IRAQ’S STABILITY AFTER A COMPLETE WITHDRAWAL OF U.S. TROOPS: A PREDICTIVE STUDY ON POSSIBLE RESPONSES BY OTHER MIDDLE EASTERN STATES

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IRAQ’S STABILITY AFTER A COMPLETE WITHDRAWAL OF U.S. TROOPS: A PREDICTIVE STUDY ON POSSIBLE RESPONSES BY OTHER MIDDLE EASTERN STATES

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by

Henry Hama

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my family. Without their patience, understanding, support, and most of all love, the completion of this work would not have been possible. As an active duty serviceman, it is a challenge balancing the time spent training in preparation for real world deployments, the time spent with each of my family members, and the time dedicated to graduate school work. My family has been behind every decision I have made both personally and professionally. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for being there for me.
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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

IRAQ’S STABILITY AFTER A COMPLETE WITHDRAWAL OF U.S. TROOPS: A PREDICTIVE STUDY ON POSSIBLE RESPONSES BY OTHER MIDDLE EASTERN STATES

By

Henry Hama

American Public University System, March 25, 2011

Charles Town, West Virginia

Dr. Jonathan Lockwood, Thesis Professor

This predictive study is an attempt to gauge Iraq’s stability with regard to the possible responses by other Middle Eastern States after a complete withdrawal of the United States (U.S.) and coalition troops from the country. There are risks of violence and destabilization, but committing U.S. troops indefinitely would have almost no impact on the underlying causes and escalating violence (Schneller 2010). On the contrary, a continued U.S. military presence would deter Iraqis from taking charge of their own country, the only long term solution to Iraq's problems, particularly with regard to security which is a domestic rather than an international issue. This study will examine available resources and similar research work on the progress of Iraq’s sovereignty and will employ the Lockwood Analytical Method of Prediction (LAMP). It will generate scenarios through the qualitative approach and test the scenarios through the quantitative approach by examining the various permutations of behavior. For this analysis, Iraq’s stability after the withdrawal of U.S. and coalition troops would be determined by both internal and external forces.
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Chapter I: Introduction

In 2008, American and Iraqi officials agreed that the United States would withdraw all of its military forces from Iraq by December 31, 2011. Shortly after taking office, President Obama announced the withdrawal of all combat brigades from Iraq. At the moment, approximately 50,000 U.S. troops remain in Iraq, down from the peak force of 171,000 in 2003 (Shakir et al 2011). Recently, Defense Secretary Robert Gates stated that the U.S. is willing to stay beyond the proposed deadline of December 31, 2011 and has been pushing Iraqis to make a decision on the offer soon. The Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman Admiral Mike Mullen agreed to the proposition and stated that the Iraqis had to make a decision promptly. While debate in the U.S. about whether American troops should remain in Iraq beyond the full pullout deadline has created controversy, Iraqis are currently engaged in a domestic political battle over whether to invite the Americans to stay (Shakir et al 2011).

Iraq's political background and current situation can be assessed as being in fair condition but likely to get worse, but there is nothing that the United States military can or should do to prevent this. Some political analysts have argued that the United States’ combat presence should be extended; elevating visions of renewed sectarian carnage, Arab-Kurd violence, and the lack of competent Iraqi security forces (ISF) as justification for renegotiating Washington's security agreement with Baghdad. There are risks of violence and destabilization, but committing United States troops indefinitely would have almost no impact on the underlying causes, and escalating violence. On the contrary, a continued United States military presence would deter Iraqis from taking charge of their
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own country, the only long term solution to Iraq's problems, particularly the country’s security, which is a domestic rather than an international issue (Schneller 2010). In addition, this study will attempt to confirm or deny the possibility of a “piranha-like feeding frenzy” as both Iraq and Iran seek revenge with the withdrawal of the United States military.

The National Alliance intended to unite the Rule of Law party with the Iraqi National Alliance in an undefeatable bloc, but has likewise wasted away its mandate by its failure to address the basic issue of who will lead the coalition. Nuri al-Maliki, the prime minister of Iraq, holds onto the premiership even as the country crumbles around him because of a lack of leadership. Death threats against party leaders continue, and at least three elected officials have already been assassinated since the last elections. If a new government is formed, it may exclude at least one of the main demographic groups: Kurds, Sunni, or Shia. The alternative of leaving out one or more parties may result in increased violence, but it may also lead to the development of a healthy opposition, able to credibly challenge the government when it acts illegitimately (Schneller 2010). The United States will not be emotionless in its withdrawal. With the remaining 47,000 support troops and 1,300 civilians and diplomats, it would do well to focus on getting the country electrified and supporting constitutional reform, things that Iraqis see as major stumbling blocks for economic and political development. Nothing would stabilize Iraq more than reliable electricity, which would allow business growth and employment of those who might otherwise join militias to support their families. Electricity would attract investment and make it possible for the oil and gas sectors to expand, increase refrigeration of vaccines and fresh food, benefit schools, and the population in general; it
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is no coincidence that major protests prompting the Electricity Minister to resign occurred in June, 2010 during the world-cup soccer tournament.

The delay in government formation both in 2005 and last year underscored the vital need to reform the constitution as well as the rest of the legal structure. The constitution's ambiguous, vague wording, written in haste and barely ratified in 2005, resulted in both Iraqiyya and the National Coalition claiming to have won the right to form the next government in the March elections. Without the laws, courts, and constitution for political and legal solutions, Iraqis will rationally choose violence as the most effective means to solve problems. The United States troops should, however, be withdrawn responsibly as their departure will have consequences for many Iraqis. According to United States Congressman Brad Sherman, ignoring those responsibilities would allow a human rights catastrophe to occur in Iraq (Schneller 2010).

With fewer United States bases, Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) will have a reduced number of targets and its presence there will likely diminish. After all, it has very few natural allies even among the Sunni Arab population. Iyad Allawi’s Iraqiyya party won a tiny advantage in the March 7, 2010 elections, but Allawi has wasted whatever mandate he had by failing to form a coalition with any of the other major political parties. His frequent travels to Sunni Gulf countries further alienate him from the Shia population. Congressman Brad Sherman’s statement on human rights catastrophe referred to the Mujahadeen-e-Khalq (MEK), about three thousand radical Iranians held in Camp Ashraf in Iraq, who opposes the Iranian government. Baghdad has no sympathy for the MEK because it assisted Saddam Hussein in suppressing Iraqi Shias and Kurds. In addition, MEK participated in the 1979 takeover of the U.S. Embassy in Tehran and so its
members, as designated terrorists, are not eligible for resettlement in the U.S. Camp Ashraf, however, postpones the inevitable and risks becoming another Guantanamo Bay. Even more desperate than the MEK are the estimated one hundred thousand Sahwa members, Sunni insurgents who initially fought against Americans in 2003-2004 but then cooperated with them against Al Qaeda from 2005-2008. Al Qaeda targets Sahwa members for betraying them; Shia militias despise them for working with the Americans, and the Shia government is reluctant to include the former insurgents in either the police or security forces. Like MEK, Sahwa insurgents do not qualify for resettlement in the United States; however, without Sahwa's assistance, U.S. forces would almost certainly have been defeated. Having signed a deal with Sahwa the United States has to uphold its end of the bargain by protecting the remaining members from being picked off by Al Qaeda or Shia militias.

**Purpose Statement**

This predictive study is an attempt to gauge Iraq’s stability with regard to the possible responses by other Middle Eastern States after a complete withdrawal of the United States and coalition troops from the country. There are risks of violence and destabilization, but committing U.S. troops indefinitely would have almost no impact on the underlying causes and escalating violence (Schneller 2010). On the contrary, a continued U.S. military presence would deter Iraqis from taking charge of their own country, the only long term solution to Iraq's problems, particularly with regard to security which is a domestic rather than an international issue.
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Statement of the Problem

Once American and coalition combat troops completely withdraw from Iraq, there is a possibility that Shia followers of Muqtada al Sadr would be deprived of their “favorite devil” and would lose relevance unless they can turn their energies to solving the country's electricity crisis and improving relations with Iraq’s Arab neighbors (Schneller 2010). This study will address the possibility that when U.S. and coalition troops, who are currently providing training and security throughout Iraq’s provinces, depart the theater of operations according to the withdrawal timeline which was agreed upon, there could be a “piranha-like feeding frenzy” as both Iraq and Iran seek revenge. Currently, there are political tensions between the two countries; Iraq’s interim government believes that Iran is doing everything in its capacity to destabilize progress in Iraq, whereas Iran believes that Iraq is allowing the United States to interfere with developments and spreading its influence in the Middle East. After the 2003 invasion of Iraq and oust of Saddam Hussein by the United States, most Sunni Baath Party members fled from their homes and sought refuge in Syria. A majority of Iraqi’s was displaced by sectarian violence which followed thereafter; most Shia Muslims sought refuge in Iran. The withdrawal of U.S. and coalition troops from Iraq will likely trigger an influx of Iraqis from neighboring countries, in an attempt to reclaim their land and homes. That influx could have the potential to cause a civil war within Iraq; raising the question of whether or not other Middle Eastern states will intervene to support the stability of Iraq or take advantage of the chaotic situation to promote their own agendas.
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**Theoretical Framework**

This study will examine available resources and other research work on the progress of Iraq’s sovereignty and will employ the Lockwood Analytical Method for Prediction (LAMP). It will generate scenarios through the qualitative approach and test the scenarios through the quantitative approach by examining the various permutations of behavior. For this analysis, Iraq’s stability after a complete withdrawal of U.S. and coalition troops would be determined by both internal and external forces. The objective of this study is to determine the stability of Iraq after a complete withdrawal of U.S. troops and the Department of State personnel. Within the methodology of the LAMP analysis, the responses or possible courses of action by the three Middle Eastern states, namely Iran, Syria, and Turkey will determine the stability of Iraq and will be considered as “scenarios” or the different situations from which the analyst is attempting to determine the most likely future. For Iraq’s stability, two major scenarios to be considered would be as follows:

1. Iraq continues to fully secure itself without any outside influence and remains on the path to democracy; Iran, Syria, and Turkey take no action or provide support to Iraq’s stability.

2. Iraq’s democratic government’s stability is derailed by Iran’s influence through Shia insurgency and the government fails to include Sunnis and Kurds resulting in the provocation of sectarian violence and eventually into a civil war OR Sunni insurgency ensues with the support from the Syrian Baath Party to overthrow the government thereby resulting in a civil war.
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For the three actors, Iran, Syria, and Turkey, the following scenarios will be considered:

1. Each of the three actors contributes to Iraq’s stability by cooperating with Iraq’s government in an effort to achieve full democracy.
2. Each of the three actors goes against Iraq’s current government to derail the country’s stability.

Each scenario posed by the effects of a complete withdrawal of U.S. troops would produce a very different future and very different responses from each of the three interested state actors. In order to effectively predict the most likely future, there now must be an analysis of all possible permutations of actions by the interested actors related to the two possible scenarios stated.

Significance of the Study

Selection of this topic is based on the fact that Iraq’s political background seems to be deteriorating and will likely get worse in the years to come, but there is nothing that the United States military or other coalition forces can or should do to prevent this. Others argue that the combat presence should be extended; bringing up visions of renewed sectarian carnage, Arab-Kurd violence, and the lack of competent Iraqi security forces as justification for renegotiating the security agreement between Iraq and the United States. Nearly 4,500 Americans have been killed in Iraq since the war began in 2003; despite the limited American role there now, U.S. troops are still dying in combat related situations. According to various news reports, the United States has spent trillions of dollars fighting wars and swelling the nation's security apparatus because of the former
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al Qaeda leader Osama Bin Laden. Keeping troops for an indefinite period in Iraq will only continue to add to that debt; it is unclear what purpose a continued U.S. presence would serve (Shakir et al 2011). Literatures will be accessed from the American Military University online library and the Military Intelligence Library at the United States Army Intelligence Center of Excellence (USAICoE) at Fort Huachuca, Arizona.

Chapter II: Literature Review

The literature review for this study focuses on the future of Iraq after a reduction and the eventual withdrawal of U.S. troops, and shared objectives between Syria and Iran since the 2003 invasion. In addition, the review addresses the current reports of progress for Iraq and the projected outcomes and statistics as the country thrives to regain its momentum and re-establish the pre-war gains that it had experienced under Saddam Hussein’s rule. There are signals of concern with regard to the future of Iraq such as the sentiments of the Ba’athist exiles in Syria, as most of those individuals were targeted during the fall of Baghdad in 2003. Many are believed to have been waiting for an opportunity to return to their land which they lost during the United States’ military invasion which ousted of Saddam Hussein’s regime.

The Future of Iraq after the Reduction and the Complete Withdrawal of U.S. Troops

In *The reality in Iraq and the 2011 withdrawal deadline*, Arango and Adnan (2010) assessed that the reality in Iraq may defy the 2011 withdrawal deadline because many American and Iraqi officials deem the American presence to be in each nation's
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interest. Even as that deadline was negotiated, a longer lasting, though significantly smaller presence of American forces had always been considered to be likely. At the moment, six months after national elections, there is still no Iraqi government to begin talking about what any post 2011 arrangement might entail. But many Iraqi officials deem it quietly necessary on a number of fronts: Iraq is buying more and more sophisticated American weapons, like tanks and warplanes, and will need Americans for training and maintenance. At the same time, training is intensifying for the Iraq Army to learn not only how to battle internal insurgents, but also how to protect its national borders, a project that will take many years.

A sustained American presence at relatively low cost could prevent Iraq, a country with a long and violent history of coups and tyranny, from slipping back into civil war. Iraq's leaders face a public that wishes to be free of the American military's grip, but the deficiencies of the country's armed forces are obvious. Hoshyar Zebari, Iraq's foreign minister acknowledged that Iraq will not be able to defend itself against foreign aggression for a long time. Currently the Iraqi Army is transitioning from a counterinsurgency fight to a national defense army, like a normal army, to defend from external threats; therefore it can be assessed that Iraq is vulnerable to external threats.

In his article, *The future of Iraq after a reduction of American troops*, Mulloy (2010) highlighted the statement made by Congressman Dennis Kucinich (D-OH) in response to President Obama's speech from the Oval Office regarding the future of Iraq; he acknowledged that the president is rightly celebrating that less American troops are in harm's way. It can be assessed that lowering of the number of troops in Iraq does not diminish the United States’ financial or resource commitment to the country. Fifty
thousand non-combat troops will remain in Iraq but that number does not include the State Department’s plan to double the amount of mercenaries through next year, whose only loyalty is to the highest bidder and to fortify numerous enduring presence posts throughout the country. This fortification will include the recent State Department’s request for Black Hawk helicopters, mine-resistant ambush-protected (MRAP) vehicles, and advanced surveillance systems; such a substantial reliance on mercenaries amounts to a privatization of war.

The U.S. will continue to spend billions of dollars in Iraq with absolutely nothing to show for it. Two weeks ago, one of the most influential Iraqi bishops Chaldean Auxiliary Bishop Shlemon Warduni of Baghdad mentioned that U.S. combat troops were leaving the country in worse shape than they found it; during the same period, a series of coordinated attacks in 13 cities throughout the country killed and wounded dozens of people.

With no American soldiers to defuse sectarian tensions in northern Iraq, it will be up to American diplomats in two new $100 million outposts to head off potential confrontations between the Iraqi Army and Kurdish Pesh Merga forces. Gordon (2010), in Replacing American soldiers with State Department employees, described that by October 2011, the State Department will assume responsibility for training the Iraqi police, a task that will largely be carried out by contractors. To protect the civilians in a country that is still home to insurgents with Al Qaeda and Iranian-backed militias, the State Department is planning to double its private security guards, to as many as 7,000 according to administration officials who disclosed new details of the plan. Defending five fortified compounds across the country, the security contractors would operate radars...
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to warn of enemy rocket attacks, search for roadside bombs, fly reconnaissance drones and even staff quick reaction forces to aid civilians in distress.

The Department of State has never operated on its own, independent of the U.S. military, in an environment that is quite as threatening on such a large scale. It can be assessed that the absence of U.S. troops might actually bolster threat groups that are currently operating in Iraq. There is a possibility that neighboring states, Iran, Syria, and Turkey will also take advantage to advance their agendas in Iraq. The number of violent incidents is significantly down, the competence of Iraqi security forces is significantly up, and politics has emerged as the basic way of doing business in Iraq. If that trend continues, it would create a much better context for dealing with the very significant and serious problems that remain in Iraq.

Shared Objectives between Syria and Iran since the 2003 Invasion of Iraq

England (2009), in his article, *Sentiments of the Ba’athist exiles in Syria*, described sentiments of the Ba’athist exiles in Syria, Sunnis who had served under Saddam Hussein, following the announcement that U.S. troops were leaving Iraq; they described the U.S.’ departure as freeing their homeland from slavery. Iraqi officials blamed the Ba'athists and Al-Qaeda for the recent series of bombings in Iraq, which killed more than 110 people. They alleged that those groups had received help from Syria and Saudi Arabia. Syria is an ally of Iran and supporter of Hezbollah, the Lebanese militant group, and the Hamas, the Palestinian Islamist movement. Refugees with political links to the Sunni insurgency hinder cross-border diplomacy between Iraq and Syria; at least one million Iraqis have taken refuge in Syria since the 2003 U.S.-led
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invasion of Iraq. Many are ordinary refugees, families who fled for their lives as violence engulfed their nation; but others are former Ba'athists who served under Saddam Hussein with ties to the Sunni insurgency in Iraq. This is an issue that has tarnished relations between Damascus and Baghdad, with Nouri al Maliki, the Iraqi prime minister, demanding the deportation of dozens of Iraqi Ba'athists back to their home country to face charges. Damascus, however, insists the Ba'athists are political refugees who are causing no harm. A Syrian official also pointed out that when Mr Maliki was enjoying Syrian hospitality during his own time in exile, he was not handed over to Saddam.

The dispute escalated in August after two truck bombs rocked Baghdad and killed over 100 people; Maliki lashed out at Damascus, claiming that Syria was hosting Iraqi insurgents responsible for the blasts even though an Al-Qaeda-linked group claimed responsibility. It can be assessed that the drawing down of U.S. combat troops in Iraq might be taken as an opportunity by the Sunni insurgents hiding out in Syria to change the dynamics in Iraq; U.S. combat operations had kept those threat groups on the run; it can be perceived that many of those insurgents have the desire to return to their homeland once U.S. forces depart.

Mattair (2010), in his article Resentment of occupation as one motive for insurgency argued that announcement of imminent withdrawal would enable Iraqi leaders to cooperate, make Iraqis less hospitable to insurgents and it would lead to improvements in unit cohesion and motivation in Iraq’s security forces. He also argued that the U.S. presence is not a stabilizing factor; while violence would continue if the U.S. troops withdrew, Americans would no longer be morally or legally responsible. While the U.S. global strategic posture would be hurt by rapid withdrawal, this could be minimized by
calling it redeployment and coupling it with generous reparations and reconstruction aid. Mattair described the U.S. global strategic posture as already being eroded by its military presence in Iraq. Resentment of occupation is one motive of the insurgents, and the lack of a timetable for withdrawal has fueled it over the years. He continued by stating that the occupation has eroded the military strength, respect and international goodwill the United States enjoyed after 9/11. The war was certainly based on poor policy making, if not deception and lies. The get-out-now arguments are, however, optimistic and speculative.

It is not clear that rapid withdrawal will foster compromise, diminish the insurgency, improve security forces or promote reconstruction, particularly when sectarian and ethnic competition for power is another motive for the insurgency. It is also not clear that withdrawal would be followed by regional restraint and allows the United States to repair its strategic posture. Getting out now would be the best option for the U.S. forces dying and being wounded in Iraq, but it is not clear that it would be best for the U.S. national interests that have been challenged by the war, namely the deterrence of adversaries, the free flow of oil, and the protection of friends. Mattair’s arguments and comments are essential in predicting the roles Iraq’s neighboring states would assume following the complete withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq.

As the U.S. winds down its presence, there are signs that Syria and Iran are becoming rivals, with Shia Iran striving to maintain a strong religious Shia alliance in power, and Syria preferring a more secular government inclusive of the Sunni minority. Khalaf (2010), in *Shared objective between Syria and Iran since the 2003* described the relationship between Syria and Iran in a statement, indicating that Syria and Iran had shared the same objective since the 2003 U.S. invasion, to bog down American troops
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and ensure the Iraq adventure is never repeated in the region. In squeezing Iran, there are visible and invisible pressures; the most obvious tool is the growing raft of international sanctions. More quietly, western powers are waging another campaign, to distance Syria from its Iranian partner.

Summary

The hope of undermining a more than 30 year Syrian-Iranian alliance is not new. It was the argument that drove European powers and later the Obama administration to end Syria's international isolation in recent years. Despite little success, however, this policy is being pursued more vigorously. This time it brings in regional states, particularly Saudi Arabia, and involves offering Damascus generous benefits, namely the opportunity to widen its own influence in Iraq as U.S. troops depart, as well as in Lebanon. Iran and Syria have been partners in supporting Hezbollah, with Damascus acting as the alleged conduit of weapons from Iran, and both using the group to exert pressure on Israel. In 2005, Syria was forced to end 30 years of sponsorship of Lebanon as it faced blame for the assassination of Rafiq Hariri, the former prime minister and Saudi ally.

It can be assessed that both Iran and Syria have interests in Iraq; with Syria vying for a government which includes a Sunni minority and Iran trying to capitalize on the current Shia dominating government of Iraq. Currently, there are 46,000 U.S. troops remaining in Iraq, down from the peak force of 171,000 in 2003 (Shakir et al, 2011). However, within the month of April 2011, Defense Secretary Robert Gates stated that the
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U.S. is "willing" to stay beyond the year's end deadline and pushed Iraqis to make a decision soon for the continued U.S. presence in Iraq, but within a support role.

Chapter III: Research Design

Introduction

There are other analytical models that can be used when conducting predictive studies, such as the Delphi Technique, the Analysis of Competing Hypotheses (ACH), and the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP). The Lockwood Analytical Method for Prediction (LAMP) will be employed in this study because of its suitability to international political predictions and processes. The LAMP adopts characteristics and processes of other predictive methods; its primary differentiation from other predictive methods is its recognition of the importance of “free will” on potential events (Lockwood & Lockwood, 1993). When dealing with political relations, each actor has an individual voice and at any given time can make a decision of “free will” which then changes the perception and behavior of other actors influenced by the original decision. The key to an effective predictive study using the LAMP is to understand the actors and perceptions of events in order to assess and compare the potential decisions each actor would undertake. The LAMP is organized for the express intention of determining possible future actions by forcing the analyst to account for the perceptions of all of the actors involved in the scenarios instead of focusing on one perspective and therefore only one set of potential “free will” choices and alternate futures.
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LAMP is a twelve step process, noticeably lacking in quantitative measures, and instead focuses on relative probability. Each step of the LAMP process requires a review of both the event which one is trying to predict as the most likely future as well as the perceptions of each actor involved in the event. The following steps of the LAMP process will be employed by the analyst:

Step 1 - Determine the issue for which one is trying to predict the most likely future.
Step 2 - Specify the national “actors” involved.
Step 3 - Perform an in-depth study of how each national actor perceives the issue in question.
Step 4 - Specify all possible courses of action for each actor.
Step 5 - Determine the major scenarios within which one will compare the alternate futures.
Step 6 - Calculate the total number of permutations of possible “alternate futures” for each scenario.
Step 7 - Perform a “pair-wise comparison” of all alternate futures to determine their relative probability.
Step 8 - Rank the alternate futures for each scenario from highest relative probability to the lowest based on the number of “votes” received.
Step 9 - Assuming that each future occurs, analyze each alternate future in terms of its consequences for the issue in question.
Step 10 - Determine the “focal events” that must occur in the present in order to bring about a given alternate future.
Step 11 - Develop indicators for the focal events.
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Step 12 - State the potential of a given alternate future to “transpose” into another alternate future (Lockwood & Lockwood, pp. 27-28).

Explanation of the LAMP

Studying the possible responses to the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq by the three potential states Iran, Syria and Turkey is adaptable to the LAMP process, in part because of the variety of perceptions of each of the interested actors. Doing a simple quantitative, cost-benefit analysis of the situation would unlikely determine how each state could be convinced to respond in a specific manner based on historical patterns of behavior or the “free will” decisions of the heads of state. Analyzing the potential behaviors of these three states is very useful to determine what provisions to be considered prior to the withdrawal of all U.S. combat troops from Iraq. There is always some concern related to any predictive study; while the LAMP attempts to address the concept of free will, it is almost impossible to visualize every variation of behavior by any individual actor, and better yet all three actors. Their behaviors can also be intertwined and often dependent on those of others. Similarly, while the LAMP method tries to incorporate the perceptions of each actor in order to effectively weigh potential decisions and possible futures, the inclusion of perception is only as effective as the analyst’s understanding of the perceptions. It is a possibility that the perceptions of Iran, Syria, and Turkey may be distorted either consciously or unconsciously based on personal education, experience, and or bias. Extensive research can aid in developing the perceptions of those actors through past and present behavior of each of these states. In addition there is a possibility that some steps may be omitted during the analytical
IRAQ’S STABILITY

process, making any conclusions questionable. The possibility of bias when conducting research should not be ruled out; however, conscious effort will be made to minimize biases associated with the conduct of this study.

Chapter IV: Methodology

Aactors and Perceptions (LAMP Steps 1 - 3)

Introduction

There are a few states in the Middle East that would attempt to take advantage of the situation in Iraq following the departure of U.S. troops, to either derail U.S. efforts while advancing their own agendas in the region or attempt to establish good rapport with Iraq for some selfish benefit. The states in question are Iran, Syria, and possibly Turkey. All those states would, in some form, way, or shape capitalize on Iraq’s instability to either establish or expand their dominance in the Middle East as well as to discredit the United States by ensuring that democracy fails in Iraq and conditions return to the pre-invasion period. The rest of the Middle Eastern states surrounding Iraq such Saudi Arabia, Jordan, United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Kuwait are considered stable and self-sustaining; and therefore are not deemed as threatening to the stability of Iraq. Assessment of those states has been purposely omitted from this predictive analysis.
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Iran

Economics

Iran's economy is marked by an inefficient state sector with reliance on the oil sector, which provides the majority of its government revenues (CIA FactBook, 2011). Most economic activity is controlled by the state; private sector activity is typically limited to small scale workshops, farming, and services. Price controls, subsidies, and other rigidities weigh down the economy, undermining the potential for growth in private sector. Significant informal market activity flourishes. The legislature recently passed President Mahmud Ahmadinejad’s bill to reduce subsidies, particularly on food and energy. The bill would phase out subsidies which benefit Iran's upper and middle classes the most over three to five years and replace them with cash payments to Iran's lower classes. This is the most extensive economic reform since the government elevated gasoline rationing in 2007. High oil prices in recent years have allowed Iran to greatly increase its export earnings, which accumulated to nearly $100 billion in foreign exchange reserves.

With Iran's oil export price from March to December 2009 averaging just $55 per barrel and with a slight decline in oil production over the past four years, the Iranian government is facing budget constraints, and Iran's foreign exchange reserves dipped to $81 billion at the end of 2009. Tehran formulated its 2009 budget to anticipate lower oil prices and has reduced some spending. Although inflation has fallen substantially because of lower oil prices, Iran continues to suffer from double digit unemployment and underemployment.
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Underemployment among Iran's educated youths has convinced many to seek jobs overseas, resulting in a significant "brain drain" (The CIA World Fact-book, 2011). Iran’s currency risk is assessed as stable though the Iranian Rial is expected to depreciate as Bank Markazi (the central bank) seeks to help non-oil exporters. The central bank will have to increase its level of intervention in the foreign-exchange market to avoid a widening of the spread between the official and black-market rates (EIU ViewsWire, 2011).

Figure 1: Iran: Country Risk Summary (EIU ViewsWire, 2011).

Politics

Formal political parties are a relatively new phenomenon in Iran and most conservatives still prefer to work through political pressure groups rather than parties; often political parties or coalitions are formed prior to elections and disbanded soon thereafter. A loose pro-reform coalition called the 2nd Khordad Front, which includes political parties as well as less formal groups and organizations, achieved considerable success in elections for the sixth Majles in early 2000. Groups that generally support the
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Islamic Republic: Ansar-e Hizbullah-Islamic Coalition Party (Motalefeh); Followers of the Line of the Imam and the Leader; Islamic Engineers Society; Tehran Militant Clergy Association (Ruhaniyat); active pro-reform student group: Office of Strengthening Unity (OSU); opposition groups: Baluchistan People's Party (BPP); Freedom Movement of Iran; Green Path Movement [Mehdi Karubi, Mir-Hosein Musavi; Marz-e Por Gohar; National Front; and various ethnic and Monarchist organizations; armed political groups that have been repressed by the government: Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan (KDPI); Jundallah; Komala; Mujahedin-e Khalq Organization (MEK or MKO); People's Fedayeen; People's Free Life Party of Kurdistan (PJAK)] (The CIA World Fact-book).

Currently, Iran’s supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khomeini, will seek to rein in his confrontational president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, but ongoing factional in-fighting within the regime could seriously hinder policymaking (EIU ViewsWire, 2011).

**National Security Concerns**

The primary reasons behind Iran potentially building a nuclear weapons program are related to Iranian national security. Iran is bordered by three former Soviet states, Turkmenistan, Armenia, and Azerbaijan, as well as Turkey, Iraq, Pakistan and Afghanistan. Currently the United States, a hated opponent of Iran, is in nominal control of both Afghanistan and Iraq. Pakistan is a nuclear state and while moderately friendly to Iran, holds the capability through its nuclear arsenal to coerce Iran if it chooses to. In this current environment, it is perhaps not surprising that Iran has entertained notions of its own nuclear weapons arsenal. Iran has historically felt as though they are the victims of a surrounding crowd of “expansionist aggressors” which include the Western states’ reliance on the oil reserves of the region and the influence of the United States on the
IRAQ’S STABILITY

Middle East region (Ziemke 2000). In light of the current geographic and military make-up of the Middle East region as well as Iran’s historic view of itself as a victim of the interests of outsiders, developing a nuclear weapons arsenal has some definite appeal for Iran (The CIA World Fact-book). In addition, Iran's lack of a maritime boundary with Iraq prompts jurisdiction disputes beyond the mouth of the Shatt al Arab in the Persian Gulf.

**Syria**

**Economics**

The Syrian economy is officially based upon the Socialist ideology defined in 1958, but some fields of economic activities allow private businesses. In November 1995 Syria and many other Middle Eastern and North African countries signed an agreement with the European Union to create a Mediterranean free trade zone by 2010. Syria is by many respects a poor country, and relies heavily on help from rich Arab states. The Syrian state handles foreign exchange, in addition to basic and vital industries like the oil refineries, most electricity plants and the railways. Some industries like large textile factories and many flour mills have the Syrian state as its owner. Private businesses dominate retail trade, although there are also consumer cooperatives in the larger cities. New laws allow private banks, but a private banking sector has not yet developed.

The Syrian trade union for industrial employees, the General Federation of Workers is a central player in the country's economy. Most other workers are organized in unions, but few play an equally strong role.
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Syria's oil industry has been developed into becoming the country's most important natural resource. Syria's production is large enough to allow exports, and the income here is now larger than for any other commodity (The CIA World Fact-book). The Syrian pound is loosely pegged to the International Monetary Fund’s (IMF) special drawing rights, but has suffered from slight black-market devaluation during current unrest. The Central Bank has sufficient foreign reserves to support the currency; however, banking is dominated by the state. Although private-sector and foreign-owned banks have grown in recent years, they still face operational restrictions (EIU ViewsWire, 2011).

![Figure 2: Syria: Country Risk Summary (EIU ViewsWire, 2011)](image)

Politics

Syria has a political system that is not democratic, and all power lies in the hands of the president, Bashar al-Assad. There are popular elections to the People's Assembly every four years. The largest group in this assembly is the National Progressive Front, which is led by the Ba'th Party. Assad holds total control over Syria through being in command of the Ba'th Party. Syria's constitution was introduced in 1973, and describes
IRAQ’S STABILITY

the country as democratic, popular and socialist. According to the constitution, only a Muslim can be president. The only groups allowed into Syrian politics are the socialists, the communists and the pan-arabists. Islamists have been strongly suppressed in the past, and remain outlawed. Following the death of long-time president Hafez al-Assad, and the takeover of his son, there has been some lifting on restrictions in Syria. Some political prisoners have been released from jail, and Assad has taken initiatives to ease control over both economy and information technology (The CIA World Fact-book). Despite widespread anti-regime unrest, Syria’s president Bashar al-Assad is likely to cling on to power in 2011-12, through heavy repression and some limited reforms. Syria's international relations have been damaged by the unrest, and further U.S. and EU sanctions are possible (EIU ViewsWire, 2011).

National Security Concerns

Several disputes make relations between Syria and Turkey uneasy. However, Syria's limited military potential and the alignment of Syrian forces on the Israeli front preclude any immediate threat along the 900-kilometer border between Turkey and Syria. Tensions in Syria are compounded by Turkey's control over distribution of the waters of the Euphrates River. Turkey's huge Southeast Anatolian Project, with its dams and hydroelectric plants, threatens to deplete Syria's water resources. In addition, Syria has a history of permitting hostile political movements, namely Armenian, Marxist, and Kurdish to conduct anti-Turkish operations from Syrian controlled territory in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley. To a considerable degree, the issues of access to water and Syria's support for the Kurdish insurgency are linked. To the extent that Turkey attempts to accommodate Syria on water sharing, Syria limits its backing of the Kurds. In December
IRAQ’S STABILITY

1993, the Syrian government took into custody the Kurdish rebel leader, Abdullah Ocalan, in what was seen as an attempt to strengthen Syria's hand in water negotiations (The CIA World Fact-book).

*Turkey*

*Economy*

Turkey appears as a country with several fragile economic sectors; it is an open question whether foreign investments, very important to the economic progress over recent years, will continue to find Turkey interesting, even safe. Economic growth has slowed down the last few years, and inflation seems to be climbing again. Still this is far below the levels of 1990's and early 2000's, when it could reach around 100% a year. 2007 figures were 10%. Economy on the level of ordinary Turks, have worsened in the last years, as inflation has been at the level of 100% or more, while normal wages have risen at a lower speed. There have been serious measures on trying to bring the Turkey's foreign debts down, which means that a large part of the national production has been sent out of the country.

The remittances coming home from Turks working abroad, mainly in Germany and Saudi Arabia, is important, but doesn't count for more than 2-3% of GNP. The state economy remains in need of IMF backing and faces challenges of high budget deficits and external debt. State budget 2008 had a deficit of US$11.7 billion, or 6.4%. Turkey has some production of oil and natural gas, but far less than domestic demands. Oil production covers only 6% of national consumption, natural gas 2.4% (2007 figures) (The CIA World Fact-book).
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![Turkey: Country Risk Summary (EIU ViewsWire, 2011)](image)

**Politics**

Turkey has been through a period of power struggle between the military and the former Islamist government, which resulted in the military claiming victory. Even if there still are armed clashes in the east of the country, Turkey is stable. The conflicts with the Kurdish population and the Kurdish military group PKK persists and stays on as an important factor in Turkish political life. The policies of the Turkish government have been strongly criticized by international organizations. A separatist insurgency begun in 1984 by the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which is now known as the People's Congress of Kurdistan or Kongra Gel (KGK); the group has dominated the Turkish military's attention and claimed more than 30,000 lives. After the capture of the group's leader in 1999, the insurgents largely withdrew from Turkey mainly to northern Iraq. In 2004, KGK announced an end to its ceasefire and attacks attributed to the KGK increased. Turkey joined the UN in 1945 and in 1952 it became a member of NATO; it holds a non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council during 2009-2010. In 1964, Turkey became an associate member of the European Community. Over the past decade,
IRAQ’S STABILITY

it has undertaken many reforms to strengthen its democracy and economy (The CIA World Fact-book).

National Security Concerns

Despite its location, Turkey has been successful in pursuing a policy of noninterference and noninvolvement in Middle Eastern conflicts. For instance, Turkey refrained from supporting either belligerent in the Iran-Iraq War of 1980-88. Although both sides violated Turkish airspace, Turkey took no defensive action and sought to mediate an end to hostilities. The major consequence of the Persian Gulf War in 1991 from the standpoint of Turkish security was the uprising of the Kurds in northern Iraq and the exodus of Kurds toward Turkish territory to escape Saddam Hussein’s brutal suppression of the rebellion. Turkey was decidedly reluctant to accept the Kurds as refugees, considering them a potential destabilizing factor in its struggle with domestic Kurdish dissidents. As an alternative, Turkey supported the UN-approved Operation Provide Comfort, which distributed relief and set up a safe haven in northern Iraq whose security was guaranteed by a coalition force of 2,000 soldiers from five countries. Incirlik served as the base for a rapid deployment of air forces to enforce a no-fly zone in the region (The CIA World Fact-book).

Potential Courses of Action for Interested Actors (LAMP Step 4):

Among the Middle Eastern states surrounding Iraq, namely Turkey, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Syria, and Iran, three are stable and self-sustained. The states that present the least amount of threat to the sovereignty of Iraq after the departure of the U.S. military forces are Kuwait, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia. Within those states, these three are
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also allies of the United States and would not act in a way to jeopardize their relationship with the United States. Iran, Syria, and Turkey, each has a stake on Iraq due to varying factors; Iran and Syria, among other states in the region, have never favored the U.S.’ invasion of Iraq. Iran, a predominantly Shia state, would want to take advantage of an Iraqi Shia led government to further its agendas within Iraq. This can be confirmed through foreign fighters and terrorist, with ties to Iran, who were captured by U.S. forces since the beginning of the war, as well as explosively formed projectile (EFP) attacks against U.S. troops during the course of the war. There is surmountable evidence that most Shia terrorist groups have sought and have been provided safe havens in Iran during the course of combat operations in Iraq.

Syria, a predominantly Sunni Muslim state which also led by the Ba’ath Party, has accommodated Sunni refugees since the onset of the war in Iraq; the state has over one million Sunni refugees in its refugee camps. Most of the Iraqi Ba’ath party members and members of Saddam’s 1920th Revolutionary Brigade sought refuge in Syria during the invasion and throughout the course of the war in Iraq. Syria does not support the current Shia led government of Iraq; it blamed Sunni insurgents operating from Syria for the recent bombings in Iraq, which claimed over a hundred civilians. There is a high probability that Iraqi Sunni’s living in Syria might want to go back to their homes that they were forced out of during the U.S.’ invasion and after Saddam’s regime was toppled. Syria’s economy is deteriorating and there is a strong possibility that a Sunni led government is preferred more in Iraq than the current Shia led government.

Turkey also has some interest in Iraq; a significant number of the Kurdish population was forced to migrate to northern Iraq and northern Turkish territories during
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Saddam’s reign in Iraq. The departure of U.S. troops from Iraq can be viewed as an opportunity by some insurgent groups in Turkey and northern Iraq to move back to their homes where they were forced out. Turkey has experienced power struggle between the military and the former Islamist government, resulting in the military controlling its government. Turkey is stable; however, conflicts with the Kurdish population and the Kurdish military group PKK remains an enduring and destabilizing factor in Turkey.

**Major Scenarios** (LAMP Step 5)

Since the objective of this study is to determine the stability of Iraq after a complete withdrawal of U.S. troops, for this analysis, Iraq’s stability after the withdrawal of U.S. troops would be determined by both internal forces and external forces. Within the methodology of the LAMP analysis, the responses or possible courses of action by the three Middle Eastern states will determine the stability of Iraq and will be considered as “scenarios” or the different situations from which the analyst is attempting to determine the most likely future. For Iraq, two major scenarios should be considered as follows:

1. Iraq continues to fully secure itself without any outside influence and remains on the path to democracy; Iran, Syria, and Turkey take no action or provide support to Iraq’s stability.

2. Iraq’s democratic government’s stability is derailed by Iran’s influence through Shia insurgency and the government fails to include Sunnis and Kurds resulting in the provocation of sectarian violence and eventually into a civil war OR Sunni insurgency ensues with support from Al-Qaeda to overthrow the government thereby resulting in a civil war.
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For the three actors, Iran, Syria, and Turkey, the following scenarios should be considered:

1. Each of the three actors contributes to Iraq’s stability by cooperating with Iraq’s government in an effort to achieve full democracy.

2. Each of the three actors goes against Iraq’s current government to derail the country’s stability.

Each scenario posed by the effects of the withdrawal of U.S. troops would produce a very different future and very different responses from each of the three interested state actors.

In order to effectively predict the most likely future, there now must be an analysis of all possible permutations of actions by the interested actors related to the three possible scenarios stated.

*Permutations of Behavior* (LAMP Step 6)

According to LAMP analysis, the basic equation for determining how many “alternate futures” are possible for the interested state actors in the study (Iran, Syria and Turkey) is \(X^Y = Z\). In this equation \(X\) equals the number of actions available to each actor, \(Y\) equals the number of national actors involved and \(Z\) equals the total number of alternate futures to be compared (Lockwood, 1993). In this analysis there are two possible courses of action for each interested actor (not including Iraq whose actions are covered by the three different scenarios), and there are three interested actors involved (again with Iraq’s actions covered by the three major scenarios.) Therefore the equation for this analysis becomes \(2^3 = 8\), meaning there are 8 possible “alternate futures” to compare for Iran, Syria and Turkey with each of the two scenarios dictated by the
IRAQ’S STABILITY

5response to the withdrawal of U.S. troops. Because each scenario posed provides the same number of permutations for possible alternate futures (8), the next step is to create a table of alternate future permutations, which will then be used to perform a “pairwise comparison” of the alternate future permutations for each scenario.

For simplification purposes, there will be abbreviations used to identify alternate future scenarios in all tables to follow. The two scenarios will likewise be identified by abbreviations:

Scenario #1 = Provide Support for Iraq’s Stability (SS)
Scenario #2 = Undermine the Government of Iraq to Deny Stability (DS)

TABLE 1:
Courses of Action

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Iraq's Stability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scenario #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scenario #2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Iran</th>
<th>Syria</th>
<th>Turkey</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SS</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>Iraq maintains stability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DS</td>
<td>DS</td>
<td>DS</td>
<td>Iraq unstable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SS</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>DS</td>
<td>Iraq maintains stability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DS</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>Stability is vulnerable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DS</td>
<td>DS</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>Iraq unstable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DS</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>DS</td>
<td>Iraq unstable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SS</td>
<td>DS</td>
<td>DS</td>
<td>stability is vulnerable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Support Iraq’s Stability = SS
Deny Iraq’s Stability = DS
IRAQ’S STABILITY

**Pair-wise Comparison** (LAMP Step 7)

A “pair wise comparison” of all alternate futures above is conducted to determine their relative possibility. The winner of each comparison gets one vote. Possible future #1 is compared with all possible futures below it, awarding a vote of one to the most likely outcome and each of the other scenarios. This is repeated for possible future #2, and so on until all the alternate futures are considered in the pairwise comparison.

**Possible Futures**

Possible futures for each scenario are then placed in rank order from highest relative probability to the lowest based on the number of “votes” received.

**TABLE 3:**

Alternate Futures Table
Scenario #1 - Provide Support for Iraq’s Stability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible Future #</th>
<th>Iran</th>
<th>Syria</th>
<th>Turkey</th>
<th># Votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>DS</td>
<td>DS</td>
<td>DS</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>DS</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>DS</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>DS</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>DS</td>
<td>DS</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>DS</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>DS</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>DS</td>
<td>DS</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Support Iraq’s Stability = SS
Deny Iraq’s Stability = DS
IRAQ’S STABILITY

TABLE 4:

Alternate Futures Table
Scenario #2 - Undermine the Government of Iraq to Deny Stability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible Future #</th>
<th>Iran</th>
<th>Syria</th>
<th>Turkey</th>
<th># Votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>DS</td>
<td>DS</td>
<td>DS</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>DS</td>
<td>DS</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>DS</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>DS</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>SS</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>DS</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Support Iraq’s Stability = SS
Deny Iraq’s Stability = DS

Using the voting results from the pairwise comparisons contained in Tables 3 and 4, the scenarios can now be ranked in order of probability from highest to lowest. The most likely course of action in Iraq, as a result of the withdrawal of U.S. troops, can now be determined.

**Ranking the Alternate Futures** (LAMP Step 8)

Tables 3 and 4 depict each alternate future and the number of votes that those same alternate futures received in the pair-wise comparisons for each of the two in Iraq. The next step of analysis is to rank the alternate futures from the highest relative probability to the lowest based on the number of votes received by each future. Tables 5 and 6 are the alternate futures tables for each scenario with each table arranged in terms of alternate future votes.
IRAQ’S STABILITY

TABLE 5:
Alternate Futures Table
Scenario #1 - Provide Support for Iraq’s Stability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible Future #</th>
<th>Iran</th>
<th>Syria</th>
<th>Turkey</th>
<th># Votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>DS</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>SS</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>DS</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>DS</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>DS</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Support Iraq’s Stability = SS
Deny Stability = DS

TABLE 6:
Alternate Futures Table
Scenario #2 - Undermine the Government of Iraq to Deny Stability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible Future #</th>
<th>Iran</th>
<th>Syria</th>
<th>Turkey</th>
<th># Votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>DS</td>
<td>DS</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
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<td>SS</td>
<td>DS</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Support Iraq’s Stability = SS
Deny Stability = DS

Tables 5 and 6 depict a pattern of behavior within each scenario; the next section will cover analysis of two alternate futures receiving the most votes within each scenario as these futures relate to the likely responses by Iran, Syria, and Turkey.
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*Analysis of Alternate Futures* (LAMP Step 9)

**Scenario #1 - Provide Support for Iraq’s Stability**

Scenario #1 attempts to identify the responses by the three of the Middle Eastern states, Iran, Syria, and Turkey to the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq; this scenario tries to identify the likelihood of those states to support Iraq’s stability and continued journey towards becoming a self-sustained democracy within the Middle East.

Everything that has occurred in Iraq since the invasion of Iraq by the U.S. and the oust of the Saddam Hussein’s regime has had effects on the neighboring states; events triggered by the invasion such as sectarian violence and ethnic tensions have resulted in Iraqis fleeing to other countries, especially Iran, Syria, and Turkey for refuge.

![Iraqi army officers plan a battalion live fire exercise at Forward Operating Base Normandy, Iraq, independently of U.S. assistance demonstrating their readiness to take full control of their training program (militaryphotos.net, 2011).](image)

**Figure 4**: Iraqi army officers plan a battalion live fire exercise at Forward Operating Base Normandy, Iraq, independently of U.S. assistance demonstrating their readiness to take full control of their training program (militaryphotos.net, 2011).

**Alternate Future #5**: As Iraq continues to pursue political and economic stability, with Shias dominating its government, one can speculate that Iran would
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support it knowing that the U.S. has exited the country and also due to the fact that Iran is a predominantly Shia state itself. On the contrary, Iran has despised the presence of the United States in the region over the course of the war; therefore a government that was erected by the United States, with ties to the U.S. would not be favored by Iran but Iran supports the stability of Iraq to promote its own agendas. This alternate future received 8 votes, indicating that in a pairwise comparison, this future is more likely to occur than all of the other alternate future permutations; it shows that Iran would attempt to destabilize the current government of Iraq so that it can appear to the Iraqis as though the U.S. abandoned them.

In this scenario, Syria and Turkey would attempt to support the stability of Iraq. The more Iraq becomes stable, the better it would be for Syria and Turkey as refugees try to find their ways back to their homeland to claim their property and citizenship. Syria and Turkey would also support Iraq’s stability in an effort to avoid confrontation with the United States; Turkey would support democracy in Iraq in an effort to promote its image as it continues to pursue admittance into the European Union with all rights as the other EU members. Syria and Turkey continue to receive aid from the other Gulf States which are also allies of the United States, such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Jordan. Any efforts to derail progress in Iraq would be counterproductive to Syria and Turkey. Currently, there has been some improvement within Iraq’s oil industry as the U.S. continues to draw down its troops; this is depicted in the chart below.
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Figure 5: Iraq’s oil industry regaining momentum with the end of major combat operations (nextbigfuture.com, 2011)

Figure 6: Iraqis head back to work as major combat operations come to an end, a step towards economic stability. (U.S. Department of State, 2010)

Alternate Future #7: As Iraq continues to pursue political and economic stability, Iran and Turkey attempt to derail progress because of their dislike of American
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influences in the Gulf region. Recently Turkey, a state considered an ally by the United States, has shown strained relations with Washington. The latest incident involving the Israeli raid of the Gaza flotilla has certainly exacerbated the situation. But even before this tragic turn of events in Turkish-Israeli relations, there were structural problems in Turkey’s perception of the United States and Israel. There are three main problems in Turkey’s perception of Washington; all three constantly fuel Turkish anti-Americanism and characterize the way Turks think and speak of the United States.

First, there is America the promoter of “moderate Islam” in Turkey. Second, there is America, the power behind “Kurdish separatism; and third, there is America the land where the “Jewish lobby” controls everything (Columnist 2010). Syria, a predominantly Sunni state, supports the stability of Iraq even though Iraq’s government is predominantly Shia. A democracy in Iraq would imply that the over one million Sunni’s taking refuge in Syria would return to their home country; it would also imply that the former Iraq Ba’ath Party members currently seeking refuge in Syria could return to Iraq and attempt to gain a place in the new democratic government of Iraq.

Scenario #2 - Undermine the Government of Iraq to Deny Stability

Scenario #2 attempts to identify the responses by the three of the Gulf States, Iran, Syria, and Turkey, to the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq; this scenario tries to identify the likelihood of those states to deny Iraq stability on its continued journey towards becoming a self-sustained democracy within the Middle East. Iraq’s Persian Gulf neighbors supported the U.S. invasion of Iraq in order to preserve order in the region; however, the overthrow of Saddam Hussein and its aftermath have not brought stability to the Gulf States as much as they have shifted the most serious challenges from external
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threats of a hostile Baghdad to internal threats, the threat of conflict spillover from Iraq (Alterman 2007).

![Image of Baghdad attacks](image)

Figure 7: 75 people were killed in a series of attacks in Baghdad following the withdrawal of U.S. troops from street patrols. (International Reporter, 2009)

**Alternative Future #4:** Iran supports the stability of Iraq for selfish reasons, with an overall goal of the eventual control of Iraq, while Syria and Turkey deny Iraq’s stability due to the American influence in the region. Alternative Future #4 received 8 votes, indicating that in a pairwise comparison, this future is more likely to occur than all of the other alternate future permutations. Iraqi and Iranian governments signed agreements on border security, energy cooperation and tourism since the elections in March; close relations have made it relatively easy for Iran to establish a varied presence and prepare itself to influence Iraq’s future political setting (Pollack 2005). Iran has positioned itself in post-Saddam Iraq to prevent Iraq from becoming an “American puppet” and surrogate of American military power, an Iraq that has evolved into a secular Western democracy with good relations with the West, including the U.S. and perhaps
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even Israel, and an Iraq that has descended into chaos and civil war. Iran may not be able
to prevent the third scenario, but it has positioned itself to influence the outcome should
another civil war ensue (Pollack 2005).

**Alternative Future #2:** In a pairwise comparison, this future may occur but is
certainly not the most likely. Here all the three actors would work against the progress in
Iraq; implications for Iran, Syria, and Turkey would be “jihadis” or holy wars would be
driven out of the region; the insurgency would end; the civil war would diminish; Turkey
would not invade Kurdistan; and Iran would not take over the Shia south; then a secular
democracy would be impossible in Iraq (Mattair 2006). Out of the three actors in
consideration, Iran has the greatest advantage to influence any sort of desirable outcome
because of its capabilities, military, economic, and political. In a recent speech delivered
by the Iranian president on the country’s annual Army Day, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad
called on the U.S. to withdraw its troops from the Gulf region and Afghanistan; stating
that the region has no need for alien troops and they should return home and let the
regional states take care of their own affairs. He described the deployment of U.S. and
NATO troops in Iraq and Afghanistan as a pretext of fighting terrorism, which had not
only failed, but also increased insecurity in both countries.
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Figure 8: Deadly bombing in Baghdad underscored the continuing threat of violence in Iraq (War News Updates, 2009)

**Determine focal events for alternate futures** (LAMP Steps 10)

For this culminating stage of the LAMP analysis; the focal events and their indicators are not only used to determine the most likely future, but also to provide a foundation for future developments or studies relating to this subject. For this study, in determining the potential responses by other Middle Eastern States, to the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq, **Alternative Future #5** would be the status quo. While considering possible focal points, it is necessary to keep in mind what the current status quo of the situation is there is no change needed to address that specific alternate future.

**Scenario #1 - Provide Support for Iraq’s Stability**

In this case, the current situation reflects **Alternative Future #5** – Iran, Syria, and Turkey support Iraq’s stability, not necessarily in agreement of a U.S. stood government, but to further their own agendas and eventually eliminate any American influence within
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the government of Iraq. The focal points that need to be considered are those that transpose the immediate future into one of the other alternate futures.

FOCAL EVENT – An increase in anti-American rhetoric from the Iranian government officials
FOCAL EVENT – The presence of increased cooperation between Iraq and Iran
FOCAL EVENT – Syria supports Iraq’s stability as long as Iraq’s government is inclusive of Sunnis
FOCAL POINT – Turkey supports stability of Iraq as long as it has freedom of movement into northern Iraq (Iraqi Kurdistan)

Alternative Future #7 – Iran and Turkey deny Iraq stability by aggressively stepping up insurgency and terrorist attacks against the “American proxy” government of Iraq; this alternate future would prove to be the most deadly course of action for Iraq as it would potentially lead to another Iraq/Iran war or civil war in Iraq.

FOCAL EVENT – An increase in anti-American rhetoric from the Iranian, Syrian, and Turkish government officials
FOCAL EVENT - Sunni insurgency exacerbates as refugees gravitate from Syria back to Iraq
FOCAL EVENT - Kurdish terrorist groups expand their territories south of the Iraq/Turkey border
FOCAL EVENT - Step up in explosively formed projectile (EFP) attacks following the withdrawal of U.S. troops

Scenario #2 - Undermine the Government of Iraq to Deny Stability

Within Alternative Future #4, Iran supports the stability of Iraq for selfish reasons, with an overall goal of the eventual control of Iraq, while Syria and Turkey deny Iraq’s stability due to the American influence in the region.

FOCAL EVENT – An increase in anti-American rhetoric from the Iranian, Syrian, and Turkish government officials
FOCAL EVENT - Sunni insurgency exacerbates as refugees gravitate from Syria back to Iraq
FOCAL EVENT - Kurdish terrorist groups expand their territories south of the Iraq/Turkey border
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FOCAL EVENT - Step up in explosively formed projectile (EFP) attacks following the withdrawal of U.S. troops

**Alternative Future #2:** In this alternate future, all the three actors would work against the progress in Iraq; implications for Iran, Syria, and Turkey would be “jihadis” or holy wars would be driven out of the region and a secular democracy would be impossible in Iraq.

FOCAL EVENT – An increase in anti-American rhetoric from the Iranian, Syrian, and Turkish government officials
FOCAL EVENT - Sunni insurgency exacerbates as refugees gravitate from Syria back to Iraq
FOCAL EVENT - Kurdish terrorist groups expand their territories south of the Iraq/Turkey border
FOCAL EVENT - Step up in explosively formed projectile (EFP) attacks following the withdrawal of U.S. troops

*Develop indicators for each focal event* (LAMP Steps 11)

FOCAL EVENT – An increase in anti-American rhetoric from the Iranian, Syrian, and Turkish government officials
  - KEY INDICATOR - Iraq turns against the United States
  - KEY INDICATOR - Iraq begins sharing intelligence with Iran
  - KEY INDICATOR - Iraq sympathizes with Iran and requests for a lift of UN sanctions against Iran
  - KEY INDICATOR - Iraq’s government expels Sunnis and Kurds out of the parliament
FOCAL EVENT - Sunni insurgency exacerbates as refugees gravitate from Syria back to Iraq
  - KEY INDICATOR – Sectarian violence erupts throughout Iraq with the potential to lead to a civil war
  - KEY INDICATOR - Iraq begins sharing intelligence with Iran
  - KEY INDICATOR - Iraq’s government expels Sunnis and Kurds out of the parliament
FOCAL EVENT - Kurdish terrorist groups expand their territories south of the Iraq/Turkey border
  - KEY INDICATOR - Iraq begins sharing intelligence with Iran
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KEY INDICATOR - Iraq’s government expels Sunnis and Kurds out of the parliament
KEY INDICATOR – Sectarian violence erupts throughout Iraq with the potential to lead to a civil war
FOCAL EVENT - Step up in explosively formed projectile (EFP) attacks following the withdrawal of U.S. troops
   KEY INDICATOR - Iraq turns against the United States to pacify Iran
   KEY INDICATOR - Iraq’s government expels Sunnis and Kurds out of the parliament
   KEY INDICATOR - Iraq sympathizes with Iran and requests for a lift of UN sanctions against Iran

_Transposition of Alternate Futures_ (LAMP Step 12)

The transposition of one alternate future to another occurs when the actions of one actor change the perceptions of one or more of the other actors. This change in perception provides the opportunity for one alternate future to “transpose” or transfer into another alternate future, potentially changing the relative probability of all possible futures as time and action progresses. Focusing once again on the four alternate futures within each scenario that were ranked “most probable” through the pairwise comparisons, a brief discussion of the possibility of transposition follows.

_Scenario #1 - Provide Support for Iraq’s Stability_

For this scenario, alternative future #5 would be the most likely course of action; as Iraq continues to pursue economic and political stability, with Shias dominating its government, Iran would support the stability of Iraq to promote its own agendas. If Iraq manages to secure itself and continues on the path to democracy without accommodating Iran and Iran’s agendas, then alternative future #5 transposes into alternative future #7, whereby Iran denies Iraq stability by aggressively stepping up insurgency and terrorist attacks against the “American proxy” government of Iraq; this alternate future would
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prove to be the most deadly course of action for Iraq as it could potentially lead to another Iraq/Iran war or to the intervention by the United States and other U.S. allies in the Middle East.

**Scenario #2 - Undermine the Government of Iraq to Deny Stability**

In this scenario, alternative future #4 would be the most likely course of action; as Iraq continues to pursue economic and political stability, Iran would support the stability of Iraq in order to advance its own agendas. If Iraq manages to secure itself and continues on a path to democracy without accommodating Iran, Syria, and Turkey then alternative future #4 transposes into alternative future #2, where every one of the states would deny Iraq stability by aggressively stepping up insurgency and terrorist attacks against the “American proxy” government of Iraq; this alternate future would prove to be the most deadly course of action for Iraq as it could potentially lead to another civil war or to the intervention by the United States and other U.S. allies in the Middle East.

**Chapter V: Conclusion**

The withdrawal of U.S. combat troops from Iraq occurred during Ramadan, the Muslim month of fasting and prayer; a timetable better suited to the American political cycle than to conditions in Iraq. Ramadan usually sees a spike in violence as religious fervor combines with heat and hunger. But delaying the withdrawal another year would have meant the Iraq War surpassing the Vietnam War in length. The timing could have been better for Iraq, but withdrawal is overdue for the U.S. Having never been justified in the first place, legally, strategically, or defensively, it is time to
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end military engagement in Iraq. The U.S. has dug the military into the landscape that requires enormous sums of taxpayer dollars to maintain its presence. The justification for staying in Iraq this long has been that U.S. soldiers prevented Iraqis from killing each other and the Iraqi government from falling apart. Many Iraqi politicians have relied extensively on the U.S. military, even as they call for the end of the occupation to attain political points against rivals. It is an unhealthy, codependent relationship and the withdrawal would be a withdrawal in all senses of the word, possibly incurring further damage in the process if not undertaken responsibly. Announcement of imminent withdrawal would enable Iraqi leaders to cooperate, make Iraqis less hospitable to insurgents, and lead to improvements in unit cohesion and motivation in Iraq’s security forces.

As the U.S. military withdraws, thousands of Iraqis will lose their jobs as translators and assistants. Along with income loss they might face death threats for having worked with and for Americans and will no longer have the protection of nearby forces. For those who do not wish to leave Iraq, generous severance packages should be negotiated, taking into account their increased need for security as U.S. troops depart. Iraqis will undoubtedly still suffer from severe electricity shortages, with no air conditioning or refrigeration for most at the hottest time of the year. Clean water will be scarce and crops will be dying; there will be long, angry lines at fuel stations, trash mounting in the streets, and occasional explosions with accompanying screams and sirens; basically most people's idea of hell (Schneller 2010). Implications for Iran, Syria, and Turkey would be “jihads” would be driven out, the insurgency would end, the civil war would diminish, Turkey would not invade Kurdistan, and Iran would not take over
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the Shia south. A secular democracy would be impossible (Mattair 2006). Based on this predictive study, out of the three actors, Iran is the most powerful and the most economically stable state; it has the ability to coerce and influence the actions of Syria and Turkey through diplomacy or aggression. Scenario #1, alternative future #5 is the most likely course of action that would ensue as a response to the withdrawal of U.S. troops; Iran, Syria, and Turkey will support the stability of Iraq.

The three states will support Iraq’s stability, not because they favor the current “U.S. influenced” government of Iraq, but because stability in Iraq translates into stability in their own states. The three states would promote stability in order to advance their own interests in Iraq. If Iraq fails to accommodate Iran’s interests, then alternative future #5 transposes into alternative future #7, whereby Iran and Turkey would independently respond to the Iraqi government with aggression in order to oust the current government and manipulate its structure to their desirable outcomes. This aggression would be carried out in the form of Shia special groups and terrorists conducting attacks against Iraq’s infrastructure and the population, to discredit the government of Iraq and the United States’ influence. This could lead to a civil war in Iraq or worse, another Iran/Iraq war.

The predicted possible futures generate the following questions:

1. Did the United States indirectly create a Shia caliphate in Iraq by the removal of the Saddam regime from power?

2. Will the United States’ objectives on Iraq be undermined with its troop withdrawal since Iran is predominantly Shia and now with Iraq under the majority Shia rule?

3. Will Prime Minister’s Nuri al-Maliki’s targeting of the Sunni remnants in Iraq incite another civil war?
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Summary

The standoff continues between Washington and Baghdad on a new Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA), which would allow a significant U.S. force to remain in Iraq after 2011. Despite persuasion from Secretary of Defense Robert Gates and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mike Mullen, the Iraqi government has shown no sign of agreement to an extension of the current deadline for U.S. troop withdrawal. Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki continues to dismiss any suggestion that he or his government will agree to talks, much less consider a SOFA extending the US troop presence, despite the heightened security risks that would follow a complete withdrawal. As the United States transitions from Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) to Operation New Dawn (OND), their roles have also changed from major combat operations to advising, training, assisting, and equipping Iraqi Security Forces. This enables them to provide for their own internal security while building a foundation capability to defend against external threats.

The threat of insurgency and terrorist attacks still exists in Iraq as evidenced with the recent rocket attacks which claimed the lives of five U.S. service members at Forward Operating Base (FOB) Loyalty, Baghdad within the first week of June 2011. The attack, which was carried out just months before the planned American withdrawal of 31 December 2011, could be indicative of the ability of the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) to control the unstable situation. In addition, there has been a rise in the assassinations of the Awakening Council members within the recent few weeks and all those events could undermine the gains that the United States achieved in Iraq over the last four years.
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has been read by the undersigned. It is hereby recommended for acceptance by the
Faculty with credit of the amount of

3 semester hours.

(Signed) ___________________________     (Date) ______________

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Recommend for approval on behalf of the Department

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Recommendation accepted on behalf of the
Dean, School of Arts and Sciences

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