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NATIONAL SECURITY IN DIVIDED SOCIETIES: A COMPARATIVE
CASE STUDY ON THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE LEBANESE AND
IRAQI ARMIES

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Introduction

In 1990, the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) began the arduous task of rebuilding itself after fifteen years of sectarian civil war and multiple army dissolutions. Twenty-five years later, the army is widely perceived to be the only national institution in the country.¹ Iraq, likewise, began in 2003 to rebuild the Iraqi Army (IA) after an invasion, disbandment, and a devastating internal sectarian conflict. Contrary to the LAF, which maintained its unity despite various internal sectarian and external threats, in June 2014 the IA disintegrated in the face of a small external actor with internal sectarian ties. Both countries exhibit strong internal subnational divisions and rebuilt their armies with extensive external interference after periods of intense internal conflict. Why did the LAF remain united and effective after the Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon in 2005, while the IA fragmented in the aftermath of the US withdrawal when confronting one of its first major challenges?

The cases of Lebanon and Iraq show that strong politicization² during the rebuilding process undermines an army's sense of corporateness, coherence, and unity which adversely affects its effectiveness and social license to operate in multi-sectarian and multi-ethnic countries. This paper will examine the rebuilding process of national militaries in multi-sectarian and multi-ethnic Iraq and Lebanon, where subnational identities are fused with national political identity after internal cross-communal conflict. This paper will use the cases of Lebanon after its civil war ended in 1990 and Iraq after the 2003 American invasion to explore the factors that either shield or enable political influence within newly-built armies. It will examine as well

¹ Fabiola Azar and Etienne Mullet, "Muslims and Christians in Lebanon: Common Views on Political Issues," *Journal of Peace Research* 39, no. 6 (2002).

² For the purposes of this paper, 'politicization' refers to "actions and processes intended to inject personal or partisan loyalty into the defense structure" (Ronald D. McLaurin, "From Professional to Political: The Redecline of the Lebanese Army," *Armed Forces and Society* 17, no. 4 (Summer 1991): 545-568, 564).

internal and external sources of politicization and methods to mitigate or encourage politicization opportunities and damaging effects.

This paper finds that the LAF was, to some extent, shielded from politicization during its reconstruction, which helped it build a strong sense of corporatism and coherence that aided its effectiveness in the face of internal sectarian divisions and outside threats. The LAF's coherence in the face of sectarian strife stems in part from officers' awareness of the damaging effect of politicization, along with a Syrian interest in keeping the army intact despite rival political parties. The IA, on the other hand, experienced heavy politicization from which the United States, focused more on searching for weapons of mass destruction as well as occupying and fighting the insurgency than it was on nation building, failed to shield it. Consequently, Iraqi politicians - sometimes encouraged by Iran - interfered frequently and systematically in the process, politicizing the army and preventing the integration and coherence necessary to contend with a threat like the Islamic State. The Lebanese case should not be considered a perfect model for Iraq or any other state to emulate in the future. However, its successes deserve recognition even as its failures should serve as a warning. This paper seeks to draw lessons learned from both cases and to make recommendations for future military policies as Iraq struggles to reorganize its fragmented army in the wake of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) attacks in June 2014.

This paper will thus examine two areas through which politicians attempted to, and continue to, politicize the army during its reconstruction process: the formation of ideology and the army's reorganization (including the officer corps and the mechanisms for promotion and appointments). Ideology in the military provides the military with an identity, a mission, and a role in society at large, all of which are necessary if politicization is to be helped or hindered. Moreover, the army's reorganization presents an opportunity for politicians to interfere by

empowering soldiers with personal rather than national loyalties. Reorganization also presents the opportunity for policies to proactively circumvent politicization and improve public perception.

In this paper, we will explain the logic behind comparing Iraqi and Lebanese military reforms and outline the methodology of the research. We will review available literature on the issue and then provide a brief background on the political system, environment, and culture in which Iraq and Lebanon operate, and describe the systems' proclivity to deadlock and crises. We will then examine military ideology, efforts at reorganization, and the opportunities to inhibit or enable politicization. Finally, we will look closely at moments of crisis for the LAF and the IA assess the future risks and uses for the military, and provide recommendations.

Why Iraq and Lebanon?

At the outset, it may appear there are too many differences between the Iraqi and Lebanese military traditions for effective comparison. In particular, civil-military relations in the two countries have markedly different histories: Iraq experienced violent military coups from 1936 to 1968, when Saddam Hussein and the Baath Party made their regime "coup-proof" by purging military officers from the Party, the revolution and the government. Lebanon, conversely, flirted with semi-military rule in the 1960s but largely managed to keep its political system democratic and the army in the barracks. The Lebanese army experienced partial and total disintegration during the fifteen year civil war, whereas the Iraqi army was forcibly disbanded by the US occupation forces. Although the LAF prior to 1990 was considered a Maronite institution, the army was never captured or controlled by one political actor or party. In Iraq, however, Saddam Hussein and the Baath placed the Iraqi military under subjective one-party civilian control and created the Republican Guard to protect the regime and the party and

fight the eight year war with Iran. The reconstruction of the Lebanese military began after the end of the civil war, whereas the process of reconstructing Iraq's military occurred during a violent widespread sectarian insurgency.

Though valid, these points overshadow the rich ground a comparison of Lebanon and Iraq offer. Both countries exhibit the same internal sectarian social divisions and external pressure from the same regional and international actors. Both countries employ a political system of power-sharing to manage those social divisions in the form of implicit or explicit consociationalism. Both national militaries exist in multi-sectarian and multi-ethnic societies, where sectarian identity preceded and often overshadowed political identity, often as a result of sectarian conflict. Armies in these societies need a social license to operate given the continuous efforts by local sectarian politicians to capture these institutions. In addition, both Iraq and Lebanon recently experienced civil wars with sectarian overtones and are still suffering from sectarian clashes, making the role of national militaries critical for the future of internal stability. Equally important, both Iraq and Lebanon experienced extensive external interference from occupying and regional actors in the rebuilding process: in Iraq, primarily from the United States and Iran, and in Lebanon, primarily from Syria.³

Methodology

This paper relies on the available literature on multi-sectarian and multi-ethnic societies and armies; the rebuilding process of the IA and the LAF; and technical, structural, sociological analyses of the IA and LAF. In addition to this literature, the authors conducted a series of interviews between December 2014 and March 2015 in both Arabic and English in Lebanon and

³ Iran influences Lebanese security institutions through its proxy, Hezbollah. However, Hezbollah was not a major player during the reconstruction process itself. The resistance group was politically contained by the Syrians and it focused on military activity in the south. Hezbollah (and therefore Iran) became a significant player in the Lebanese security sector after the withdrawal of Syrian troops in 2005, the same year that Hezbollah first entered the Parliamentary Cabinet.

Washington, DC. These interviews specifically targeted Lebanese and Iraqi generals involved in the rebuilding process, in addition to generals who served in the military before, during, and after the rebuilding. We spoke to Lebanese, American, and British analysts, politicians, and journalists in order to understand societal reaction and perception of the rebuilt army. We also interviewed a retired US military official directly involved as the US military liaison with Iraqi military officers in Iraq before and during the de-Baathification process. Finally, we were able to speak to two Iraqi refugee families in Lebanon in order to hear firsthand accounts on the response of the IA in the face of ISIS advances in Nineveh province.

Due to the sensitive political and military situation, the authors were only able to speak with one currently serving senior Iraqi military officer. Access to Iraq proved impossible due to security reasons and, with one exception, the Iraqi generals interviewed are currently exiles in the United States. We understand that their perception of the US government and military, the rebuilding process, and the current political situation in Iraq are affected by their experiences in Iraq and after. Both Iraqi and Lebanese interviewees spoke on the condition of anonymity and those involved in the rebuilding process or sensitive political events afterwards may have exaggerated the unity and logic of their military's actions. We therefore tried to verify their claims with public evidence when available. The military interviewees were at the higher officer ranks; we did not meet with middle to junior-level officers. Our inability to travel to Iraq also affected our ability to understand how Iraqi society at large perceives the IA. Despite these limitations, the interviews provided invaluable information.

Literature Review

Literature focusing on the Lebanese army provides rich information about the institution's sectarian changes over time. Oren Barak, for one, painstakingly and statistically

outlined the LAF's sectarian composition from 1958 through 1990, finding that the Army had in practice (if not on paper) reached sectarian parity in the officer corps well before the Ta'if Agreement of 1990 made it a legal necessity.⁴ In a separate work, Barak identified five factors that come into play in the rebuilding process: sectarian balance, role of the army, regional crisis, internal political crisis, and the role of the leadership, and tracked the evolution of political influence within the army. Barak's book is the most extensive literature written in English on the LAF as an institution.⁵ Ronald McLaurin examined sectarian strain in the army, specifically focusing on the army's collapse in 1984 and General Michel Aoun's attempted politicization of the armed forces in 1989.⁶

Technical literature on the Lebanese Army has grown in recent years, especially since the Syrian military withdrawal from Lebanon in 2005. Aram Nerguizian at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) largely focuses on the technical aspects of the LAF; he examines the structure, organization, and needs of the LAF in terms of training and military equipment.⁷ Nerguizian also tracks the flow of US aid to the military in the past decade and examined the challenges facing the LAF after the Syrian withdrawal.⁸ Retired LAF General Tannous Mouawad wrote about the current challenges facing the LAF's authority in Lebanon and the importance of preserving its military relations with the West.⁹

⁴ Oren Barak, "Towards a Representative Military? The Transformation of the Lebanese Officers Corps since 1945," *Middle East Journal* 60, no. 1 (Winter 2006): 75-93.

⁵ Oren Barak, *The Lebanese Army: A National Institution in a Divided Society*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2009).

⁶ Ronald D. McLaurin, "From Professional to Political."

⁷ Aram Nerguizian, *The Struggle for The Levant: Geopolitical Battles and the Quest for Stability* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2014).

⁸ Aram Nerguizian, *The Lebanese Armed Forces; Challenges and Opportunities in Post-Syria Lebanon* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2009).

⁹ Tannous Mouawad, "Lebanon and Syria: A Case Study," in *Military Engagement: Influencing Armed Forces Worldwide to Support Democratic Transition: A Handbook Project*, ed. Dennis Blair (Washington: Brookings, 2013): 363-373.

The literature that examines the Iraqi army after 2003 tends to fall in the realm of the technical. Of these, Anthony Cordesman's and Sam Khazai's pieces provide a superb survey of the arms and training the Iraqi army received from NATO and the United States in its immediate rebuilding,¹⁰ throughout the first insurgency, and after American forces left the country in 2010.¹¹ However, little to no literature looks to the Lebanese example as a possible learning source for Iraq. The technical literature cannot account for all of the Iraqi army's successes and failures; all the guns and tanks and training in the world cannot create a cohesive military on its own. In this context, Major General Najim Abed al-Jabboury's piece written before the US troop withdrawal in 2009 provided important critical insight on how political influence was eroding Iraq's security sector. Jabboury voiced fears of renewed sectarian and ethnic tensions in Iraq, should the United States fail to insulate the IA from political influence.¹²

Literature on military effectiveness in multi-sectarian and multi-ethnic societies tends to focus on the potential for minority loyalty or betrayal. For example, Timothy Hoyt examined the Iraqi Army's performance in light of social divisions and its ethnic and sectarian makeup. He argued that when sectarian discrimination within the army is absent, its coherence and performance is higher.¹³ Alon Peled's seminal book on the matter focused on "military manpower policy" and the "Trojan horse" problem, studying whether minorities in armies tend to turn their guns on the regime rather than on the enemy. He found that minority groups could be integrated effectively into the armed forces provided the opportunity for upward mobility

¹⁰ Anthony Cordesman and Patrick Baetjer, *Iraqi Security Forces: A Strategy for Success* (Westport: Praeger Security International, 2005). See also, Andrew Rathmell et. al, *Developing Iraq's Security Sector: The Coalition Provisional Authority's Experience* (Arlington: RAND Corporation, 2005).

¹¹ Anthony Cordesman and Sam Khazai, *Iraq in Crisis* (Washington, DC: CSIS, 2014). See also, Anthony Cordesman and Sam Khazai, *Shaping Iraq's Security Forces* (Washington, DC: CSIS, 2014).

¹² Najim Abed al-Jabboury, "Iraqi Security Forces after U.S. Troop Withdrawal: An Iraqi Perspective," *Strategic Forum*, no. 245 (National Defense University, August 2009).

¹³ Timothy D. Hoyt, "Social Structure, Ethnicity, and Military Effectiveness: Iraq, 1980 - 2004," in *Creating Military Power: The Sources of Military Effectiveness*, ed. R. Brooks and E. Stanley (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007).

(promotions) was based on merit rather than on sect.¹⁴ Florence Gaub's book on military integration after civil wars found that multi-ethnic armies, rather than exhibiting inherent weakness, are often the impetus for peacemaking in multiethnic societies, becoming a symbol of national reconciliation and coexistence.¹⁵

Structural examinations of Iraq and Lebanon do exist. Pieter Koekenbier, for one, wrote an analysis piece in 2005 encouraging those involved in the rebuilding of the Iraqi army to consider Lebanon as an example of a country that had already experienced the rebuilding of a divided and multi-sectarian army.¹⁶ Somewhat surprisingly, he advocated against a quota system for the IA's future, upholding instead a meritocracy system based on officers' judgment as the best way to encourage successful minority integration into the army. He noted that while absorbing militias into the army is possible, there must be political incentive for the groups to join. While the piece shows an impressive amount of foresight, Koekenbier's work is ten years out of date.

Of the few pieces that consider the rebuilding of the Iraqi Army and the LAF together, the most thorough and insightful by far is Florence Gaub's 2011 examination of the rebuilding of multi-ethnic armies after conflict.¹⁷ Gaub looked specifically at the sociological and structural factors of rebuilding, structuring her analysis along five lines: the ethnic makeup of the armed forces; the recruitment process; the inclusion or exclusions of "politically compromised personnel;" the society's perception of the military; and the professionalization of the resulting new force. Her paper exposed the vast complexities and practical trade-offs that multi-sectarian

¹⁴ Alon Peled, *A Question of Loyalty: Military Manpower Policy in Multiethnic States* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998).

¹⁵ Florence Gaub, *Military Integration after Civil Wars: Multiethnic Armies, Identity and Post-Conflict Reconstruction* (New York: Routledge, 2011).

¹⁶ Pieter Koekenbier, "Multi-Ethnic Armies: Lebanese Lessons & Iraqi Implications," *Conflict Studies Research Centre* (London: 2005).

¹⁷ Florence Gaub, "Rebuilding Armed Forces; Learning from Iraq and Lebanon," *Strategic Studies Institute* (Carlisle, PA: 2011).

and multi-ethnic armies face during the rebuilding process. She illuminated important lessons learned and we will draw heavily from her experience. However, her study neglected two important factors in the Iraqi army's eventual disintegration: Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's creation of a heavily politicized and imbalanced parallel command structure loyal to him personally rather than to the Ministry; and external influences on the process.

Last but not least, Anne Marie Baylouny wrote about the importance of the Syrian buffer between Lebanese politicians and LAF leadership after the end of the Civil War and the Syrian buffer's role in shielding the LAF from politicization.¹⁸ However, her piece did not examine the Iraqi case at all. The existing literature, therefore, does not explicitly examine the importance of politicization in the Iraqi and Lebanese cases, a gap this paper aims to fill.

Political System Background

Politicization is aided in times of political crises by political actors jockeying for more power over the defense structure. This section will briefly discuss Iraq and Lebanon's political system, its proclivity toward political deadlock and crisis, and the consequences for politicization of the military.

Both the Iraqi and the Lebanese government operate explicitly, or implicitly, under a sectarian power-sharing consociational system. Consociationalism, a term put forth in the 1950s by Arend Lijphart, is a form of "government by elite cartel designed to turn a democracy with a fragmented political culture into a stable democracy."¹⁹ Lijphart envisioned it to be the solution to political sectarian conflict. He later came to call the Lebanese model a "corporate consociational" system, whereby certain political posts remained reserved for certain sects (a

¹⁸Anne-Marie Baylouny, "Building an Integrated Military in Post-Conflict Societies: Lebanon," in *The Routledge Handbook of Civil-Military Relations*, ed. T. Bruneau and F. Matei (New York: Routledge, 2013): 242-254.

¹⁹ Arend Lijphart, "Consociational Democracy," *World Politics*, no. 2 (January 1969), 216.

model mimicked in its military).²⁰ In Lebanon, the consociational system began under the auspices of the unwritten 1943 National Pact; the 1989 Ta'if agreement institutionalized the system.²¹ In Iraq, the choice to accommodate Iraq's subcultures underlay the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA)'s decision to create a broad-based Interim Governing Council (ICG) in 2003.²² The ICG, and therefore consociationalism, eventually became the implicit logic for the 2005 constitution. The 2005 constitution set up a federal system intended to accommodate all Iraqis and offer state protection to minorities, now Sunni Arabs, Kurds, and other ethnic and religious elements; however, it appealed initially only to the Kurds and Shi'a, both of whom had been treated as minorities under 500 years of Sunni rule.²³ It recognized the virtual autonomy of the Kurdistan Regional Government (the three provinces ruled by the Kurdish regional authority since the 1991 rebellion) and allowed for additional provinces to petition to have a similar status.

Though the constitution speaks about federalism there are three political options for Iraq: mono-nationalist federalism, multi-ethnic federalism, and confederalism. In the first, the eighteen provinces are ruled over by the central government but have some specific rights as regions. In multi-ethnic federalism, the federalist system would contain three separate regions for each of the major ethno-sectarian parties (Shi'a, Sunnis, and Kurds). In confederalism (the Kurdish region in practice today), regions are a part of the confederacy by choice and are, in fact, *de facto*

²⁰ Arend Lijphart, "Self-Determination versus Pre-Determination of Ethnic Minorities in Power-Sharing Systems," in *The Rights of Minority Cultures*, ed. Will Kymlicka (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006). The term 'corporate consociationalism' was first used by Theodore Hanf, though Lijphart later came to employ it as well. See: Theodore Hanf, "The 'Political Secularization' Issue in Lebanon," *Annual Review of the Social Sciences and Religion*, no. 5 (1981).

²¹ William Harris, *The New Face of Lebanon: History's Revenge* (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2006).

²² John McGarry and Brendan O'Leary, "Iraq's Constitution of 2005: Liberal consociation as political prescription." *International Journal of Constitutional Law* 5, no. 4 (October 2007).

²³ Iraqi Constitution, articles 117 (Kurds) and 14 (minorities), <http://cabinet.iq/PageViewer.aspx?id=2> (Last Accessed April 12, 2015).

independent.²⁴ Implicitly, the system today acts along the ideals of consociationalist power-sharing. According to Turkish political scientist Burak Bilgehan Özpek, however, the unwritten nature of institutional power-sharing in Iraq presents a threat to minority security in the system.²⁵

Lijphart's consociationalism faced many criticisms²⁶ and, in practice, proved to be a system prone to crises and deadlock in both Lebanon and Iraq since it relies on rule by consensus; and when no consensus exists, the system enters into a stalemate. In Lebanon, two factors drastically affected the balance of the consociational system and created social unease and political crises. The first was demographic change and regional upheaval where deterritorialization, denationalization, and porous borders had resulted in transnational political influence on subnational groups.²⁷ The second was external actors who added undue strain on the system, increasing the potential for its deadlock and crisis.²⁸ The same constitutional protections meant to ensure no one subnational group could "capture" and dominate the system oftentimes, in practice, mean that the government cannot achieve anything through political means. When no consensus exists, particularly on contentious issues, no decision is made. For better or worse, however, the system appears intractable in Lebanon and is the foundation of Iraq's government. Therefore, each country frequently faces political crises, putting the army under an even greater risk of politicization.

Politicization and Ideology

²⁴ See Aram Rifaat, "The Kurds in Post-Invasion Iraq: The Myth of the Rebuilding of the Iraqi State," *The Journal of Social, Political, and Economic Studies* 33, no. 4 (Winter 2008).

²⁵ Burak Bilgehan Özpek, "Democracy or Partition: Future Scenarios for the Kurds of Iraq," *Insight Turkey* 14, no. 3 (2012), 136.

²⁶ For a summary of the main criticisms, and specifically criticisms on its application to Lebanon, please see Michael C. Hudson, "Trying Again: Power-Sharing in Post-War Civil Lebanon," *International Negotiations*, 2 (1997): 103-122.

²⁷ Imad Salamey, "Failing Consociationalism in Lebanon and Integrative Options," *International Journal of Peace Studies* 14, no. 2 (Autumn/Winter 2009), 86.

²⁸ Michael Kerr, *Imposing Power-Sharing: Conflict and Coexistence in Northern Ireland and Lebanon* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2005), 2.

The ideology of military institutions forms their identity and helps build their corporate culture. In addition, ideology determines the military's mission and role in society, which ultimately determine the army's relationship with the state and society that it seeks to serve. A strong ideology in the military that promotes unified purpose and identity should impede politicization and fragmentation. Ideology is fluid. Belief in and interpretations of ideological symbols and a national narrative can change over time, to the detriment and benefit of the military. Consecutive reinforcement of military ideology - such as encouragement of the neutral role of the Lebanese military encouraged throughout LAF history - can ensure some continuity. But ideology can also be reinterpreted to encourage politicization, as Army Commander Michel Aoun proved in Lebanon from 1984 - 1991.²⁹ Ideology in Iraq has proved to be more fluid than in Lebanon both by experience and by design. This section will examine the use of ideology as both a tool of and a buffer to politicization of the army in Iraq and Lebanon. Because ideology is often inherited and then reinterpreted, it will briefly examine the ideologies present in the history of the two armies as well as show how those ideologies affected, and were affected by, politicization.

Ideology in the Historical Context

In the case of Lebanon, the LAF's military ideology comes from its first commander after independence, Commander Fu'ad Shehab, who created in the nascent military a set of principles that later came to be called "Shehabism." Shehabism promotes the army as the protector of society rather than the guardian of politicians in hold of the central government.³⁰ Shehabism emerged as an answer to political interference in the military during a time of intense sectarian-

²⁹ General Aoun, Army Commander in 1984, expanded politicization in the LAF by using the army as a tool of his political agenda, furthering the split between the East and West Beirut factions of the army.

³⁰ Erika G. Alin, *The United States and the 1958 Lebanon Crisis: American Intervention in the Middle East*, (Lanham: University Press of America, 1994), 85.

political strife, as was the case in 1952, 1958, 1975 and 2008. A combination of outdated census information, confessionalization of the military along the consociational National Pact structure, and structural discrimination against sects with lower access to education created the popular conception of the LAF as a Maronite institution. Although Shehab, a Maronite himself, built a well-educated and professional military,³¹ the LAF remained constrained by this perception throughout the 1950s and 60s. In order to avoid any disintegration within the military, given the public perception at the time, Shehab insisted on army neutrality in all sectarian conflicts. He created an institution that prided itself on education, professionalism, and nonpartisanship. This foundation persisted despite the civil war, and military officers continued to study and train in Western countries throughout the violence.³²

The LAF's largest break with Shehabism in its original interpretation - and its first foray into politicization - came when General Michel Aoun assumed the position of Army Commander in 1984. In 1984, the entire Shi'a sixth brigade defected and linked itself to the Shi'a political group Amal.³³ As a consequence, the city of Beirut split between predominantly Christian East Beirut and predominantly Muslim West Beirut. General Aoun kept links with army commanders in West Beirut throughout the disintegration, partially due to his personal desire to become the president in the 1988 elections.³⁴ In order to achieve the military support he needed for effective presidential rule, he began a steady promotion of junior officers whose merits lay in their loyalty to Aoun personally.³⁵ In doing so, he actively reinterpreted Shehabism by focusing not on Shehabism's positions of neutrality, but rather on its history of a strong military leader who came

³¹ William Harris, *The New Face of Lebanon*, 146.

³² Retired Lebanese Army General, in discussion with the authors, Beirut, 29 December 2014.

³³ William Harris, *The New Face of Lebanon*, 187.

³⁴ Ronald D. McLaurin, "From Professional to Political," 546.

³⁵ *Ibid*, 547.

forward to decisively lead the country in a time of crisis (Shehab himself).³⁶ Aoun's effective politicization of the LAF allowed him to assume the presidency in 1988.

General Aoun split with the Syrian-sponsored government, creating his own shadow government in East Beirut and conducting a "war of liberation" against the Syrian forces and the Lebanese Forces (LF). In doing so, he made the army a political actor in Lebanon's sectarian war. General Aoun's politicization of the army led many troops to desert it.³⁷ This episode in Lebanon's history shows the ability of ideology to either enable politicization or impede it.

On the other hand, no one ideological narrative has monopolized the Iraqi military since its creation in 1920. In the beginning of the modern state, King Faisal I and his Sharifian³⁸ deputies (notably his first general and Minister of Defense, Jafar Pasha al-Askari, and General Nuri al-Sa'id) considered the military to be the birthplace of nationalism in independent Iraq and specifically fostered Arab nationalist sentiment in its ranks. In the revolutionary years of the late 1950s and 1960s, the military – especially the Sunni officer corps – subscribed to various iterations of secular pan-Arabism as represented by the Arifs, Gamal Abd al-Nasir, Hafiz al-Asad and, by the late 1960s, the Baathist Party (itself a pan-Arabist movement). The desire to become the true defender of pan-Arabism led to successive military coups until the Baath came to power a second time in 1968. The Baathist regime was led by a Sunni Arab general, Ahmad Hasan al-Bakr, and his kinsman and party boss, Saddam Hussein, but they did not seek unification with Sunni Arab Syria or Egypt. Instead, they briefly formed the Rejectionist Front with Syria to oppose Sadat's treaty with Israel and promulgated an ideology that emphasized loyalty to the regime rather than loyalty to the Sunni Arab nation state. This may have kept Iraq's

³⁶ Pieter Koekenbier, "Multi-Ethnic Armies," 13, ft.34.

³⁷ Ronald McLaurin, "From Professional to Political," 553.

³⁸ The Sharifians were King Faisal I's biggest supporters and many served in his government in Iraq after 1920. They were former Ottoman officers (mostly Sunni) who were educated in Ottoman and German military academies and served in the Ottoman Army in World War I. Most of them deserted in 1916 and joined the Arab Revolt against the Ottoman Empire to fight under Amir Faisal and the British.

Kurds and Shi'a Arabs within some national boundary since both opposed immersion in a broad pan-Arab political culture.

Rhetoric and ideology changed again during the Iran-Iraq war years, when Saddam emphasized Arab nationalism in face of a resurgent Persian enemy and managed to retain Shi'a loyalty to the army and the state during the war.³⁹ In this period, official rhetoric and popular culture utilized symbols of national unity from pre-Islamic and Arab history as well as Kurdish and Shi'a heroes to successfully foster a sense of Iraqi patriotism in the military.⁴⁰ Iraqi scholar Zaid al-Ali describes the army as even “enjoy[ing] a reputation among the general public for professionalism and patriotism,” reflecting its patriotic rhetoric.⁴¹ The Iran-Iraq War normalized war for Iraqi society at large as the government “transform[ed] war into a way of governing” to ensure “that the impact of the war was borne by the population” and affected the daily lives of all Iraqis.⁴²

As the Iran-Iraq War raged on, political rhetoric became less secular and more Islamist. Saddam called on religious stories and symbols from both Sunni and Shi'a tradition to describe the battle against the Persians (called Saddam's Qadisiyyah, referring to the 7th century victory of the Arabs over the Persians) to add an aura of holiness to the military regime and ensure the loyalty of the Shi'a who made up most of the enlisted ranks of the army. This profession of religiosity did not prevent Saddam from using the army against his own people during and after

³⁹ Faleh Jabar, “The War Generation in Iraq,” in *Iran, Iraq, and the Legacies of War*, ed. Lawrence Potter and Gary Sick (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004), 128. See also Dina Rizk-Khoury, *Iraq in Wartime: Soldiering, Martyrdom, and Remembrance*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

⁴⁰ Faleh Jabar, “The War Generation in Iraq,” 128; Phebe Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2012), 208.

⁴¹ Zaid al-Ali, *The Struggle for Iraq's Future: How Corruption, Incompetence and Sectarianism have Undermined Democracy* (London: Yale University Press, iBook, 2014), Ch.2, Section 4, Sub-title 5, Paragraph 2.

⁴² Dina Rizk Khoury, *Iraq in Wartime*, 48-9.

the war.⁴³ The end of the Iran-Iraq War, the invasion of Kuwait, and the beginning of rebellion in the predominantly Shi'a south and Kurdish north (with its resulting harsh crackdowns) effectively destroyed the national unity Saddam tried to create during the war and marked the end of the era of Iraqi patriotism Saddam had attempted to foster, according to Iraqi sociologist Faleh Jabar.⁴⁴ Instead of focusing on any one ideology, historian Dina Khoury wrote, the ruling regime tightened its system of rule that was “despotic and marked by extreme improvisation [drawing] on tribalism, sectarianism, [and] Baathism.”⁴⁵

The ideology of regime and personal loyalty was established by 1979, when Saddam announced his presidency;⁴⁶ it was strengthened in direct response to the mass defections and rebellion Iraq witnessed after the Kuwait War. The Shi'a rebellion (*intifada*) in southern Iraq began with disaffected army commanders and units returning from Iraq,⁴⁷ reminding Saddam of the inherent danger of military officers. In the early 1980s, Saddam's method of employing primarily members of a few loyal Sunni tribes in the better trained and equipped Republican Guard – which essentially became the regular army during the Iran-Iraq War – heavily politicized it, cementing it as his personal tool.⁴⁸ Saddam, who never served in the army himself but witnessed four separate military coups in a decade, marginalized the regular army and strengthened the Republican Guard, whose main purpose was to “protect him [Saddam] from the army.”⁴⁹ Sociologist Faleh Jaber noted that in the aftermath of 1991, “modern holistic solidarities, observed earlier among [the Iran-Iraq War] generation, such as solidarity of class or

⁴³ For instance, the use of the word “Anfal” to refer to the brutal campaign against the Kurds in the North comes directly from a Qur'anic heritage (see Makiya, Kanan. *Cruelty and Silence* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1993), 156-7).

⁴⁴ Faleh Jabar, “The War Generation in Iraq,” 133.

⁴⁵ Dina Rizk-Khoury, *Iraq in Wartime*, 8.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 27.

⁴⁷ Kanan Makiyya, *Cruelty and Silence*, 59.

⁴⁸ Ironically, the Republican Guard also became the source of any coup attempts during Saddam's years in power.

⁴⁹ Amatzia Baram, “Neo Tribalism in Iraq: Saddam Hussein's Tribal Policies 1991-1996,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 29, no. 1 (February 1997): 1-31, 5.

nation [were] displaced by primordial, segmentary loyalties, of the clan, the tribe, the family, or local community.”⁵⁰ The military, a reflection of the society it came from, exhibited these same segmentations even as the military command pursued an ideology of loyalty. By the mid-1990s, Islamism among both the Sunnis⁵¹ and the Shi’a emerged as the only unifying ideologies in the nation. Ironically this trend may have been enabled in part by Saddam’s escalation of Islamic rhetoric during the war with Iran in the 1980s.⁵²

Rather than promoting any one unifying ideology, Saddam Hussein’s divisive method of rule instead promulgated an environment of suspicion among people, tribes, families and allies, and the only permissible ideology taught in the military, the mosques, and in schools was one of regime loyalty. This has created a legacy in post-Saddam Iraq, to the point where wisdom has become that “he who owns the security forces, owns the politics.”⁵³ This escalated culture of politicization, tribalism, and sectarianism, in conjunction with a normalization of war in Iraqi society,⁵⁴ would come to deeply affect the rebuilding process. The foundations set for each country’s ideology affected how ideology was perceived, interpreted, and utilized by both politicians and military officials during the rebuilding process.

Ideology in the Reconstruction Process

Ideology during the reconstruction process in Iraq and Lebanon emerged as a response to the past. In Lebanon, General Emile Lahoud (who became the commander, with Syrian support, after the signing of the Ta’if Agreement in 1989) and the officers who refrained from joining either Sunni Lt. Ahmad Khatib’s desertion in 1976 or General Michel Aoun, chose to reinterpret Shehabism closer to its original interpretation, focusing on its neutral and national principles as a

⁵⁰ Faleh Jabar, “The War Generation in Iraq,” 135.

⁵¹ Iraq’s Sunnis were influenced by the Muslim Brotherhood, which was banned under Saddam (except for the anti-Assad branch) as well as the Wahhabist Saudis, who built mosques in Iraq.

⁵² Ofra Bengio, *Saddam’s Word*, (London: Oxford University Press, 2002), 15.

⁵³ Najim al-Jabboury, “Iraqi Security Forces,” 3.

⁵⁴ See Dina Rizk-Khoury, *Iraq in Wartime*, 48-81.

tool for army unity. General Lahoud was supported by both inherent Syrian approval and the general desire of local politicians to prove that Ta'if could work.⁵⁵ In Iraq, however, the prevalent ideology during the rebuilding process was de-Baathification. This policy - a direct reaction to Saddam's legacy by the victims of his rule - generated divisiveness in the military rather than promoting a return to national ideals. It was used by Maliki to justify some of his politicization, to expand central authority, and as a way for former dissidents and exiles (mostly Shi'a) to seek revenge by taking control of the military and security ministries.⁵⁶ Those removed under the auspices of de-Baathification "were, almost by definition, Sunnis."⁵⁷

In Lebanon, General Lahoud used Shehabism to create a common sense of unity and purpose for the military. Central to Shehabism's principles lay the concept of nationalism. Scholars traditionally associate the concept of nationalism as "a space unifying divergent social groups and interests in one monolithic national community,"⁵⁸ necessary for the "logic of war" and the coherence of the national fighting force. Lahoud and the officers supporting him used Shehabism's nationalist principle to encourage soldiers and officers in loyalty to the state rather than loyalty to their sect. Lahoud used education to reinforce that nationalist ideal: both in Lebanese military schools and by continuing the tradition of sending Lebanese officers to Western countries (usually France or the United States) to train with Western armies through the International Military Education and Training (IMET) program.⁵⁹ This education, central to the LAF's officer corps, gave officers exposure to militaries whose countries firmly expected them to stay unified, professional, and in the barracks.⁶⁰ It should be noted that the Syrians viewed the

⁵⁵ Retired Lebanese Army General in discussion with the authors, Beirut, 3 January 2015.

⁵⁶ Phebe Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, 267.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Faleh Jabar, "The War Generation in Iraq," 121.

⁵⁹ Bureau of Political-Military Affairs. US Department of State, <http://www.state.gov/t/pm/65533.htm> (Last Accessed March 22, 2015).

⁶⁰ Tannous Mouawad, "Lebanon and Syria: A Case Study," 367.

IMET program with concern and attempted to lure all officers to be trained in Syrian military schools instead. The senior Lebanese commanders, however, viewed the Syrian schools (which indoctrinated a Baathist ideology) to be of lower quality.⁶¹

Lahoud's gamble on Shehabism succeeded for both internal and external reasons. Externally, the Syrians bought into Shehabism's usefulness for its principle of political neutrality. The Syrians, who wished to impose their political designs on the country, supported a neutral LAF. The Syrians viewed Aoun's actions from 1988 - 1991 with both frustration and mistrust, and wished to avoid another confrontation with LAF forces. The Syrians may also have desired LAF support in Lebanese internal security matters such as the militia disarmament mandated by the Ta'if agreement.⁶² The Syrians had roughly 30,000 troops in the country at the time that, given regional instability, might better have served Hafez al-Assad outside of Lebanon's borders.

Internally, Lebanese politicians were under pressure from their constituents to prove that Ta'if could work. The LAF proved to be a visible manifestation of Ta'if's potential. As such, politicians from all sides supported the LAF's unity in order to perform internal policing, disarm militias, and confront restive militant Palestinians to ultimately return stability to Lebanon. Without their own personal militias, the LAF became the only Lebanese source for security.

After the Syrian occupiers left the country, the LAF's neutral ideology was tested most visibly in May 2008 when clashes erupted in Beirut between majority Sunni militant supporters of the "14 March" political bloc and the majority Shi'a (and Hezbollah) militant supporters of

⁶¹ Retired Lebanese Army General in discussion with the authors, Beirut, 3 January 2015.

⁶² The Ta'if Agreement, <http://www.un.int/wcm/webdav/site/lebanon/shared/documents/Constitution/The%20Taif%20Agreement%20%28English%20Version%29%20.pdf>. Ta'if allowed the Hezbollah group to keep its arms, viewing the militant group as a resistance movement to Israel rather than a militia. The implications of this decision on Lebanon's future security are outside the scope of this paper.

the “8 March” bloc.⁶³ Hezbollah “turned its guns inward” and forcibly marched on Beirut to disband a nascent armed Sunni militia group associated with 14 March Prime Minister Saad Hariri in the early stages of its formation. Hezbollah's actions created a crisis for the LAF, which was faced with the choice to either prevent Hezbollah’s incursions (which would lead to a perception of LAF protection of Sunni militias and most likely fragment the army) or to remain neutral and risk the perception of supporting 8 March against the legitimate authorities.⁶⁴ Ultimately, the LAF chose to remain inactive and indirectly allow the Hezbollah takeover. Many civilians were killed in Beirut despite close proximity to stationed troops, who were accused by supporters of 14 March of not fulfilling their duties to protect the legitimate civilian authorities.⁶⁵ To many, therefore, May 2008 represents the worst failure of the LAF since the Civil War.⁶⁶

However, the LAF viewed inaction as its duty to the nation. In its ideology, neutrality demanded that the LAF never side with any internal Lebanese armed party during an internal political crisis. In doing so, the LAF emulated the actions of Fu’ad Shehab himself in 1958. The LAF’s 2008 actions were furthermore in keeping with the LAF’s stance in 2005. When ordered by the government to prevent anti-Syrian protesters (who now make up the 14 March bloc) from convening in Beirut, the LAF refused their orders in order to maintain their neutrality. At the time, 14 March supported the army’s actions for obvious reasons.

⁶³ Lebanon’s political scene today, while composed of various sectarianized-political parties, is essentially divided in two. One side (composed of the Sunni Future Movement, the Christian Lebanese Forces, and the Christian Phalangists) forms the anti-Syrian political bloc 14 March (so named after the anti-Syrian protests that erupted after PM Rafiq al-Hariri’s assassination in 2005). The other side (largely composed of Shi’a Hezbollah, Shi’a Amal, the Christian Free Patriotic Movement of Michel Aoun, and occasionally the Druze Progressive Socialist Party under Walid Jumblatt) forms the pro-Syrian political bloc 8 March. While often associated with specific sects, these parties are more accurately described as rightist or leftist.

⁶⁴ Retired Lebanese Army General in discussion with the authors, Beirut, 5 January 2015.

⁶⁵ Lebanese politician from the ‘14 March’ coalition in discussion with the authors, Beirut, January 7 2015.

⁶⁶ With the removal of the Syrian buffer in 2005, the LAF was subjected to attempts by the political elite to politicize the army (see Aram Nerguizian, “Lebanese Civil Military Dynamics: Weathering the Storm?” *Carnegie Endowment*, 21 November 2011, <http://carnegieendowment.org/2011/11/21/lebanese-civil-military-dynamics-weathering-regional-storm/fkp9> [last accessed 4 May 2015]). However, 2008 marked the height of 14 March’s attempts to affect the ideology and composition of the LAF and yet the army refused to follow its orders. This suggests that politicization is limited in the LAF.

Lebanese opinions on the LAF's actions in 2005 and 2008 therefore stem largely from their own political affiliation. For the purposes of national unity within the army, however, the LAF's policies of political neutrality must be considered a success. The LAF's actions come not only from an ideology of political neutrality but furthermore from a heightened sense of political awareness amongst its commanders. Faced with a situation where military action would inevitably lead to mass defections and internal disintegration, the LAF stuck to its traditions and remained neutral. In this, the LAF's neutral ideology prevented politicization and preserved army unity.

The LAF was shielded from politicization throughout its reconstruction process, but it has become a third political actor on the Lebanese political scene. Due to the political awareness of its commanders and the frequent political crises in the consociational system, the AC often faces opportunities to play a political role on the national level. Because the LAF has good relations with all political parties, it could be considered the "kingmaker" in Lebanon. Its choice to intervene or not intervene politically will tip the balance toward one side or the other. This has led to the rise of "commander syndrome," where the Commander of the LAF – a trusted persona – often goes on to become president of the country, leading to speculation and fear that the AC's decisions to intervene or not intervene may be based in part on the AC's presidential aspirations. The rise of the LAF as a political actor represents one trade-off of the reconstruction process in Lebanon.

In post-2003 Iraq, however, no such ideology of national neutrality existed. Instead, the primary ideology was de-Baathification, promoted both externally by the United States and internally by returning Iraqi exiles and Shi'a Arabs and Kurds who had remained in country and

were determined to capture political leadership of the country and seek revenge.⁶⁷ Rather than an ideology stating what the new nation and army was, de-Baathification focused on what the army deliberately was *not*. Intentionally or unintentionally, the CPA and the nascent Iraqi government used de-Baathification to weaken the army rather than promote an ideology to bring it together. One current Iraqi general, a Sunni himself, referred to de-Baathification as “de-Sunnification,” a reflection of the disproportionate effect of the law on Arab Sunnis.⁶⁸ Most senior and experienced army officers were purged by de-Baathification, leaving a vacuum of experienced leaders to promote a new ideology and inspire confidence and loyalty in the troops. In June 2003, only four former officers were called back to lead the new Iraqi army - and none of them above the rank of colonel.⁶⁹ Without experienced leaders, the new army had no chance to create and indoctrinate a new ideology of nationalism before the country faced a violent and divisive insurgency. Nationalism was neglected on the national scale as well, as various Kurdish and Shi’a leaders espoused divisive ethnic and sectarian rhetoric with a non-national Iraq agenda.

Demilitarization, the second punitive measure of the CPA against the former regime, removed and humiliated experienced troops. The order “involved as many as 400,000 Iraqis (and their families).”⁷⁰ The effects of demilitarization were felt throughout the country, not just by soldiers and their families. As a former US Army officer involved in the IA reconstruction process noted, “the Iraqi military predated the state. We took away the last symbol of sovereignty a common Iraqi could look at.”⁷¹

⁶⁷ Zaid al-Ali, *The Struggle for Iraq's Future*, Ch. 2, Section 4, Sub-title 5.

⁶⁸ Current Iraqi General in discussion with the authors, Washington DC, 6 February 2014

⁶⁹ Retired Iraqi Brigadier General in discussion with the authors, Washington DC, 30 January 2015. At the same time, the retirement age was lowered so that returning former Sunni Baathist officers could be forced to retire, most without pensions.

⁷⁰ Phebe Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, 268.

⁷¹ Retired American Army Colonel in discussion with the authors, Washington DC, 24 February 2015.

De-Baathification and demilitarization appealed to internal and external actors due to Saddam's legacy of using the army as a political tool against his people. This created a determination to ensure that it could never happen again as well as a desire for greater civilian control, and therefore greater civilian interference, with the armed forces. Article 9 of the 2005 Constitution explicitly states that the army "shall be subject to the control of the civilian authority [...] shall not be used as an instrument to oppress the Iraqi people, shall not interfere in the political affairs, and shall have no role in the transfer of authority."⁷² Mechanisms to provide civilian oversight of the army through parliament and the Ministry of Defense were created by the US and subsequently side-stepped by Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki to strengthen his personal rule and central authority.

In fact, Maliki used the ideology of de-Baathification to extensively politicize the military. For example, he used de-Baathification to purge the Military Intelligence Directorate (M2). In February 2010, Maliki fired up to 376 intelligence officers under the auspices of de-Baathification, including the head of the M2 Alaa al-Amiri.⁷³ The majority of these officials (mostly Sunni) were replaced with loyalists to Maliki; they were inexperienced in military matters but members of his political party, the Da'wa, causing US officials to worry that the "purges" would directly affect military morale and operations.⁷⁴ Maliki's mixed use of de-Baathification, tribalism, and sectarianism mimicked that of Saddam's in post-Kuwait Iraq, where he used the same disparate themes to boost his ideology of personal loyalty and security.

⁷² The Constitution of the Republic of Iraq, <http://cabinet.iq/PageViewer.aspx?id=2> (Last accessed April 12, 2015).

⁷³ Marisa Sullivan, "Maliki's Authoritarian Regime," *Institute for the Study of War*, Middle East Security Report 10, (April 2013), 16.

⁷⁴ Shashank Bengali, "Maliki filled Iraqi security services with Shiites," *McClatchyDC*, 3 December, 2010, <http://www.mcclatchydc.com/2010/12/03/104726/us-cables-say-maliki-filled-iraqi.html> (Last Accessed March 27, 2015).

Florence Gaub argued that Iraq's history of military nationalism offers a narrative for the new IA to emulate in the future.⁷⁵ While military nationalism did exist, it has effectively been twenty-seven years since the army and the political leadership pursued any real discourse of Iraqi patriotism. However, the removal of Maliki, the intersection of international interests on a strong IA to remove ISIS from Iraqi territory, and an internal need for security presents a window of opportunity for Iraqis to create and promote a new sense of Iraqi patriotism just as the Lebanese did in the aftermath of Ta'if.

In conclusion, ideology plays an essential role in either promoting or preventing politicization of the army. While it is by no means the only component of politicization, it has the potential to bring an army together around a sense of loyalty to the nation rather than to subnational identities, or else to divide the army on the basis of personal, tribal, or sectarian loyalties.

Reorganization

Reorganizing militaries in the aftermath of internal civil conflicts provides one of the most visible methods in which the army can gain an improved public perception and a heightened social license to operate. Due in part to its inevitability, it therefore represents an opportunity for either political capture or the prevention of politicization. Several methods employed in reorganization can actually prevent politicization by promoting integration of sectarian and regional groups and ethnic parity. However, reorganization also provides an opportunity for politicians to interfere in the army's composition by advocating policies biased toward subnational groups with personal or tribal rather than national loyalty. This section will examine the politicization potential in the reintegration of former militiamen into the armed forces as well as the use of a quota to bring about ethnic parity in the officer corps.

⁷⁵ Florence Gaub, "Rebuilding Armed Forces," 26-7.

In the aftermath of the civil war, the LAF's leadership pursued a policy of sectarian and regional integration in order to mix the groups homogenous during the civil war and prevent the sort of large group defections witnessed with Lt. Khatib. This latter reorganization happened "against the will of many if not most civilian politicians."⁷⁶ The integration policy, combined with educational training for current troops and recruits on the need for national unity,⁷⁷ was designed to prevent politicization and sectarian "capture" of any segment of the army.⁷⁸ As such, it posed a problem for former militiamen; after the signing of the Ta'if accords, the government issued amnesty to militia members and invited those who wish to re-apply, to do so as *individuals* rather than as members of a militia.

Thousands of soldiers from the main Lebanese militias (Amal, Progressive Socialist Party and Lebanese Forces) applied for reintegration by 1992. However, much to the wrath of militia leaders, AC Emile Lahoud determined that the army would only need 4,000 troops in the coming period of time. Eventually, around 6,000 were integrated (including those in civilian administration positions).⁷⁹ Statistics on the number of militia officer applications vary from dozens⁸⁰ to as many as 970,⁸¹ but officers ultimately needed to pass the same requirements. Independently assessed, the majority of those officers permitted to join were mandated to join the military academy from three to four years in order to go through training and indoctrination in national values.⁸² The reintegration process - which included the officers who fought with

⁷⁶ Anne-Marie Baylouny, 246. See also: Emile Lahoud, "Bila Hasana" [Without Immunity], Interview with Jean Aziz, Orange Television (OTV). 30 April 2013, <http://www.otv.com.lb/beta/v/episode/اميل-السابق-الرئيس-مع-حصانة-بلا-لحد-2861>. (Last Accessed December 10, 2014).

⁷⁷ Florence Gaub, "Multi-Ethnic Armies," 8-9.

⁷⁸ For further details on the technical aspects of achieving sectarian integration in the LAF after 1990, please see Riad Taqi al-Din, *An Army Revived: 1988-1994* (in Arabic) (Beirut, 1994).

⁷⁹ Baylouny, "Building an Integrated Military," 248.

⁸⁰ Elizabeth Picard, "Prospects for Lebanon: The Demobilization of the Lebanese Militias," *Center for Lebanese Studies* (Oxford, 1999): 8.

⁸¹ Retired Lebanese Army General in discussion with the authors, Beirut, 3 January 2015

⁸² Ibid.

Aoun⁸³ - ensured that all sects were represented in the newly mixed brigades, suppressing any politicization within one brigade or another.⁸⁴

Successful reorganization of the Lebanese army could not have happened without external support from the Syrians.⁸⁵ Syrian troops took the primary responsibility for security and stability in the country, with tens of thousands of troops stationed in country to provide a buffer between militia groups. This allowed the LAF to focus on its internal changes rather than security throughout the country. The LAF did provide internal security assistance, notably in 1991 with Palestinian Liberation Organization militants in the South,⁸⁶ but for the large part dedicated its energies to militia reintegration and internal indoctrination in a nationalist ideology.

In the case of Iraq, the army's general disbandment (CPA Order 2, 23 May)⁸⁷ and the de-Baathification law (CPA Order 1, 16 May)⁸⁸ constituted the main factors influencing the recruitment process within the newly-formed army. By banning many soldiers and officers from joining the new army, the process was automatically biased towards the new political forces in Iraq. A retired US Army officer who was responsible for liaising with Iraqi military officers

⁸³ Florence Gaub, "Rebuilding National Militaries," 6.

⁸⁴ Importantly, members of the Christian Lebanese Forces both refused and were refused integration for the most part. The LF wished to reintegrate whole militias without mixing, which the LAF leadership refused to accept. Aoun's soldiers were accepted out of respect for their abilities and training, and out of a need for Christian soldiers (Retired Lebanese Army General in discussion with the authors, Beirut, 3 January 2015).

⁸⁵ Syrian hegemony over Lebanon after the Civil War could not have happened without the "decisive role" of the United States, who allowed Syrian hegemony in exchange for Syrian support in the Kuwait War against Iraq (see William Harris, *The New Face of Lebanon*, 237).

⁸⁶ Pieter Koekenbier, "Multi-Ethnic Armies," 9.

⁸⁷ Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), 23 May 2003,

http://www.iraqcoalition.org/regulations/20030823_CPAORD_2_Dissolution_of_Entities_with_Annex_A.pdf;

(Last Accessed, 1 April 2015). The original US entity in charge of the situation in Iraq, the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA) had expected the IA (once purged of its top command) to assist in security and reconstruction efforts (Phebe Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, 265). Paul Bremer's decision reportedly took many US officers by surprise (Ibid, 268) and sent around 400,000 soldiers into the streets. These soldiers would later become the basis of the massive insurgency that began in 2003 (Anthony Cordesman, *Iraqi Security Forces*). The inability of US soldiers to properly maintain security created an "intercommunal 'security dilemma'" that, combined with ethnic entrepreneurs, escalated the subnational violence across the country (Oren Barak, "Dilemmas of Security in Iraq," *Security Dialogue* 38, no. 4 (December 2007), 456).

⁸⁸ CPA, Order Number One, 10 May 2003, http://www.iraqcoalition.org/regulations/20030516_CPAORD_1_De-Baathification_of_Iraqi_Society_.pdf (Last Accessed 1 April 2015).

under ORHA and the CPA described the United States as “going into Iraq with an occupation mindset rather than a nation-building one, and as such did not consider a plan for Iraqi Army reorganization ahead of time.”⁸⁹ Reintegration of militiamen in the early CPA government was not a priority (except to limit the size of the Kurdish *peshmerga* forces)⁹⁰ and when a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR)⁹¹ policy was finally pursued, it lacked the financial and logistical support to actually integrate the nine militia groups (including the militias of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, the Kurdistan Democratic Party and the Shi’a Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq)⁹² it nominally served,⁹³ let alone provide adequate indoctrination of a nationalist ideology. Although some senior Sunni Baathist officers were called back to serve because of a lack of qualified people, the new structure of the Iraqi army was heavily skewed to recruitment from the dominant Shi’a political community. The majority of the officers called back were, in fact, Shi’a.⁹⁴

This was especially evident at the rank and file level. For instance, a whole unit from the Shi’a militia organized by Muqtada al-Sadr, a radical Iraqi Shi’a cleric from Baghdad, was integrated into the IA under the name of Kadhimiya Battalion. Members of Parliament loyal to Sadr engineered this process, and they relied on their connections with former Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki to succeed. In accord with his position as prime minister, Maliki was the Commander-in-Chief of the Iraqi Army and he almost certainly facilitated this level of politicization to further establish his direct control over Iraqi military and security forces.⁹⁵ The

⁸⁹ Retired American Army Colonel in discussion with the authors, Washington DC, 24 February 2015.

⁹⁰ Andrew Rathmell et. al, “Developing Iraq’s Security Sector,” 65.

⁹¹ DDR in post-2003 Iraq was referred to as “transition and integration” (TR) rather than DDR.

⁹² SCIRI was an Iranian sponsored militia created during the Iraq-Iran war from Iraqi Shi’a exiles in Iran and loyal to the Ayatollah Muhammad Bakr al-Hakim (see Nikki Keddie, *Modern Iran* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 271)

⁹³ *Ibid*, 70.

⁹⁴ Zaid al-Ali, *The Struggle for Iraq's Future*, Ch.2, Section 4, Sub-title 5, Paragraph 12.

⁹⁵ Marisa Sullivan, “Maliki’s Authoritarian Regime.”

Kadhimiya Battalion did not go through the same indoctrination and rehabilitation process as the Iraqi militia officers and posed a real threat to the counterinsurgency effort: when asked to back up the US Alpha Company's raid on a commander in the Mahdi Army (formed by al-Sadr in 2006), the battalion instead fired upon the Americans before providing the Mahdi militia members with extra weapons.⁹⁶

Not every ethno-sectarian group desires a strong central military, particularly one allowed to police internally.⁹⁷ Historically, the Kurds frequently clashed with the Iraqi central government. Though some Kurds worked for the government and were party members, the Kurdish north frequently engaged in armed conflict with Baghdad in the hopes of obtaining independence or, at the very least, autonomy. Through the years of political and military conflict between Iran and Iraq, the Kurdish north alternatively received military and economic support in its ambitions from Iran, the West, and Saddam himself. In the late 1980s, Saddam embarked on a systematic campaign (the Anfal) against the Kurds, using the military, chemical weapons, and conventional arms to slaughter and uproot large portions of Kurdish society.⁹⁸ In 1996, Saddam responded to a plea for help from one Kurdish leader – Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) chief Masoud Barzani – to cross the forbidden line demarcating Arab Iraq from the Kurdish provinces and eliminate Barzani's chief rival, Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) leader Jalal Talabani.

The Kurds are divided into two parties led by prominent Kurdish families. The Kurdish militias themselves are highly politicized, following orders from their respective parties. Each has its own *peshmerga* militia; while they were nominally unified and mixed in early 2010 to

⁹⁶ Michael R. Gordon & General Bernard E. Trainor, *The Endgame: The Inside Story for the Struggle for Iraq, from George W. Bush to Barack Obama*, (New York: Vintage Books, iBook, 2012), Ch. 18, Section 5.

⁹⁷ The Kurds are not the only group adverse to an IA with powers of internal policing. Saddam's legacy made many Iraqis wary of a military free to operate inside the country. Externally, decades of conflict between Iran and Iraq suggest the Iranians do not want to see a strong central military either.

⁹⁸ Phebe Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, 198-200.

form the Kurdistan Region Border Guard, they did not fully integrate their units.⁹⁹ Events since the 1990s reveal little cooperation or coordination between PUK and KDP units. The Kurdish militias are highly politicized, following orders from their respective parties rather than a unified military command or council, even within mixed units.¹⁰⁰ The only thing stronger than their internal rivalries is the distrust they share for a strong centralized Baghdad and a strong centralized army.

A series of components coalesced to discourage effective Kurdish integration into the IA. At first, Kurds were reluctant to integrate *peshmerga* fighters into the national army. The prominent Kurdish ideology of highly ethnicized Kurdish nationalism¹⁰¹ inherently clashes with integration into an Arab dominated national military. According to a former US Army officer involved in the IA reconstruction process, Barzani worried that the United States was rebuilding the army too effectively and encouraged the Chief of Staff Babakir Zebari (a Kurd) to slow down the process.¹⁰² It was not until the summer of 2010 that an agreement was reached between Kurdish leaders and Maliki regarding the integration of four *peshmerga* brigades into the IA. This agreement would not have happened without American pressure on the Kurds, led by US General Ray Odierno.¹⁰³ However, this integration process failed and the Kurds accused the IA and Maliki of systematically discriminating against Kurdish soldiers and sidelining the Kurdish

⁹⁹ Shakhwan Mahmoud, "Sangawi: The Peshmerga Will Not be Integrated into the Iraqi Army," *Niqash* (blog), 22 January 2010, <http://www.niqash.org/articles/?id=2590> (last accessed 12 April 2015).

¹⁰⁰ Michael Knights, "What Iraq's Peshmerga Really Need," *Washington Institute for Near East Policy*, 7 August 2014, <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/what-iraqs-kurdish-peshmerga-really-need> (last accessed 13 April 2015); Anne Hagood, "The Peshmergas and the Future of the State," *Noria*, 21 January 2015, <http://www.noria-research.com/2015/01/21/the-peshmergas-and-the-future-of-the-state/> (last accessed 10 April 2015).

¹⁰¹ Denise Natali, "The Persistent Boundaries of Kurdish Nationalism," *World Politics Review*, 9 May 2012: 3.

¹⁰² Retired American Army Colonel in discussion with the authors, Washington DC, 24 February 2015

¹⁰³ Jane Arraf, "Iraqi Army trains Kurdish forces as part of U.S. integration plan," *Christian Science Monitor*, 23 August 2010, <http://www.mcclatchydc.com/2010/08/23/99558/iraqi-army-trains-kurdish-forces.html#storylink=cpy>, (last accessed 12 April 2015).

Chief of Staff.¹⁰⁴ The Second Division, in which the *peshmerga* forces were integrated, was stationed in Mosul and had internal divisions between Kurds and Arabs. This was one of the important reasons why Mosul fell to the Islamic State in June. There was no coherence between the Arab and Kurdish fighters, and they did not communicate with each other in battle. Ultimately, the Kurds opted to defend their territories rather than try to defend other communities' territories, such as the Yazidis and Christians east and west of the city of Mosul. Future attempts to integrate the *peshmerga* into the IA will fail unless the Kurds decide to cooperate and Baghdad addresses the real question of dual loyalties.

In conclusion, the reorganization of the Lebanese army was focused, pre-planned and to a large extent effective. Senior Lebanese officers had a clear vision of where the LAF should be heading in the aftermath of the civil war, and sought to apply their plans by keeping political intervention at a minimum through integration, education, and rehabilitation of reintegrated militiamen. They furthermore benefitted from Syrian support. On the other hand, the dismantling of the Iraqi army because it was seen as the custodian of Baathism and Arab nationalism deprived it of its most senior and experienced leadership. This conventional wisdom probably applied more to the Republican Guard and other special units than it did to the regular army, which Saddam had long ago marginalized out of distrust. He relied instead on special units within the army, such as the Republican Guards and the Special Republican Guards,¹⁰⁵ other security and intelligence services and the Baath Party militia because he did not trust the army's political loyalties.¹⁰⁶ The CPA and its Iraqi successor governments therefore might have drawn

¹⁰⁴ Burak Bilgehan Özpeck, "Democracy or Partition," 136.

¹⁰⁵ Saddam's trust of the Republican Guard was ill-placed to some extent; in the decades he ruled Iraq all the coups that were reported came from favored Sunni Arab tribes in the Republican or Special Republican Guard rather than the discredited regular armed forces.

¹⁰⁶ Zaid al-Ali, *The Struggle for the Future of Iraq*, Ch. 2, Section 4, Sub-Title 5, Paragraph 12.

from the general army, but instead chose an ill-considered plan to recruit a new force. Rather than act as a shield from politicization, the US in reality enabled it.

The Quota Question

Quotas at the officers level is of huge importance in multi-sectarian and multi-ethnic societies. Quotas essentially ensure that everyone gets a share of the national institution. In the officer corps they provide one of the most visible symbols of sectarian parity after conflict, promoting public perception of the army as a national institution and increasing its social license to operate.¹⁰⁷ According to McLaurin, sectarian quotas within the officer corps are often perceived to be *a* if not *the* means of politicization and but they are, in fact, measures that can help shield the army from politicization and civilian dominance.¹⁰⁸ However, it is the law-makers who impose quotas on the military when drafting national constitutions and laws, rather than the army commanders. As such, these necessary measures are within the hands of the same politicians who actively are competing for power and possibly for control of national security institutions. This was the case in Iraq post-2003, for example, and Lebanon pre-1990.

In pre-1975 Lebanon, the widely held perception of the LAF as a markedly Maronite institution reflected Maronite ambitions and Muslim distrust more than it did the actual sectarian composition of the institution. Lebanese politicians ultimately conceded the importance of institutionalizing sectarian quotas within the officer corps (a 50 percent parity between Christians and Muslims) of the soon to be rebuilt LAF.¹⁰⁹ This is one of the main factors that contributed to the rise of the LAF's image as a 'supra-religious' institution in Lebanon.¹¹⁰ Because of the

¹⁰⁷ Florence Gaub, "Rebuilding Armed Forces," 18-9.

¹⁰⁸ Ronald D. McLaurin, "From Professional to Political," 564, ft. 2.

¹⁰⁹ Oren Barak showed that sectarian parity had, in fact, already been achieved by the time it was institutionalized. Institutionalization of this parity in the Ta'if agreement, however, helped rebuild public trust in the Lebanese army (See Oren Barak, "Towards a Representative Military?").

¹¹⁰ Gaub, "Rebuilding Armed Forces," 10.

sectarian quota within the officer corps, all communities are represented and no one community is dominant, preventing subnational capture of the institution.

On the other hand in Prime Minister Maliki's Iraq, the image of the Iraqi Army suffered from the hegemonic influence of the Shi'a community within the military establishment. When the IA fragmented in June 2014, it was widely perceived by the population as a Shi'a army. This was due to Maliki's politicized recruitment process at the officers' level which frequently disregarded the de-Baathification law. Officially, Article 9 of the Iraqi constitution notes that the Iraqi military "will be composed of the components of the Iraqi people with due consideration given to their balance and representation without discrimination or exclusion."¹¹¹ At no point does it specify how the military will reflect society (equally or proportionally) and at no point does it lay out a quota. Cadets are meant to be selected in an "ethnically fair" manner by a multi-ethnic board according to General Secretariat Instruction 07/30797 (2008). According to Florence Gaub, in practice the board creates a divide with 60 percent Shi'a Arabs, 20 percent Sunni Arabs, and 18 percent Kurds (reflecting the assumed proportions in Iraqi society at large).¹¹²

The experience of Lebanon shows that quotas can be helpful in promoting the unity of the army and gaining a social license to operate. However, as the experience of Iraq shows, quotas are not enough to shield the military institution from the possibility of being dominated by a powerful party, especially when it used to protect the individuals in power rather than the state.

Promotion and Appointments

¹¹¹ The National Constitution of the Republic of Iraq, Article 9, http://www.iraqnationality.gov.iq/attach/constitution_ar.pdf (Last Accessed 10 April 2015).

¹¹² Florence Gaub, "Rebuilding Armed Forces," 10. This statement, however, conflicts with the 2010 statement of the Secretary General of the Peshmerga Forces, Mahmoud al-Sangawi, who claimed Kurds were only 8 percent (see Mahmoud, "Sangawi: The Peshmerga Will Not be Integrated into the Iraqi Army").

Political influence in the military can “lead to appointments and promotions motivated not by merit but by favoritism, which in turn would make allegiance to such influential persons rational on the part of the soldiers.”¹¹³ The desire for loyalty in multi-sectarian and multi-ethnic armies often prompts politicians to encourage an officer corps dominated by one sect in order to avoid the “Trojan horse” or “fifth column” phenomenon. However, research (and the Iraqi experience during the Iran-Iraq War)¹¹⁴ shows that, given an opportunity for upward mobility, sectarian minorities will fight for the nation.¹¹⁵ If the promotion process becomes politicized, however, this process could constitute the most destabilizing force on the military institution. Regardless of the existence of quotas at the officer corps, politicians could still capture the promotion process within the military and appoint officers that are within their patronage networks to lead army units. Amine Gemayel’s intervention at this level during his presidential term between 1982 and 1984, was the main reason why the newly-rebuilt LAF fragmented once again.¹¹⁶

In the case of Lebanon, the Army Commander (AC) is appointed by the cabinet of ministers through a voting process that has to be attended by the President. According to Article 65 of the Lebanese constitution, the AC can only be appointed if two-thirds of the cabinet agree on a single candidate.¹¹⁷ This appointment by consensus provides the necessary political backup to the new appointee. Moreover, the national constitution assigns the task of appointing LAF commanders to a military committee headed by the AC. This committee is formed by six members representing different sects in the country, and it selects candidates for commanding

¹¹³ Anne-Marie Baylouny, “Building an Integrated Military,” 243.

¹¹⁴ Yitzhak Nakash, *The Shi’is of Iraq*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 138.

¹¹⁵ Alon Peled, *A Question of Loyalty*, 172-3.

¹¹⁶ Oren Barak, *The Lebanese Armed Forces*, 82-6.

¹¹⁷ The National Constitution of the Republic of Lebanon, <http://www.presidency.gov.lb/Arabic/LebaneseSystem/Documents/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF%D8%B3%D8%AA%D9%88%D8%B1%20%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%84%D8%A8%D9%86%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%8A.pdf> (Last Accessed 2 April 2015).

positions through a voting process.¹¹⁸ The candidate who receives the majority of votes will be appointed to his new position as soon as the president issues a decree which the prime, defense and finance ministers have to sign. Although this leaves a window of opportunity for politicians to maneuver, the ultimate decision lies within the military institution. The AC can simply appoint whoever he wants by a *note de service* that is renewed each time, until the presidential decree is finally signed by all involved parties. This is in fact what is currently happening in Lebanon, since the parliament has failed to elect a new president for the country.¹¹⁹

As noted in the previous section, the Syrians provided the political buffer that the LAF leadership needed to promote and appoint leaders according to merit rather than political will, despite protests from Lebanese civilian leaders. Top commanders were chosen by the military council, the president, and the government, thereby protecting the leadership from internal politicization. However, the top military positions were generally held by pro-Syrian officers either by Syrian mandate or general practice,¹²⁰ to the extent that one Lebanese political analyst referred to the post-Civil War Lebanese army “Syria’s army.”¹²¹ Certainly not all of the top leadership was pro-Syrian at heart - at least one submitted a national defense strategy designed to defend against Syrian invasion¹²² - but coordination with the Syrian military and the LAF’s apolitical stance in the face of Syrian hegemony at the very least gave a perception of pro-Syrian tendencies in the top leadership. Despite this, the LAF refused to crack down on anti-Syrian protests in 2005, suggesting that the Syrians were not able to fully politicize or fully control the LAF. Instead, their political buffer helped shield it from political capture.

¹¹⁸ Retired Lebanese Army General in discussion with authors, Washington DC, 8 April 2015.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Anne-Marie Baylouny, “Building an Integrated Military,” 249.

¹²¹ Lebanese journalist and analyst in discussion with authors, Beirut, 2 January 2015.

¹²² Retired Lebanese Army general in discussion with authors, Beirut, 3 January 2015

In Iraq, political deadlock and structural differences enable the level of politicization to reach higher levels. To begin with, there is no Army Commander in Iraq. Instead, the Commander-in-Chief of the IA is constitutionally the Prime Minister in order to optimize civilian control over the military. Nominally, the Minister of Defense (with parliamentary oversight) appoints commanders. Maliki did not name a defense or an interior minister and the Council of Ministers was unable to/never exercised this authority, allowing Maliki to create a chain of command loyal to him. He instituted the Office of the Commander-in-Chief (OCINC) in 2007 ostensibly to facilitate coordination between the Iraqi armed forces and the Prime Minister, under whose authority the office functions. In practice, Maliki used the OCINC to politicize the army and make his regime “coup-proof,”¹²³ much like Saddam early in his regime. An extra-constitutional body, the OCINC operated without any legal regulations, allowing Maliki to appoint his preferences based on personal loyalty.¹²⁴ As British scholar Toby Dodge noted, “when faced with a fractured political elite consumed with infighting and self-enrichment, Maliki set about building a network of influence and patronage that would bypass the cabinet and link the prime minister directly to those generals [...] who were exercising state power below ministerial level, in effect building a shadow state.”¹²⁵ While Maliki may have intended the office to sidestep deadlocked politicians and encourage centralized security in a time of chaos, its effects heavily politicized the IA and weakened the military in the long-term.

Maliki used his power to appoint Shi’a as commanders, the most visible level of the officer corps. Out of fourteen commanders appointed in April 2013, eleven were Shi’a, two Sunni Arab (one of whom was a staunch Maliki loyalist), and one a Kurd.¹²⁶ This highly visible

¹²³ Toby Dodge, “Iraq’s Road Back to Dictatorship,” *Survival* 54, no. 3 (June-July 2012), 152.

¹²⁴ Marisa Sullivan, “Maliki’s Authoritarian Regime,” 11-19.

¹²⁵ Toby Dodge, “Iraq’s Road Back to Dictatorship,” 151.

¹²⁶ Marisa Sullivan, “Maliki’s Authoritarian Regime,” 18.

politicization at the commanders' level affected both public perception of the Army and internal army morale.

In a further consolidation of power, Maliki in April 2007 transferred the Counter Terrorism Services (CTS) from the Ministry of Defense (MoD) to the authority of the prime minister's office. CTS retained its control of the Counter Terrorism Command (CTC), even though it was still technically under MoD authority. Maliki was consequently able to use the CTC to conduct secret operations that would strengthen his position in the Iraqi system.

Although Iraqi legislators tried to put an end to the CTS in 2008, their internal political divisions kept them from forwarding a counter-terrorism bill in the parliament before the end of the parliament's term in 2009.¹²⁷ This enabled Maliki to further politicize the security institutions as lawmakers failed to provide oversight on security institutions. For instance, prior to the March 2010 national parliamentary elections, Maliki sent the Counter Terrorism Forces (CTF) to detain several his political opponents in Diyala province. Three managed to flee except one, Najm Abdullah al-Harbi, who was detained under charges of harboring terrorist fighters in 2006. Although al-Harbi won his election by earning the second-highest number of votes,¹²⁸ he was still detained and his victory was cancelled.

As Maliki consolidated his authoritarian powers over the security institutions in Iraq, US officials proved unable to influence him in his major appointments. Aware of the damage that OCINC was creating, the US managed to shrink its size but was unable to influence the staff selection process. Its efforts to insert an advisor into the office were also rejected. Furthermore, despite identifying sectarian personnel within OCINC who had participated in violent and probably illegal activities, US officials were unable to detain senior Iraqi officials because they

¹²⁷ Maliki also stripped parliament of its right to propose legislation at this time.

¹²⁸ "Loose Ends: Iraq's Security Forces Between US Drawdown and Withdrawal," *International Crisis Group*, Middle East Report No. 99 (26 October 2010), 13-7.

needed Maliki's authorization, and he dismissed all claims. This inability to influence either the appointment of competent officers or the oversight processes added to the frustration felt by US officials with their failure to reform Iraqi national security institutions.¹²⁹ In the aftermath of the June 2014 disaster, when the Iraqi army disintegrated at Mosul, a former Multinational Force Division Commander from 2007-2008, retired Army Lt. Gen. Mark Hertling, noted that Maliki had been "replacing good Sunni and Kurdish commanders with less capable Shi'a officers with ties to the Maliki government" for years.¹³⁰ The US knew about the problem, he said, it just did not take effective action against it. As early as 2009, a retired Iraqi Army Major General warned that US passivity in this regard would cause problems.¹³¹ The US presence in effect enabled politicization at the promotion level.

Contrary to the US role, Iran's efforts to shape the security institutions in Iraq left their mark. With the collapse of Saddam's regime in April 2003, Iran was able to use its influence with Iraqi militias it had organized and trained in exile in Iran to plan operations intended to remove those who had fought against it, including a series of assassination attempts against Iraqi intelligence officials working for the Iraqi National Intelligence Service (INIS) and, according to some Iraqi military sources, the assassinations of Iraqi pilots active in the 8-year war. Iraqi intelligence authorities intercepted the Iranian attempts as early as 2004, when INIS's former chief, Mohammad al-Shahwani, openly accused Iran of responsibility for the assassination of eighteen of his officers. Shahwani even accused the Badr Corps, now embedded in the Ministry of the Interior, of working for Iran and conducting the killings.¹³² The Badr Brigade, the militia

¹²⁹ Gordon & Trainor, *The End Game*, Ch. 19, Section 3.

¹³⁰ Jeff Schogol, "Former US commander: Iraqi government undermined its military," *AirForceTimes* (18 June 2014) <http://www.airforcetimes.com/article/20140618/NEWS08/306180058/Former-U-S-commander-Iraqi-government-undermined-its-military> (last accessed, 12 April 2015).

¹³¹ Najim al-Jabboury, "Iraqi Security Forces," 2.

¹³² Ned Parker, "Iraqi spy chief accuses Badr militia of killing agents," *Middle East Online* (14 October 2004) <http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=11578> (last accessed, 17 March 2015).

of the Shi'a Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), was "integrated" into the Iraqi police after returning from exile. Shahwani claimed in 2009 that as many as 290 of his officers were killed since 2004, while George Friedman's think-tank STRATFOR claims the number had reached nearly 500 by 2012.¹³³ Nonetheless, despite extensive - but ineffective - US support to INIS, Maliki's attempts to contain and weaken Shahwani ultimately succeeded and he was forced to resign in 2009. After that, Maliki's favorite intelligence agency, the Ministry of State for National Security (MSNS) grew in influence and size. The Iranian role in the systematic assassination of INIS officers had an indirect but deep impact in dismantling an institution that witnessed the resignation and exile of several of its senior officers out of fear of Iranian-ordered assassination.¹³⁴

To conclude, the processes of promotion and appointments can offer fertile ground for politicization both by internal and external actors. External enabling of political manipulation by US passivity or neglect and Iranian direct involvement in the targeting of anti-Iranian intelligence officers allowed Maliki the opportunity to thoroughly politicize the leadership and adversely affect the military and intelligence service's effectiveness. Maliki's unchecked ambition to create a shadow command structure, enabled in part by political deadlock in the Iraqi parliament and his position as Commander-in-Chief, did not facilitate a sense of merit in the army and lowered military morale and coherence. On the other hand, a Syrian political buffer, the position of the Army Commander approved by two-thirds of the Lebanese Cabinet, and the use of a multi-ethnic council to appoint commanders within the army structurally shielded the LAF from politicization.

¹³³ "Maliki takes over Iraqi security services," *United Press International* (8 October 2012) http://www.upi.com/Top_News/Special/2012/10/08/Maliki-takes-over-Iraqs-security-services/66651349712904/ (last accessed, 17 March 2015).

¹³⁴ David Ignatius, "Iraq's Iranian Connection," *Washington Post* (25 August 2009) <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/08/24/AR2009082402491.html> (last accessed, 18 April 2015).

Breaking Points

The effects of politicization during the reconstruction process can be seen most evidently in two recent crises each: in Lebanon when Sunni militants overran the border city of Arsal on 2 August 2014,¹³⁵ and in Iraq when ISIS militants captured the city of Mosul in northwest Iraq in June 2014. Both attacks were the result of the external conflict in Syria but had strong ties to intense sectarian debates within the countries. As such, they represented both internal and external challenges to the separate forces.

In the case of Lebanon, Sunni militants attacked and took the city of Arsal through the mountainous borders that separate Lebanon from Syria after the LAF's arrest of two high-profile al-Qaeda members in Lebanon. The attack took the LAF by surprise, and as a consequence the terrorist groups were able to overtake the city and the army posts and kidnap a dozen Lebanese soldiers and policemen. Within the next few days, however, the LAF successfully launched a counter-offensive on the city, retook it, and chased the militants back into Syria. LAF unity was strengthened when news emerged that some of the kidnapped officers and soldiers had been brutally killed by the fleeing terrorist groups.

While an external attack, the Arsal battle reflected internal debates amongst the Lebanese about Shi'a Hezbollah actions in Syria and Sunni ties to rebel Syrian groups. As a contentious political issue, Arsal posed a risk of sectarian division within the LAF.¹³⁶ Nonetheless, the LAF's unity throughout the battle is largely a reflection of its professional, apoliticized status. While some may claim that the LAF cannot be considered a success simply because it has not failed

¹³⁵ Rakan al-Fakih, "Army vows to finish Arsal battle in 48 hours," *The Daily Star* (4 August 2014) <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2014/Aug-04/265976-army-vows-to-finish-arsal-battle-in-48-hours.ashx> (last accessed, 12 April 2015).

¹³⁶ Lebanese journalist and analyst in discussion with the authors, Beirut, 2 January 2015.

yet, its actions in Aarsal - and later in Tripoli¹³⁷ - suggest its national character and unity can survive when faced with sectarian-tinged threats due in large part to its apoliticized nature.

In Iraq, ISIS led an offensive to capture the city of Mosul after a steady campaign that began the previous December in Fallujah. In the six months between the capture of Fallujah and Mosul, ISIL had conquered one-third of Iraq, mostly in uncontested areas of predominantly Sunni Arab Anbar Province. Mosul fell within hours because the army fragmented and fled without a shot fired. Mosul represented the ultimate failure of the IA's rebuilding, and proved devastating to Iraq's unity. Analysts have since provided many explanations for the 2nd Division's collapse. Some argue that the IA's failures were primarily technical and refer to the IA's light infantry characteristics, lack of heavy weapons and logistical challenges.¹³⁸ Other analysts point to the poor relationship between the local population in Mosul and Fallujah and IA personnel. It is said that 2nd Division soldiers lacked discipline and were corrupt, much like their officers. Instead of supporting reform efforts, they claim Maliki contributed to the defeat by ignoring warnings of the coming danger and appointing a corrupt commander in 2012 to replace one who had tried and failed to discipline the soldiers and their officers.¹³⁹ All these factors combined together to deprive the 2nd Division of the manpower and unit cohesion it desperately needed to confront the ISIS advance. The damaging effects of politicization, particularly in the realm of appointments and promotion, were clearly apparent after Mosul's fall.

¹³⁷ Antoine Amrieh, "Army restores order, militant leaders on the run," *The Daily Star* (28 October 2014) <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2014/Oct-28/275598-army-restores-order-militant-leaders-on-the-run.ashx> (last accessed, 12 April 2015).

¹³⁸ Princy George, "Why has the Iraqi army struggled to counter ISIL advance?" *IHS Jane's Intelligence Review* (15 June 2014) <http://www.janes.com/article/39259/analysis-why-has-the-iraqi-army-struggled-to-counter-isil-advance> (last accessed, 3 December 2014).

¹³⁹ Yasir Abbas & Dan Trombly, "Inside the Collapse of the Iraqi Army's 2nd Division," *War on the Rocks* (1 July, 2014) <http://warontherocks.com/2014/07/inside-the-collapse-of-the-iraqi-armys-2nd-division/> (last accessed, 20 February 2015).

The ISIS threat presented the first defeat of its kind to the IA after the US withdrawal, but deep structural politicization would likely have caused a collapse of unity had a different threat presented itself at a different time.¹⁴⁰ ISIS benefited from the sympathy of the Sunni Arab community in Iraq in order to stage its attack, which in turn helped it secure a swift victory and discouraged Sunni soldiers fighting within the IA. Many Sunni Arabs supported ISIS's move because they had grown disillusioned from the discriminatory policies of the central government and feared further marginalization.¹⁴¹ Furthermore, many hoped that ISIS would march to Baghdad, rout Maliki, and reimpose their strong presence in the Iraqi political system after nearly a decade of exclusion. ISIS made these promises to the local population before it staged its attack in order to win their support.¹⁴² Broken promises notwithstanding, ISIS' victory divided Iraqi society even as it fragmented the Iraqi military.

Conclusion

After years of debilitating internal and external sectarian-tainted conflict in Lebanon and Iraq, both countries needed to rebuild a national army under the auspices of an occupying power. While differences exist between the two countries - notably in the history of civil-military relations, the perceived legitimacy of the occupying force, and the operating environment of the rebuilding process - there nevertheless remains rich ground for comparison. Both countries have strong subnational identities that have become linked over time with political identities and both operate under implicit or explicit constitutional political systems. An examination of Lebanon

¹⁴⁰ Interview with a Lebanese journalist, Beirut, 2 January 2015.

¹⁴¹ A key disappointment for Sunnis was the failure of the Prime Minister and the Ministries of Defense and the Interior to integrate Sunni militia fighters who helped defeat al-Qaida in the 2006-2007 Sunni Awakening (Sahwa) into either the security or the military forces as promised. Future attempts at a "new Sunni Awakening" must address this failure and the sense of abandonment many Sunni Awakening leaders felt after US withdrawal in 2011. See Guy Taylor, "Obama sends ex-general to Iraq to lobby Sunni tribes to join fight against Islamic State," *Washington Times* (1 October 2014) <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2014/oct/1/us-push-new-sunni-awakening-iraq/#ixzz3Xn6RP8OU>, (last accessed, 18 April 2015).

¹⁴² Iraqi refugees from Mosul in discussion with the authors, Jounieh, Lebanon, 7 January 2015.

and Iraq shows that politicization during the rebuilding process adversely affects army unity, quality, and coherence in multi-sectarian and multi-ethnic societies. This paper studied internal and external factors that shielded or enabled politicization in the army's ideology and reorganization. It found that in times of crisis, politicization throughout the rebuilding process directly contributed to army disintegration.

With the advent of ISIS - and the internal and external pressures to confront it - and the subsequent removal of Maliki as prime minister, Iraq has a unique window of opportunity to implement real change in its armed forces, just as Lebanon did immediately after the end of the Civil War. The next section will briefly examine the question, what's next for Iraq and Lebanon?

What's Next?

The fall of Mosul, the ultimate symbol of Iraq's subnational divisions, has fostered new national conversations and opened the door for army and military coordination in addition to debate about the political system and national reconciliation. As part of the national debate on the next steps to protect minorities in Iraq, new Prime Minister Haidar al-Abadi sent a draft law in February 2015 to the Council of Representatives proposing formation of a regional National Guard. The controversial bill would create a national police composed of local forces and answerable to both the provincial and the central government; it has been lauded by many Sunni politicians and tribal leaders as a necessary step toward national reconciliation¹⁴³ and condemned by others. Another law would in effect end de-Baathification except for the most serious crimes committed in the name of the party and government.¹⁴⁴ Passage of these laws by parliament might provide an opportunity for IA reorganization, downsizing, and de-politicization. Most

¹⁴³ "Iraqi cabinet approves draft law to set up national guard," *Reuters US Edition* (3 February, 2015) <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/02/03/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-guard-idUSKBN0L70ZT20150203> (last accessed, 5 April 2015).

¹⁴⁴ "Iraqi Cabinet OKs draft law to set up national guard," *Al Arabiya News* (3 February 2015) <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2015/02/03/Iraqi-Cabinet-OKs-draft-law-to-set-up-national-guard.html> (last accessed, 24 March 2015).

importantly, it might promote unity and coherence within the IA. It could also prompt a nationwide conversation about the type (mono-national or multi-ethnic) of federalism Iraq wishes to move toward. Failure to pass either law could result in further Sunni distrust of the central government.

Currently, Iraq is witnessing an increase in sectarian and ethnic violence from the same militias fighting ISIS, particularly in the Diyala and Salah al-Din provinces. Press reports describe massacres and atrocities committed by Shi'a militias against Sunni populations freed from ISIS control.¹⁴⁵ While Prime Minister Abadi claims authority over some Shi'a militias, his actual ability to control their actions remains to be seen. Meanwhile, Kurdish *peshmerga* forces, strengthened by US military aid, have used the opportunity provided by fighting ISIS to take *de facto* control over cities and disputed territories contested by Arabs and Kurds for decades.¹⁴⁶ If left unchecked, the rise of these phenomena will only strengthen ethnic and sectarian divisions.

Prime Minister Abadi has managed to make strides in the right direction. One of his earliest decisions was to abolish Maliki's OCINC, opening up the possibility for a return to parliamentary oversight.¹⁴⁷ This encouraging move suggests that Abadi is willing to make institutional changes for the good of the country. In fact, one current Iraqi general noted that Abadi does not have the same political aspirations as Maliki, indicating that he is capable of making reforms.¹⁴⁸ Though he is limited by the loyalists Maliki left behind, the current Iraqi

¹⁴⁵ For example, see Alice Fordham, "After Retaking Iraqi City, Shiite Militias Accused Of Targeting Sunnis," *National Public Radio* (7 April 2015) <http://www.npr.org/blogs/parallels/2015/04/07/398004441/after-retaking-tikrit-shiite-militias-accused-of-violence-against-sunnis> (last accessed, 17 April 2015); or Samantha Payne, "Shi'ite militia 'massacre 77 Sunni villagers' during Diyala offensive against Isis," *International Business Times* (30 January 2015) <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/iraq-shiite-militia-massacre-77-sunni-villagers-during-diyala-offensive-against-isis-1485859> (last accessed, 18 April 2015).

¹⁴⁶ For information on the contested city of Kirkuk, see Sheren Khalel and Matthew Vickery, "The Kurds are at demographic war with ISIS in Kirkuk," *Haaretz* (26 February 2015) <http://www.haaretz.com/news/world/.premium-1.644202> (last accessed, 18 April 2015).

¹⁴⁷ Michael Knights, *The Long Haul* (Washington DC: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2015), 17.

¹⁴⁸ Current Iraqi General in discussion with the authors, Washington DC, 6 February 2014

crisis may be dire enough to allow for real national consensus on important reforms. In this receptive environment, international recommendations may fall on open ears.

As the Syrian conflict enters its fifth year, its spillover continues to present an opportunity for renewed sectarian and ethnic violence, dysfunctional governance, politicized military and security services, and possible partition of Iraq and Syria. In Lebanon, where Syrian refugees continue to pour in through the border despite new laws, sectarian clashes will continue to test the LAF's unity. Whether its structure and ideology can withstand the test remains to be seen, but the LAF's apoliticized nature, and its refusal to be drawn into political battles, offers some hope as long as the Lebanese political groups continue to support its national identity and mission.

Recommendations

Iraq:

- *Create a post for an Iraqi Army Commander (AC).* The presence of an Army Commander is important in the case of Iraq in order to shield the army from political influence while keeping it under civilian oversight. The Iraqi parliament's failure to provide the necessary civilian oversight function over national security institutions allowed Maliki to directly control the IA. The army should be given the authority to appoint and promote military commanders, and the AC should be present and head a multi-sectarian and multi-ethnic military committee to oversee and implement this process, not the Prime Minister.
- *Emphasize a nationalist narrative in soldier training.* While a nationalist narrative and ideology comes in part from society as a whole, indoctrination on the importance of being a national institution rather than being a sectarian armed force could help the creation of a nationalist ideology in the military.

- *Enforce a sectarian quota in the officer corps (if no National Guard law passes).* Visible parity in the officer corps encourages a positive public perception of the military just as possibilities for upward mobility encourage minorities to fight for the nation as a whole. While there is a trade-off (it might entrench sectarianism in the armed forces), given the lack of trust in the national institution at the moment, a quota may improve civil-military relations.
- *Create new, mixed divisions.* Create new integrated divisions (including mixed Kurdish troops) to gradually replace the old divisions. After training, allow them to confront ISIS and engage in border control in order to develop their doctrine of responsibilities and improve popular perception of the military. Though a short-term trade-off exists in military effectiveness (the new units will be inexperienced), integration could go far in restoring national faith in the military.
- *Amend or cancel de-Baathification laws.* This will remove barriers to the return of professional officers from the pre-2003 era. A professional military alongside an integrated national leadership can help create a new nationalist ideology.

Lebanon:

- *Call for a National Dialogue on the Army's role in society and the state.* Due to its status as a national institution, criticism of the LAF has become taboo in Lebanese society, politics, and among the intelligentsia.¹⁴⁹ While national political support helps the LAF's social license to operate, the LAF risks becoming its own political actor in Lebanon.

¹⁴⁹ Lebanese academic and political analyst in discussion with the authors, Washington DC, 20 March 2015.

- *Resume discussions over a National Defense Strategy and include the Army Commander and representatives from Hezbollah.*¹⁵⁰ As a stakeholder in the defense structure of Lebanon, discussions over the future of the Lebanese National Defense Strategy should include the technical recommendations of the Army Commander. This will help the dialogue produce an achievable strategy.
- *Prevent LAF coordination with Syrian regime troops, particularly in the event of renewed terrorist clashes along the Syrian-Lebanese borders.* Visible coordination with one side or the other in the Syrian conflict will inflame internal tensions and threaten the LAF's coherence and social license to operate.
- *Recruit more soldiers to reflect the heavier operational load on the LAF.* The Syrian crisis has put increased strain on the LAF, forcing it to do more internal policing and border defensive operations. This has stretched the LAF thin, threatening its operations. Should a new National Defense Strategy add more responsibilities to the LAF, it will require more soldiers to perform its duties.¹⁵¹

USA:

- *Use political, economic and military leverage to encourage reforms in Iraq.* Iraq needs the United States to train and provide logistic support to its armed forces and to counter-balance Iranian influence, especially in the military. With the monetary support and military aid the US provides, it is uniquely positioned to encourage reforms in Iraq.
- *Remain engaged in Iraq.* US passivity in the face of Maliki's politicization of the army enabled him to assume direct control over the military and evade parliamentary demands

¹⁵⁰ The LAF has previously been excluded from these talks in even an advisory role. See Aram Nerguizian, "Lebanese Civil Military Dynamics: Weathering the Storm?"

¹⁵¹ Though the LAF rank and file has become increasingly Shi'a, many Sunnis are currently applying to the LAF, so an increase in recruitment should have a diverse pool to recruit from (Retired Lebanese Army General in discussion with the authors, Beirut, 5 January 2015).

for reform. The US must remain actively involved in the process of army reform under the Abadi administration and keep its promises to those joining the fight against ISIL.

- *Continue military support to the LAF.* The US Congress has been reluctant to provide the LAF with military aid for fear that it will wind up in the hands of Hezbollah. While a valid concern, complete disassociation with the LAF undermines US influence on the Army and weakens it in the face of regional dangers, risking a larger role for Hezbollah in Lebanon's security field.
- *Do not pressure the LAF to disarm, replace, or clash with Hezbollah.* The LAF is technically incapable of pursuing the armed group. Many Lebanese, not merely the Shi'a, consider the resistance movement to be the country's only effective defense against Israel. As such, any attempt to remove Hezbollah will inevitably spark civil tensions throughout the country.

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