2. Trends in armed conflicts

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I. Introduction

In 2007 there was a clear trend towards the further fragmentation of violence in the locations of some of the world's deadliest armed conflicts and other conflict-prone areas. This has been accompanied by the diversification of armed groups and the further erosion of the boundaries between different forms of violence. Much of this 'fragmented' violence is difficult to measure and categorize. While it often occurs in areas of major armed conflict, it may not be directly related to the conflict's main incompatibility.[1] Rather, the larger conflict provides a favourable environment for other forms of violence, both organized and unorganized, and may even trigger them. This fragmented violence often acquires its own dynamics and becomes self-perpetuating. While it is generally carried out on a lower scale in terms of battle-related deaths, it has high costs for civilians in terms of casualties, displacement and less direct impacts.

Section II introduces the chapter's thematic focus on the diversity of armed violence and the erosion of the boundaries between, for example, insurgency, terrorism, sectarian violence and one-sided violence against civilians. Sections III–V, respectively, address the mix of forms of violence in the context of a major armed conflict in Iraq; in the Darfur region of Sudan, where the fighting in 2007 fell short of a major armed conflict;[2] and in Pakistan, which in 2007 suffered multiple forms of violence and instability—only some linked to local armed conflicts—that threatened human, national, regional and international security. The first two cases demonstrate a general fragmentation of armed violence, while all three show the diversification of armed actors and the erosion of boundaries between forms of violence. The conclusions are offered in section VI.

Appendix 2A presents data on major armed conflicts in the period 1998–2007 from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), along with a brief survey of trends in lower-intensity conflicts, particularly those fought between non-state actors. Appendix 2B provides the definitions, sources and methods for the UCDP data and explains some significant changes made to the coding of major armed conflicts in 2007. Appendix 2C discusses the human security approach to direct and structural violence.

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[1] I.e. the incompatible positions being contested by the conflict parties. See appendix 2B.
[2] See appendix 2A.

II. The fragmentation and diversification of armed violence

A variety of forms of armed violence perpetrated by non-state and state-affiliated actors are becoming widespread and increasingly interconnected in both conflict and post-conflict settings. In different combinations, these forms often account for much of the ongoing violence in areas affected by armed conflicts.[3] They are carried out in the same locations, often by the same actors and may be integrated to the point where they are indistinguishable from one another.

The diversity of violence reflects the range of motivations, identities and levels of activity of armed actors. Predatory groups that engage in criminal violence and exploit opportunities offered by a war economy continue to proliferate in conflict zones. Increasingly, states engaged in counter-insurgency are trying to mount symmetrical responses to asymmetrical challenges from non-state actors by relying on paramilitary groups, including ethnic, sectarian or tribal militias. The merging of insurgent, inter-communal, tribal and criminal violence with counter-insurgency operations can easily acquire cross-border or broader transnational dimensions.[4] In addition, 99 per cent of one-sided violence—that is, violence that directly and intentionally targets civilians—takes place in countries where an armed conflict is active.[5] While states can cause many civilian casualties, especially in the course of conflicts over governmental authority, in conflicts over territory more civilians are killed by non-state actors.

Weak or dysfunctional state capacity appears to be the main condition for the fragmentation of armed violence. One symptom of state failure is the loss of the state's monopoly on violence. This is accompanied by the proliferation of armed non-state actors, hinders conflict management and may keep violence at a relatively high level even after a conflict has ended. All three countries that serve as case studies for this chapter—Iraq, Sudan and Pakistan—are among the top 20 in the 2007 Failed States Index.[6] The involvement of neighbouring states, regional powers and other international actors—in the form of military interventions, support to groups in conflict, or political and economic pressure—may also contribute to the fragmentation of violence and erosion of the boundaries between its different forms. While this involvement may in part be a response to the weakness of state capacity, it can itself be destabilizing if it fails to promote effective post-conflict state building.

For decades, non-state actors engaged in armed conflicts have often combined traditional insurgent tactics—attacks against government military and

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[3] On the definitions of major and minor armed conflict see appendices 2A and 2B.

[4] See Lindberg, S. and Melvin, N. J., 'Major armed conflicts', *SIPRI Yearbook 2007: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2007), pp. 55–78.

[5] On 1-sided violence see Eck, K. and Hultman, L., 'One-sided violence against civilians in war: insights from new fatality data', *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 44, no. 2 (Mar. 2007), pp. 233–46.

[6] Sudan and Iraq are ranked as the most unstable states and Pakistan is ranked number 12. Fund for Peace and *Foreign Policy* magazine, 'Failed States Index 2007', *Foreign Policy*, vol. 86, no. 4 (July/ Aug. 2007), p. 57.

security targets—with terrorism—the politically motivated use or threat of violence against non-combatants.[7] Other manifestations of armed violence have become more widespread and increasingly intertwined with one-sided violence and with criminal violence. Three of these—the combination of terrorism with sectarian strife, violence by state-aligned actors ranging from tribal militias to private security companies (PSCs), and violent local power play—are discussed below.

Terrorism and sectarian strife. Traditionally, sectarian violence implies a symmetrical confrontation between two or more non-state actors representing different population groups.[8] While terrorist acts may sometimes be aimed at fomenting broader sectarian strife, the state has traditionally been terrorism's ultimate target, making it an asymmetrical tactic. This has made it possible to distinguish between terrorism and sectarian violence. However, the close association of some sectarian groups with the state may reach a point, as it has in Iraq, when the state becomes a semi-sectarian entity. In such cases, the distinctions between sectarian violence and terrorism—and between the groups that carry them out—may become increasingly blurred. When a state that is perceived as having a strong sectarian bias is confronted with insurgent forces representing other sectarian groups, the transformation of anti-government terrorism into an instrument of sectarian strife is almost inevitable. For such a state, counter-insurgency may also blend with sectarian violence.

The blending of terrorism with sectarian violence was one of the main trends in patterns of violence in Iraq in 2007 and may also explain why such a large proportion of global terrorist activity is taking place there. In January–November 2007 Iraq accounted for over 69 per cent of the world's terrorist incidents and for 85.8 per cent of fatalities from such incidents.[9] While there have been peaks of conflict-related terrorist activity before, the dynamics of global terrorism have never been so dominated by one major armed conflict.

State-aligned militias and private contractors. States' use of armed groups other than their security forces is not a new phenomenon. However, it acquires a new dimension when coupled with a general pattern of fragmentation of violence, further eroding the boundary between state-aligned and non-state violence, as is clearly demonstrated by the activities of pro-state militias in Darfur and Iraq.

Another aspect of the problem is the growing presence of PSCs in conflict areas, particularly Iraq, which in 2007 was the site of the largest private

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[7] This definition distinguishes terrorism from the broader notion of using terror to intimidate a population, which may be employed by states. See Stepanova, E., *Terrorism in Asymmetrical Conflict: Ideological and Structural Aspects*, SIPRI Research Report no. 23 (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2008), pp. 5–15.

[8] Sectarian violence here refers to violence both between members of different sects (inter-sectarian violence) and between different groups in the same sect (intra-sectarian violence).

[9] In 2003 only 7.7% of terrorist incidents and 23% of fatalities took place in Iraq. Terrorism Knowledge Base, Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism (MIPT), <http://www.tkb.org/>. In May 2008 the Terrorism Knowledge Base was merged with the Global Terrorism Database managed by the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) at the University of Maryland, <http://www.start.umd.edu/data/gtd/>.

military deployment in modern history. While these forces have a role to play as security providers, their participation in counter-insurgency operations and their use of force against civilians remains highly controversial.[10]

Violent power play at the local level. Many conflict and post-conflict zones are experiencing a proliferation of militias engaged in localized acts of violence. Although this violence may take an ethnic, tribal, sectarian, criminal or other form—or several forms at once—it could often be more accurately characterized as violent local power play. Many of the militias involved are essentially opportunistic, frequently changing alliances and even including members of ethnic, sectarian, tribal or other groups that are otherwise in conflict with each other. They fight for power, resources and control at the local level, rather than for a nationalist, religious, sectarian or socio-political agenda. This localized violence inevitably includes predatory and parasitical activities related to the informal economy (e.g. smuggling by tribal networks), taking advantage of the formal economy's weakness or limited reach. It thrives when state control is weak or non-existent, as is often the case when the state is mired in multiple conflicts at the sub-national and national levels.

III. Iraq

The context: the insurgency and the surge

Insurgency aimed largely at the United States-led Multinational Force in Iraq (MNF-I) and the Iraqi security forces (ISF), reached a new peak in early 2007, resulting in over 5700 battle-related deaths by the end of the year.[11] In June, 73 per cent of attacks were directed against the MNF-I, the highest level since 2005, although the ISF and Iraqi civilians suffered the most casualties.[12] Even though the insurgent groups were not united, they shared some common goals, which could be summarized as enhancing their control over the population, driving out foreign forces and undermining the Iraqi Government.[13]

While some Shia forces, such as the Jaish al-Mahdi (JAM, or Mahdi Army), fought against the US-led coalition in 2004, most of them had ceased their insurgent activities before 2007. The strongly nationalist Sunni part of the insurgency took on a more radical Islamist and sectarian profile from 2006, with al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) becoming one of its deadliest elements. However, while AQI has been responsible for many mass-casualty terrorist incidents and large-scale attacks against the MNF-I and the ISF, most sources suggest that

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[10] See Holmquist, C., *Private Security Companies: The Case for Regulation*, SIPRI Policy Paper no. 9 (SIPRI: Stockholm, 2005); and Perlo-Freeman, S. and Sköns, S., 'The private military services industry', SIPRI Research Paper, June 2008, <http://books.sipri.org/product_info?c_product_id=361>.

[11] See appendix 2A. The term 'insurgency' is used here for the sake of consistency with the Uppsala Conflict Data Program's coding of this conflict as being between the Iraqi Government, the multinational coalition and 'Iraqi insurgents'. However, most insurgent groups in Iraq see themselves as engaged in resistance against foreign occupation.

[12] US Department of Defense (DOD), *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq*, Report to Congress (DOD: Washington, DC, Sep. 2007), pp. 19–20.

[13] US Department of Defense (note 12), p. 16.

AQI and allied groups comprise no more than 15 per cent of the insurgency's total strength.[14] Foreign fighters make up an even smaller proportion of the insurgency, between 4 and 10 per cent.[15]

Since early 2006 the Sunni-dominated insurgency had become increasingly intertwined with Sunni sectarianism directed at Shias perceived as being pro-MNF-I, pro-government or pro-Iranian. At the same time, several Shia militias—including some, like the Badr Corps, that are affiliated with political forces that are part of the Iraqi Government—started to engage in sectarian violence against the Sunnis. At the end of 2006 US officials and commanders in Iraq suggested a substantial increase in US military presence in response to the sharp rise in sectarian violence. On 10 January 2007 President George W. Bush announced a change of US strategy in Iraq and a plan to commit over 20 000 additional US troops to support 18 Iraqi Army and National Police brigades in Baghdad.[16]

The US military build-up—commonly referred to as the surge—started with a major offensive in early February. The first phase of the surge, which lasted until early June, was dominated by intense counter-insurgency operations, including the bombing of parts of Baghdad in February and June. It met heavy resistance and even led to an increase in some types of violence, but produced few security dividends. US troop fatalities peaked at 123 in May, close to the all-time highs of April 2004 (135) and November 2004 (137). The surge did not change the main causes of US military fatalities since occupation. Between January and September, half of US troop deaths were caused by improvised explosive devices.[17] The average number of US military helicopters brought down every month during the same period was slightly higher than in 2006.[18] Non-state actors in Baghdad systematically struck at well-protected strategic targets, including the best-protected area in Iraq—the international zone—which suffered over 80 attacks between March and May.[19] The high frequency of suicide attacks remained unchecked: between July 2006 and

[14] Cordesman, A. H., *The Tenuous Case for Strategic Patience in Iraq: A Trip Report* (CSIS: Washington, DC, 6 Aug. 2007), p. 11. AQI's role in the resistance and sectarian killings and its links to transnational Islamist networks seem to have been exaggerated by US Government sources.

[15] Estimates of the size of the insurgency range between 5000–15 000 and 30 000 in 2006 and up to 70 000 in 2007, while estimates of foreign fighters range from 800 to 2000. International Crisis Group (ICG), *In Their Own Words: Reading the Iraqi Insurgency*, Middle East Report no. 50 (ICG: Brussels, 15 Feb. 2006), p. 1; and O'Hanlon, M. E. and Campbell, J. H., 'Iraq index: tracking variables of reconstruction and security in Iraq', Brookings Institution, Washington, DC, 1 Oct. 2007, <http://www.brookings.edu/iraqindex/>, pp. 26–27. The US bipartisan Iraq Study Group estimated the number of foreign 'jihadists' in Iraq in 2006 to be 1300. Baker, J. A. and Hamilton, J. H. (co-chairs), 'The Iraq Study Group report', 6 Dec. 2006, <http://www.usip.org/isg/iraq_study_group_report/report/1206/>, p. 10.

[16] The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, 'President's address to the nation', 10 Jan. 2007, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2007/01/20070110-7.html>. Up to 28 000 extra troops were eventually dispatched to Iraq—21 500 troops in 5 combat brigades and 7000–8000 support personnel. Garamone, J., 'Support troops put surge total at 28,000 U.S. servicemembers', US Department of Defense, American Forces Press Service, 16 Mar. 2007, <http://www.defenselink.mil/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=32483>.

[17] For US DOD daily casualty reports see O'Hanlon and Campbell (note 15), pp. 17–18.

[18] O'Hanlon and Campbell (note 15), p. 33.

[19] UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to Paragraph 30 of Resolution 1546 (2004), S/2007/330, 5 June 2007, p. 11.

June 2007 there were at least 540 such attacks, compared with just 300 between the 2003 invasion and June 2006.[20] Suicide bombings—which often resulted in over 100 deaths—and the monthly totals for all multiple-fatality bombings both peaked in February–April 2007.[21] The most spectacular terrorist acts targeted crowded places in Baghdad's Shia neighbourhoods, provoking new sectarian revenge attacks. Iraqi officials continued to be targeted. In June US commanders acknowledged that despite the deployment of 18 000 additional troops in Baghdad, US forces controlled fewer than a third of the city's neighbourhoods.[22]

The MNF-I was forced to change tactics once again. From mid-June a new series of offensives, collectively known as Operation Phantom Thunder, were launched in key Baghdad districts, in the so-called 'belts' around Baghdad, in Diyala governorate and its capital, Ba'quba, and in Babil and Al-Anbar governorates.[23] An important new feature of this second phase of the surge was the MNF-I's arming and financing of selected Sunni tribal militias to fight their former allies, the more radical Islamist insurgent groups, particularly AQI.[24] In 2007 dissatisfaction with the Islamists' radical agenda and violent practices—reinforced by 'turf wars' over smuggling, illicit road taxing and similar activities—grew among some Sunni Arab tribes, especially in Al-Anbar governorate, leading to violent clashes between Sunni groups. US military and financial support to the dissatisfied tribes contributed to the rise of new Sunni tribal militias—a phenomenon that was dubbed 'tribal awakening' in US sources—and the fragmentation and, thus, weakening of the Sunni armed resistance in the centre of the country. Another characteristic of the second phase of the surge was a new emphasis on making the troop presence much more visible.[25]

Stage two of the surge appeared to have a stabilizing effect on the security situation in some central governorates, including Baghdad and Al-Anbar. The Commanding General of the MNF-I, David Petraeus, stated on 10 September that the military objectives of the surge were, 'in large measure, being met' and the level of 'security incidents' had significantly decreased since mid-

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[20] Nordland, R. and Dehghanpisheh, B., 'Surge of suicide bombers', *Newsweek*, 13 Aug. 2007.

[21] O'Hanlon and Campbell (note 15), pp. 10–11.

[22] 'Security plan only able to protect 146 of the 457 Baghdad neighbourhoods despite surge', Associated Press, 4 June 2007.

[23] US Central Command, Headquarters, 'MNC-I conducts Operation Phantom Thunder', Press release, 20 June 2007.

[24] The US military insisted that the 'tribal awakening' among the more moderate Sunni tribes was the result of a well-prepared strategy on the part of the MNF-I, but some civilian experts have argued that it had local origins and 'had not been the function of the surge strategy'. Petraeus, D. H., Report to Congress on the situation in Iraq, 10–11 Sep. 2007, <http://foreignaffairs.house.gov/110/pet091007. pdf>, pp. 2, 4; and Cordesman (note 14), p. 9.

[25] A similar strategy was used by British forces in southern Iraq (Operation Sinbad, Sep. 2006–Mar. 2007). At first it had some stabilizing effect but was unsustainable as long as it was not matched by significant progress in building legitimate and functional Iraqi authorities. See e.g. International Crisis Group (ICG), *Where is Iraq Heading? Lessons from Basra*, Middle East Report no. 67 (ICG: Brussels, 25 June 2007), pp. 16–17.

June. He also cited a considerable decline in civilian casualties since December 2006, by 45 per cent across Iraq and by 70 per cent in Baghdad.[26]

However, Petraeus admitted that the overall security situation was 'complex, difficult, and sometimes downright frustrating'.[27] US intelligence estimates pointed at 'uneven improvements' in preventing 'the steep escalation of rates of violence'.[28] Other US military sources showed that there had been a more modest decline in civilian casualties over the summer than the figures cited by Petraeus and hesitated to claim that the trend was sustainable.[29] The US Government Accountability Office (GAO) stated that 'measures of population security show differing trends' and average numbers of daily attacks against civilians remained unchanged between February and July 2007.[30] The new series of offensives also did not help to decrease suicide attacks. The number of suicidal mass-casualty bombings in September, 12, was the same as that in January or in June 2007.[31] Car bomb incidents remained at 80 per month from May through September, the highest level since July 2005.[32] Terrorist violence increasingly targeted ethnic and religious minorities. The worst terrorist attack since 2003 was directed against Yazidi Kurds in August,[33] while on 7 July a suicide bombing in the Shia Turkoman-populated village of Amerli in Salah ad-Din governorate, killed around 150 people.[34] Overall, the surge had not decisively weakened the insurgency by the end of 2007. AQI and allied groups retreated from some areas but showed considerable resilience and remained active in other areas. Other Sunni rebel groups, such as Jaysh Ansar al-Sunna, did not suffer major losses and remained active.

Another notable trend in 2007 was a renewal of activity by Shia insurgents, even as sectarian tensions prevented coordination between Sunni and Shia elements of the insurgency. New Shia insurgent groups, along with some splinter groups and the most radical factions of JAM, targeted the MNF-I, the ISF and government-affiliated Shia groups, such as the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI) and its militia, the Badr Corps.[35] Shia insurgent activity started in January with heavy fighting between the ISF (backed by US forces) and a Shia

[26] Petraeus (note 24), p. 3.

[27] Petraeus (note 24), pp. 1–3.

[28] US National Intelligence Council, 'Prospects for Iraq's stability: some security progress but political reconciliation elusive', National Intelligence Estimate, Washington, DC, Aug. 2007, p. 1.

[29] US Department of Defense (note 12), p. 20.

[30] US Government Accountability Office (GAO), *Securing, Stabilizing, and Rebuilding Iraq: Iraqi Government Has Not Met Most Legislative, Security, and Economic Benchmarks*, Statement of David M. Walker before the US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, GAO-07-1220T (GAO: Washington, DC, 4 Sep. 2007), pp. 1–2, 9. Official information on violence in Iraq rarely includes data on lower-scale but widespread inter-tribal and intra-sectarian clashes.

[31] O'Hanlon and Campbell (note 15), p. 11.

[32] O'Hanlon and Campbell (note 15), p. 21.

[33] On 14 Aug. 2007 suicide bombers drove 4 trucks into 2 houses in Shaam, an area near the Syrian border populated by Yazidis (an Iraq-based Kurdish group), killing over 250 people and injuring 350. Glanz, J., 'Iraqi toll reaches 250 in multiple bombing', *International Herald Tribune*, 15 Aug. 2007.

[34] Farrel S., 'Around 150, death toll in Iraq attack among war's worst', *New York Times*, 8 July 2007.

[35] ISCI was known as the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI) until May 2007. International Crisis Group (ICG), *Shiite Politics in Iraq: The Role of the Supreme Council*, Middle East Report no. 70 (ICG: Brussels, 15 Nov. 2007), p. 15.

militia in Zarqa near An-Najaf, ahead of the Shia Ashura celebrations.[36] For the MNF-I and the ISF, Shia insurgent groups began to 'emerge as a more serious threat in many of the disputed areas in Iraq than Al Qa'ida and Sunni Islamist threats'.[37]

Overall, the security situation was uneven across Iraq in 2007 and the differences between regions grew. The reach of the MNF-I in many parts of the country was limited; intelligence assessments primarily focused on the central governorates and claims about a decline in incidents elsewhere could not be verified.[38] The MNF-I and Iraqi Government's control of Baghdad and the areas around it remained limited, despite the surge, while violence shifted to new areas, including the previously relatively stable south.[39]

The fragmentation of violence

Sunni–Shia sectarian violence

Sectarian strife remained the main form of inter-communal violence in Iraq in 2007. Sectarian violence had not been prevalent at the earlier stages of the invasion but intensified following mass-casualty terrorist attacks against Shia targets that were blamed on Sunni insurgents, especially after the bombing of a Shia shrine in Samarra's Golden Mosque in February 2006. Shia sectarian violence combined reprisal attacks by pro-government militias against Sunni insurgents with one-sided violence against Sunni civilians. Sectarian violence on both sides mainly took the forms of 'sectarian cleansing' (i.e. killing the members of one sectarian group or driving them out of a community) and revenge attacks by squads affiliated with either Sunni or Shia militias, rather than involving the larger populations or mass violence. Areas with mixed populations, such as Baghdad, the northern city of Tel Afar and Diyala governorate, were the worst affected.

The sharp rise in sectarian clashes was one of the main reasons cited for the surge in 2007.[40] However, the US military's claims that MNF-I and Iraqi operations reduced 'ethno-sectarian' deaths by 55 per cent across Iraq and by 80 per cent in Baghdad since their peak in December 2006 should be treated with caution.[41] Estimates of the dynamics of sectarian violence are complicated by the difficulty of establishing 'whether the perpetrators' intents were sectarian in nature'.[42] Also, stage two of the surge achieved success in areas

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[36] 200 people were killed and a US helicopter was shot down in the fighting. '"Hundreds" killed in Iraq battles', BBC News, 29 Jan. 2007, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/6308821.stm>.

[37] Cordesman (note 14), p. 12.

[38] US National Intelligence Council (note 28).

[39] Three central governorates—Baghdad, Salah ad-Din and Diyala—and the northern governatorate of Ninawa have 42% of the Iraqi population but accounted for 78% of attacks in May–July 2007. US Department of Defense (note 12), p. 17.

[40] The White House (note 16).

[41] Petraeus (note 24), pp. 1, 3. The term 'ethno-sectarian' is used in Petraeus's report to denote both the prevailing sectarian violence and comparatively marginal inter-ethnic violence.

[42] See US Government Accountability Office (note 30), p. 2.

where there was minimal inter-sectarian conflict.[43] Even General Petraeus acknowledged that the confessionally and ethnically homogenous Al-Anbar was 'unique' and that the US strategy of arming and financing Sunni tribal militias in Sunni-populated regions like Al-Anbar and Diyala might not be easy to replicate elsewhere.[44] If applied in more mixed areas, the marriage of convenience between the MNF-I and some Sunni tribes may indirectly stimulate further sectarian tensions. Furthermore, the Shia-dominated Iraqi Government has become increasingly suspicious of the MNF-I's reliance on Sunni tribes and could in response step up its support to Shia militias. In the long run, the possibility of the 'tribalization' of sectarian violence and its spread to non-urban areas cannot be excluded.[45]

A modest decline in inter-sectarian violence in mixed areas such as Baghdad in 2007 can be more directly attributed to the impact of 'sectarian cleansing' and a sharp increase in population displacement. In 2003–2004 the number of newly internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Iraq was growing by 100 000 people per year. It grew by 50 000 in 2005, and the total number of IDPs reached 250 000. In 2006, as inter-sectarian violence increased, the number of new IDPs rose sharply, by 435 000, reaching a total of 685 000. During the surge, in January–August 2007, there were over 520 000 new IDPs, almost doubling the previous total in just eight months.[46] The displacement involved the forced creation of mono-sectarian enclaves that were more difficult for enemy militants to penetrate.[47] The polarization of communities was most evident in Baghdad.

Operation Fardh al-Qanoon, the Baghdad component of Operation Phantom Thunder, contributed to this process both indirectly by tolerating sectarian separation and directly through the construction of barriers to separate Sunni enclaves such as Azamia from Shia-dominated areas. In addition, while stage one of the surge provoked new terrorist attacks that primarily resulted in Shia deaths, stage two refocused some of the Sunni groups from anti-Shia violence back to fighting the MNF-I and the ISF. From June on, much of the inter-sectarian violence in Baghdad area was perpetrated by Shia militias who took advantage of the withdrawal of the Sunni groups in order to push Sunni residents out, especially from the city's north-western districts.[48] This was largely tolerated by the Shia-dominated ISF.

While no major armed actors in Iraq, including Shia groups both inside and outside the Iraqi Government, stayed immune from sectarian strife, Shia-

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[43] US National Intelligence Council (note 28), p. 2.

[44] Petraeus (note 24), p. 5.

[45] Al-Khalidi, A. and Tanner, V., 'Sectarian violence: radical groups drive internal displacement in Iraq', Brookings Institution–University of Bern Project on Internal Displacement Occasional Paper, Oct. 2006, <http://www.brookings.edu/papers/2006/1018iraq_al-khalidi.aspx>, p. 1.

[46] O'Hanlon and Campbell (note 15), p. 33. With those displaced prior to 2003, the number of IDPs in Iraq may have reached 2 256 000 in Sep. 2007. Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 'Total internally displaced population is estimated to be more then 2 million (as of September 2007)', <http://www.internal-displacement.org/>.

[47] US National Intelligence Council (note 28), p. 3.

[48] Cordesman (note 14), p. 10.

generated sectarian violence seemed to come as much from militias associated with political forces inside the government as from the few Shia insurgent groups.[49] The role of state-affiliated and state-aligned actors in sectarian and one-sided violence against civilians had been growing since the formation of the Iraqi Government, which was largely along sectarian and ethnic lines. The association of some key Shia militias with the state and sectarian tendencies and mixed loyalties within the ISF continued to play a highly destabilizing role in 2007.[50] This 'sectarian creep' into state power also blurred the lines between sectarian violence, terrorism and insurgency.

Intra-Sunni and intra-Shia violence

The dynamics of violence in Iraq in 2007 were also characterized by a rise in both intra-Sunni and intra-Shia clashes. The widening divisions between the Arab Sunni 'tribal awakening' movement and the main Sunni insurgent groups were primarily driven by competition for power rather than by confessional imperatives. Even so, the growing religious extremism of parts of the Sunni insurgency played a role in aggravating intra-Sunni tensions. In October 2006 the Mujahideen Shura Council, the AQI-led coalition of Sunni insurgent groups formed earlier that year,[51] jointly declared with some tribal militias 'the foundation of the righteous state, the Islamic state' in Iraq, based on Islamic law (sharia).[52] Council forces went beyond Islamist statements and started to impose strict regulations and norms in areas under their control. This radical version of Islamism was rejected by some tribal groups, who were also attracted by the possibility of support offered by the new US strategy.[53] Nevertheless, the 'tribal awakening' has not 'translated into Sunni Arab support for the Iraqi Government or widespread willingness to work with the Shia'.[54] Abdul al-Rishawi, the USA's main Sunni tribal ally in Al-Anbar, was killed in a bomb attack on 13 September, allegedly by insurgents, only 10 days after he shook hands with President Bush during the latter's surprise visit to the area.[55]

In 2007 intra-Shia clashes intensified in the south of Iraq. In the summer, tensions between JAM and the ISCI-affiliated Badr Corps escalated into fighting between Shia groups in all the main southern cities. Advisers and supporters of the ISCI's spiritual leader, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, were regularly attacked by rival Shia groups. In mid-August, the Badr-affiliated governors of Al-Qadisiyah and Al-Muthanna were killed, possibly by units

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[49] The SCIRI-led United Iraqi Alliance entered government after the Jan. 2005 parliamentary elections.

[50] Petraeus (note 24), p. 1; and US National Intelligence Council (note 28), p. 3.

[51] The Mujahideen Shura Council included AQI and 5 smaller groups: Jaish al-Taifa al-Mansoura, al-Ahwal Brigades, Islamic Jihad Brigades, al-Ghuraba Brigades and Saraya Ansar al-Tawhid. It was later joined by the Army of al-Sunnah Wal Jama'a. See MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base (note 9).

[52] Mujahideen Shura Council in Iraq, 'The announcement of the establishment of the Islamic State of Iraq', Video statement, 15 Oct. 2006. A partial transcript in English, produced by the Al-Boraq Workshop, is available at <http://www.e-prism.org/>.

[53] Knights, M., 'Struggle for control', *Jane's Intelligence Review*, vol. 19, no. 1 (Jan. 2007).

[54] US National Intelligence Council (note 28), p. 1.

[55] Rubin, A. J., 'Sunni sheik who backed U.S. in Iraq is killed', *New York Times*, 14 Sep. 2007.

close to JAM. At the end of August, more than 50 people were killed in intra-Shia fighting in Karbala, leading JAM's leader, Muqtada al-Sadr, to announce a six-month suspension of militant operations. The increase in both Shia insurgent activity and intra-Shia fighting in the south was facilitated by the withdrawal of some JAM militants from Baghdad during the surge. Violent competition for power and resources between Shia factions is likely to intensify as Iraqis assume control of provincial security—in Al-Basrah, violence escalated with the drawdown of British forces, which started in September 2007.[56] However, despite violent clashes between rival Shia militias, for much of 2007 al-Sadr's movement and the ISCI remained the main components of the United Iraqi Alliance, the Shia political coalition supported by al-Sistani.

Other armed actors

In 2007 violence by non-state actors in Iraq went beyond insurgency and sectarianism, continued to fragment, took more localized forms and was carried out by a growing number of armed actors of different types.

Important armed actors on the MNF-I side included private security companies. At least 180 PSCs, with about 30 000 employees (at least 170 of whom had been killed by early 2007), augmented the number of foreign troops in Iraq by 20 per cent. The range of tasks given to the PSCs is unprecedented and they work in the most dangerous areas, often as stand-ins for MNF-I troops. The status of PSCs, their chains of command, operating guidelines and role in security operations that may result in civilian deaths have not so far been subject to any formal control.[57] There was a major international scandal after 17 Iraqi civilians were killed by employees of the PSC Blackwater USA who were escorting a diplomatic convoy on 16 September 2007.[58]

Armed Iraqi non-state actors other than insurgents and sectarian squads included in 2007 (*a*) tribal groups not associated with insurgency or counter-insurgency; (*b*) ethno-nationalist, primarily Kurdish, groups ranging from the Kurdistan Workers' Party (Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan, PKK) to the Kurdish Peshmerga militias that are only partly integrated into the ISF; and (*c*) violent actors at the local level, ranging from predatory gangs, sometimes reinforced by ethnic or tribal links, to 'neighbourhood security groups'. While this power-brokering is often driven by a natural impulse to create some degree of

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[56] US National Intelligence Council (note 28), p. 2. The second largest force contributor, the UK, cut its contingent in Al-Basrah by 1600 troops down to 5250—10% of the peak strength in 2003—and announced further major cuts. Walker, S., 'Brown sees more troops home by end 2007', Reuters, 3 Oct. 2007; and Smyth, P., 'UK troop withdrawals', Commentary, Royal United Services Institute, 11 Oct. 2007, <http://www.rusi.org/research/hsr/intro/commentary/ref:C470E091E6C335/>. Denmark withdrew its 460 troops from southern Iraq by Aug. 2007.

[57] Some PSCs are paid directly by the US Government while others work as subcontractors of foreign companies in Iraq. Project for Excellence in Journalism, 'A media mystery: private security in Iraq', 21 June 2007, <http://www.journalism.org/node/6153>.

[58] Blackwater is the largest PSC in Iraq, with about 1000 contractors. Glanz, J. and Tavernise, S., 'Security firm faces criminal charges in Iraq', *New York Times*, 23 Sep. 2007. On other incidents involving PSCs see e.g. 'Iraq arrests foreign contractors', Al Jazeera, 19 Nov. 2007, <http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/BCD517FD-B1F3-41EB-8CFA-B28ABC40AAFC.htm>.

order and fill the security vacuum, it also promotes the further fragmentation of violence and proliferation of armed actors.

Criminal violence, exacerbated by the release en masse of criminals from Iraqi prisons on the eve of the US-led invasion and the security vacuum that followed it—accounted for 36 per cent of all civilian deaths in Iraq in 2003–2005 and has continued to rise since then.[59] Public opinion surveys show that Iraqis often see criminal violence as the greatest security concern.[60] In addition to violence by urban street gangs, criminal groups engaged in black market activities such as the smuggling of oil, gasoline, arms and other commodities, and kidnapping for ransom continued to be responsible for a large share of local-level violence in Iraq in 2007. It is increasingly difficult to distinguish 'purely' criminal violence from other armed violence in Iraq, as rival sectarian, insurgent and anti-insurgent groups, as well as corrupt officials, often share the profits from these activities with criminal gangs.[61]

Underlying factors and implications

Of the broad range of factors that affect the dynamics of violence, the most critical are (*a*) the weakness of the state and (*b*) the influence and policies of external actors. These factors are closely interrelated; for instance, the post-invasion state-building agenda promoted by the US-led coalition emphasized sectarian and ethnic mobilization over national platforms and thus contributed to the structural weakness of the new Iraqi state.

State weakness

Of all three cases reviewed in this chapter, the state in Iraq appears to suffer most from a lack of domestic legitimacy and functionality. The sectarian leanings of the government of Nuri al-Maliki and its lack of interest in national reconciliation were underscored by its reluctance to adopt de-Baathification legislation that could promote Sunni political involvement and to pass legislation that would guarantee fairer distribution of Iraq's oil funds.[62] The large size of the Iraqi security forces, coupled with sectarianism in their ranks and the USA's selective support for militias may have long-term destabilizing effects, with or without the presence of the foreign forces.[63] Growing regional factionalism in the Kurdish north and the Shia-dominated south of the country

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[59] Approximately 40 000 criminals were released. Burke, J., 'Iraq: an audit of war', *The Observer*, 6 July 2003. On civilian deaths see Iraq Body Count, 'A dossier of civilian casualties in Iraq 2003–2005', 19 July 2005, <http://www.iraqbodycount.org>; and Overseas Security Advisory Council, 'Iraq 2007 crime & safety report', 18 Dec. 2006, <https://www.osac.gov/Reports/>.

[60] See e.g. Perito, R., 'Policing Iraq: protecting Iraqis from criminal violence', USIPeace Brief, United States Institute of Peace, June 2006, <http://www.usip.org/pubs/usipeace_briefings/>.

[61] It has been claimed that as much as 300 000 barrels a day of oil were smuggled from southern Iraq to Iran alone in 2007. 'Oil and corruption in Iraq part II: smuggling thrives in Basra', Environmental News Service, 11 Sep. 2007.

[62] US Government Accountability Office (note 30), pp. 2, 13.

[63] As of Sep. 2007, estimates of the ISF's strength ranged from 359 700 to 445 000. O'Hanlon and Campbell (note 15), p. 34; and Petraeus (note 24), p. 5.

make the prospects for effective power-sharing and national-level reconciliation questionable in the foreseeable future.

Although political processes in Iraq are tending to erode, rather than consolidate, the state, simplistic solutions such as the division of Iraq into ethno-sectarian quasi-states do not seem realistic precisely because of the complex interplay of multiple forms and levels of violence. The same is true for a highly centralized state based on secular Iraqi nationalism, an idea compromised by Baathism. However, it may be premature to write off populist cross-sectarian Iraqi nationalism as a potential unifying force to serve as a basis for at least a minimally functional and legitimate system of governance. Very few politico-militant forces have kept their nationalist credentials untainted, address social and governance issues and can reach across sectarian divisions. Nevertheless, some elements of this approach can, for instance, be traced in the mass-based Sadrist movement.[64] Any lasting solution to state weakness in Iraq would also require full, rather than symbolic, Sunni political participation, but this is unlikely as long as the US-led forces remain in Iraq and the Sunni-dominated insurgency continues.

The role of regional and international actors

While the USA, through its military presence, exercises the main direct external influence on the dynamics of violence in Iraq, there are several other significant external actors, from transnational extremist networks to neighbouring states with interests in Iraq—such as Iran and Syria—and other international actors and organizations.[65] In February the USA said it was ready to hold talks with Iran and Syria on the situation in Iraq, although official US sources still presented both countries as major destabilizing influences in Iraq.[66] Nevertheless, Iran and Syria took part in the Iraqi 'neighbours conference' on security and political matters in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, on 4 May,[67] and their deputy foreign ministers attended a follow-up conference in Baghdad in September.[68] Unlike most of the other external developments in 2007, the neighbours dialogue initiative had at least some positive impact on the

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[64] While JAM, especially its radical offshoots, was involved in sectarian clashes in 2007, it officially declared in Apr. that it had ceased terrorist activity. On 26 May al-Sadr delivered a Friday sermon calling for US troops to withdraw and for Shias and Sunnis to unite in confronting the occupying forces and offering reconciliation to the Sunni Arabs 'on all issues'. 'Sadr uses dramatic reappearance to deliver blast of anti-US rhetoric', *The Independent*, 26 May 2007.

[65] The influence of transnational terrorist networks on the overall dynamics of violence in Iraq appears to have been exaggerated. More disturbing is the role of the conflict in Iraq as a symbol and rallying point for transnational violent Islamism.

[66] While Syria was mainly accused of letting foreign militants heading to Iraq cross its territory, Iran was blamed for intensifying its financial, training and arms support for Shia militants since 2006. US National Intelligence Council (note 28), p. 4.

[67] LaFranchi, H., 'Iraq's neighbors weigh next steps after regional conference', *Christian Science Monitor*, 7 May 2007.

[68] Associated Press, 'Iraq tells neighbors violence could spill over borders', *International Herald Tribune*, 9 Sep. 2007.

dynamics of violence in Iraq.[69] The reluctance of other Arab and Muslim governments to offer major support to Iraq might be due to suspicion of al-Maliki's alleged Iranian sympathies and reflect his government's lack of legitimacy in the Arab world.[70]

Turkey, a major regional actor, was threatened by violence originating in Iraq. In October PKK militants stepped up their incursions from Iraq's semi-independent Kurdish north into Turkish territory. On 17 October the Turkish Parliament voted to allow the government to launch military operations against the PKK in Iraq.[71] On 1 December the Turkish Army fired on PKK forces based inside Iraqi territory.[72] Further Turkish artillery and air attacks followed from 16 December.

One of the broader international developments was the launch of the International Compact with Iraq on 3 May in Sharm-el-Sheikh. This joint UN–Iraqi plan, backed by the World Bank, was initiated in 2006 in response to requests from the USA and the Iraqi Government. It established a five-year road map for economic reform, reconciliation and peacebuilding and pledged debt reduction of around $30 billion.[73] A related development was the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1770 on 10 August. Resolution 1770 extended the mandate of the UN Assistance Mission to Iraq (UNAMI) for another year.[74] For the first time since 2003 the Security Council did not simultaneously extend the MNF-I's mandate.[75] While Resolution 1770 also expanded the UN's role to include strengthening of the neighbours dialogue process, donor coordination and implementation of the International Compact, this had no tangible effect on developments in Iraq during 2007. A qualitative upgrade of the UN's role will be needed to assist state building and the future national unity government in Iraq. It will depend on many interrelated factors, including the levels of violence and the pace of a gradual and planned—but imminent—reduction of the USA's military role.[76] To maintain its credibility in Iraq, the UN will need to further distance itself from the US military presence.

[69] E.g. after Nov. 2007 even US sources acknowledged that Iran had stemmed the flow of weapons to Iraq. Reid, R. H., 'US general: Iran sticking by pledge to stem flows of weapons, explosives to Iraq', Associated Press, 14 Nov. 2007.

[70] US National Intelligence Council (note 28), p. 3. In Apr. 2007 Saudi King Abdullah declared that the US military presence in Iraq was an 'illegal foreign occupation'. MacLeod, S., 'Will Iraq's neighbors help?', *Time*, 3 May 2007.

[71] These issues dominated the third Iraq neighbours conference held in Istanbul in Nov. 2007. 'Other regional crises steal spotlight at Iraq neighbors conference', *Daily Star* (Beirut), 5 Nov. 2007.

[72] 'Turkey attacks PKK fighters in Iraq', Al Jazeera, 1 Dec. 2007, <http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/79EAF5B4-B2C6-47E4-903B-FBE65BD439B4.htm>.

[73] On the International Compact with Iraq see <http://www.iraqcompact.org>; and 'Conference adopts Iraq plan', Al Jazeera, 3 May 2007, <http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/C841C9B9-BB77-4467-B8CE-28AE2935F8D5.htm>.

[74] UN Security Council Resolution 1770, 10 Aug. 2007.

[75] The Security Council's agreement to the continuation of the MNF-I's mandate was announced in a press statement. UN Security Council, 'Security Council press statement on Iraq', SC/9042, 13 June 2007, <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2007/sc9042.doc.htm>.

[76] On 26 Nov. Iraq and the USA signed a 'declaration of principles' for further bilateral negotiations on the long-term US military presence. 'Iraq deal eyes long US presence', Al Jazeera, 27 Nov. 2007, <http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/817CBD8C-DBCF-40E5-857C-C50E8B0F41E0.htm>.

IV. Darfur, Sudan

The context

Violence in Sudan's most conflict-affected region, Darfur, did not cease after the signing of the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) in May 2006 between the Sudanese Government and a faction of the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A) led by Minni Minawi (SLA/MM).[77] In 2007 the main patterns of violence continued a shift from state-based armed confrontation to a complex mix of less intensive but numerous mini-conflicts, with shifting allegiances and unabated violence against civilians.

The armed conflict between the government and the SLM/A in Darfur dates back to 2003. Rebels in Darfur were encouraged by the success of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) insurgency in the south of the country.[78] At the same time, the Government of Sudan was able to redeploy forces from the south due to progress in peace negotiations with the SPLM. Unwilling to be forced to make concessions to yet another insurgency and fearing international involvement, the government launched a harsh counter-insurgency campaign in Darfur, also involving some local Arab nomadic groups.

Darfur is one of the least developed parts of Sudan. The region's north is badly affected by the desertification of the Sahel, while the populations of eco-logically more stable areas such as Jebel Marra are expanding rapidly.[79] Most of the Arab tribes in the region are either cattle nomads, such as the Rezeigat, or camel nomads, such as the Mahariya. Some non-Arabs, such as the Zaghawa, are also camel nomads, but most non-Arab tribes, including the Fur and Massalit, are settled farmers. Livelihood patterns and social factors have trad-itionally been the most important factors in the tribal identities of the almost entirely Muslim population than Arab or non-Arab ethnicity.

A systematic drive by the nomads—who traditionally have better military organization—to seize land from settled tribes, especially in Jebel Marra, started with the droughts and famine of the mid-1980s. Inter-tribal tensions over land and water were exacerbated by a policy implemented by the second Sadiq al-Mahdi government (1986–89) of arming Arab nomads from Darfur against the SPLA and mobilizing members of the Zaghawa tribe to support their kin in the civil war in Chad.[80] In response, the Chadian Government armed the Fur in Darfur. In 1987, 27 Arab tribes formed an alliance—the

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[77] The Darfur Peace Agreement was signed by the Government of Sudan and the SLA/MM on 5 May 2006. Its text is available at <http://www.unmis.org/english/dpa.htm>. The SLA/MM split from the SLA in Nov. 2005.

[78] The SPLM/A managed to gain major concessions from the Sudanese Government under the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) after a protracted peace process. The text of the CPA is available at <http://www.unmis.org/english/cpa.htm>.

[79] The Sahel is a strip of arid savannah running south of the Sahara desert, stretching from Eritrea and Sudan in the east to Senegal in the west.

[80] The al-Mahdi clan is part of the Arab elite that is now in opposition to the government of President Omar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir, who came to power in 1989.

Janjaweed (or 'hordes')—against the Fur, who formed militias to defend themselves. From the mid-1990s, the Janjaweed were increasingly supported by the Sudanese Government to fight against the Fur and other non-Arabs, while the Fur started to be supported by the SPLM/A and established ties with the Zaghawa against the Arabs. The Fur–Zaghawa alliance formed the backbone of the 2003 insurgency by the Darfur Liberation Movement (renamed SLM/A in March 2003)—which included Fur, Massalit and Zaghawa—and of the Zaghawa-dominated Justice and Equity Movement (JEM)—which was supported by the Popular National Congress Party of Hassan al-Turabi.[81]

While the conflict in Darfur had local roots, it was exacerbated by political struggles at the national level and by Chad and Sudan's policies of supporting the other's rebels. The broader dimensions of the conflict include sharp disparities in socio-economic development between the Sudanese capital, Khartoum, and the peripheral areas and the failure of the north Sudanese Arab elites to build a more representative system of governance in a socially and culturally diverse country.[82]

The fragmentation of violence

In 2007 small-scale conflicts in and around Darfur continued to multiply and featured several interconnected forms of violence. A lull in the fighting between the government and the main rebel factions—JEM, the SLA faction led by Abdel Wahid al-Nur (SLA/AW) and another SLA splinter group, G19[83]—in early 2007 was short-lived. However, even though aerial bombardment of rebel positions and clashes between the military and the insurgents continued in some areas throughout the year, state-based fighting declined considerably.[84] This did not, however, lead to a marked improvement in security conditions, which continued to deteriorate—especially for the civilian population—mainly due to a marked increase in non-state violence. The main clashes were no longer those between the rebels and the Janjaweed but those between the splintering rebel groups. The integration of the SLA/MM into the political process was slow and weakened the group's local support. Furthermore, a pattern of generalized violence became embedded in Darfur, with armed groups shifting alliances depending on the circumstances and engaging in predatory violence, local power play and cross-border incursions.[85]

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[81] Al-Turabi was removed from power in 2001 by more moderate Islamists led by the current president, Omar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir, and Vice-president Ali Osman Mohamed Taha.

[82] The 'Black Book', a pamphlet authored by rebel leaders Khalil Ibrahim of JEM, complains about regional disparities in Sudan and the predominance of Arabs in positions of power and wealth. Ibrahim, K., [The Black Book: imbalance of power and wealth in Sudan], 2000, <http://www.sakanab.wtcsites. com/black_book.htm> (in Arabic).

[83] The G19 is named for 19 commanders originally aligned with Wahid Nur who walked out of peace negotiations in Abuja in 2006.

[84] For this reason the conflict in Darfur was removed from the table of major armed conflicts for 2007. See appendix 2A.

[85] Natsios, A. S., US President's Special Envoy to Sudan, Statement before the US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, 11 Apr. 2007, <http://www.senate.gov/~foreign/hearings/2007/hrg070411a.html>,

Both defecting groups, like the SLA/MM, and rebel factions continued to fragment. With its leader in exile in Paris since 2006, the SLA/AW had less military clout on the ground but still enjoyed popular support, particularly among the IDPs. However, the SLA/AW, which first splintered in 2006 into G19 and several other factions, continued to divide in 2007. The National Redemption Front, an alliance formed by G19, JEM and several other groups in Eritrea in June 2006 failed to form an executive body and was on the verge of disintegration by mid-2007.[86] JEM was also torn by internal rivalries (e.g. between JEM leader Khalil Ibrahim and Idris Azraq) and split into several factions. Thus, in 2007 the rebels were more divided than ever and their key leaders were absent from the talks brokered by the UN and the African Union (AU) at Sirte, Libya, in October.[87] More representative talks among rebel factions were held in Juba, southern Sudan, in November. However, there were indications that at least half a year may be required for the rebels to agree even on the basic terms of a ceasefire, the first item on the agenda.[88]

In 2007 more rebel factions from Darfur were based in—and received support from—Chad (and, to a lesser extent, from Eritrea).[89] An agreement between Chad and Sudan to improve security along the border, brokered by Libya in February 2007, did not significantly reduce the support that both countries provided to each other's rebels.[90] While bases in neighbouring states allowed rebels to regroup, long stays abroad made them increasingly detached from the developments in Darfur and deprived them of local support.

The fragmentation of rebel groups was accompanied by their growing involvement in criminal activities, ranging from cattle looting and banditry to assaults on international peacekeepers and aid workers, usually to hijack vehicles and supplies.[91] While attacks against peacekeepers and humanitarian workers, primarily by the rebels,[92] represented only a tiny proportion of the violence in Darfur, they markedly increased in 2007, when AU peacekeepers suffered the deadliest attacks since 2004.[93]

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p. 1; and Human Rights Watch, 'Darfur 2007: chaos by design', Sep. 2007, <http://hrw.org/reports/2007/sudan0907/sudan0907web.pdf>, p. 5.

[86] 'Founding declaration of Darfur's National Redemption Front', *Sudan Tribune*, 20 June 2006.

[87] Associated Press, 'Mediators brace to reboot Darfur peace talks after rebel no-show', *International Herald Tribune*, 28 Oct. 2007.

[88] McDoom, O., 'Darfur rebels may unite but talks still tough', Reuters, 12 Nov. 2007.

[89] On military support to armed non-state actors in Darfur by Chad and Eritrea see chapter 7 in this volume, section V.

[90] Since 2006, rebels from Chad, such as the Union of Forces for Democracy and Development, and the Central African Republic have been based in and have operated from Darfur.

[91] In the first half of 2007, 70 UN and NGO humanitarian vehicles were hijacked or stolen. UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (OCHA), 'Humanitarian news from Sudan: monthly digest—Jun 2007', Reliefweb, 7 Aug. 2007, <http://wwww.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/SHES-75 UR5H?OpenDocument>.

[92] The signatory faction SLA/MM also engaged in fighting with AU peacekeepers. The government applied more indirect pressure on international humanitarian personnel, especially through delays in issuing visas and travel permits.

[93] The deadliest attack was carried out on 30–31 Sep. allegedly by SLA/Unity (G19) rebels who for the first time overran an AU peacekeeping outpost, killing 10 Nigerian and Sengalese peacekeepers and seizing military vehicles, arms, ammunition and fuel. According to the chief of the AU mission in

There were more defections by rebel factions, such as a Massalit-dominated group led by the former governor of West Darfur, Ibrahim Yahia, which joined the DPA in June.[94] Clashes between splintering factions overlapped with inter- and intra-tribal violence, including violence between Arab groups.[95] Some Arab groups started fighting against the government.[96] An Arab rebel group led by members of the Rezeigat tribe—the Popular Forces Army—established contact with G19 in Chad. Some of the Janjaweed fighters also joined forces with the rebels against the government or against other Arab tribes.

Nevertheless, most of the semi-autonomous, government-affiliated Janjaweed militias continued to attack tribes from which the rebels draw their support, especially the Fur and Zaghawa.[97] Like the rebels, the Janjaweed are very mobile and have been actively engaged in cross-border raids.[98] Attempts to dismiss the Janjaweed as either plain criminals or government-controlled militia driven by a combination of greed and Arab supremacism are both inadequate. The Janjaweed are mainly from north Darfurian camel nomad tribes, without traditional land rights, who have been the most heavily affected by environmental problems. These tribes have for decades been armed and subcontracted by the Sudanese Government to guard the border with Chad. The origin of these tribal militias helps to explain why only relatively few Arab tribes in Darfur joined the Janjaweed. The rest—cattle herders and farmers with traditional land rights, primarily in South Darfur—tried to remain on the sidelines of the conflict.[99] No more than 20 000 Arabs are thought to have joined the government's counter-insurgency campaign since 2003.[100]

Darfur, Rodolphe Adada, the incident 'has no political rationality', while SLM/A leaders blamed it on 'rogue elements'. Associated Press, 'African peacekeepers surprised by rebel attack that came as they sat to break Ramadan fast', *International Herald Tribune*, 1 Oct. 2007. The second deadliest was the killing of 5 Sengalese peacekeepers by unidentified gunmen on 2 Apr., for which the theft of a truck was the likely motive. Polgree, L., 'Rebel attack on African Union force in Darfur is deadliest', *International Herald Tribune*, 3 Apr. 2007. See also Shahine, A., 'African Union says Darfur militias acting with impunity', Reuters, 25 Apr. 2007, <http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/L25725561.htm>.

[94] 'Darfur rebel faction signs peace agreement with Khartoum', *Sudan Tribune*, 8 June 2007. The impact of such defections on the events on the ground in Darfur has been minimal.

[95] Examples include the clashes between the formerly allied tribes the Mahria and the Terjem, the Habanniya and the Salamat, the Habanniya and the Rizeigat, and the Hotya and the Rizeigat.

[96] Since the signing of the DPA, it is estimated that up to 4000 Arab fighters may have joined rebel forces in Jebel Marra by May 2007. Crilly, R., 'In Darfur, some Arabs now fight alongside rebels', *Christian Science Monitor*, 22 May 2007.

[97] In May the International Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant for Janjaweed commander Ali Kushayb, an alias of Ali Muhammad Ali Abd-al-Rahman, who was already in custody in Sudan on other charges. International Criminal Court, 'Warrants of arrest for the Minister of State for Humanitarian Affairs of Sudan, and a leader of the militia/Janjaweed', Press release, 2 May 2007, <http://www.icc-cpi.int/press/pressreleases/241.html>; and Human Rights Watch, 'Sudan: hand over war crimes suspects to ICC', 2 May 2007, <http://hrw.org/english/docs/2007/05/02/sudan15822.htm>.

[98] Associated Press, 'Janjaweed fighters kill 400 on Chad border with Sudan', *International Herald Tribune*, 10 Apr. 2007.

[99] Arabs comprise up to one-third of Darfur's population of 7 million and have long provided the local support base for al-Mahdi's Umma Party, which is in opposition to the present government.

[100] Flint, J., 'The Arab lion bares its head in Darfur's ongoing war', *Daily Star* (Beirut), 22 Dec. 2006; and Polgreen, L., 'Militia talks could reshape Darfur violence', *International Herald Tribune*, 15 Apr. 2007.

While the Sudanese Government continued to arm the Janjaweed and appeared to exercise more control over them at the outset of the Darfur conflict, it did not fully control them even at the peak of the counter-insurgency campaign in 2003–2004.[101] It was much less able—and probably less willing—to do so after the DPA. While the Janjaweed's origin and structure mean that their full disarmament is impossible, the government had not made any seriously attempt to disarm them, as required by the DPA, by the end of 2007.[102] Anger at the failure to provide them with promised land, privileges or funds was one reason why some Janjaweed turned their arms against the government in 2007. The accommodation between the rebels and some Janjaweed militias underscores the eroding distinction between non-state and state-aligned actors, who may often switch alliances.

Fragmenting violence in and around Darfur had high human costs and dramatic humanitarian consequences in 2007. Despite a decrease in civilian casualties in January–April 2007, overall one-sided violence against civilians continued unabated.[103] The main change in casualty patterns was that tribal and factional violence started killing more people than battles between government and the rebels.[104] Fatality figures in the Darfur conflict are often exaggerated.[105] The most accurate estimates, according to an expert panel convened by the GAO and the US National Academy of Sciences in April 2006, have been made by the Center for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED).[106] According to CRED, by mid-2007 the total death toll for Darfur from direct violence and conflict-related disease and malnutrition was around 200 000.[107]

While fewer people were dying in Darfur from hunger and disease in 2006–2007 than at the peak of the fighting in 2003–2004, over 2 million remained displaced, making Darfur the site of the largest humanitarian operation in the world. In 2007, up to 2.5 million IDPs and refugees were living in camps in Darfur and eastern Chad. Some 250 000 were newly displaced in January–September 2007, mainly as a result of factional and tribal clashes.[108] The population of IDP camps continued to grow, and nearly all camps around

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[101] On the arming of the Janjaweed see chapter 7 in this volume.

[102] The AU commander in Nyala, southern Darfur, Col. James Oladipo, quoted in Gettleman, J., 'Chaos in Darfur on rise as Arabs fight with Arabs', *International Herald Tribune*, 2 Sep. 2007.

[103] Natsios (note 85), p. 2.

[104] Gettleman (note 102).

[105] An estimate of 'close to 400 000' deaths in Darfur between Feb. 2003 and Apr. 2005, first made by the Coalition for International Justice and 2 US experts and cited by several advocacy groups in 2007, was criticized as being inflated. See British Advertising Standards Authority, Adjudication on complaint by the European Sudanese Public Affairs Council against Save Darfur Coalition t/a Globe for Darfur and the Aegis Trust, 8 Aug 2007, <http://www.asa.org.uk/asa/adjudications/Public/TF_ADJ_42993.htm>.

[106] US Government Accountability Office (GAO), *Darfur Crisis: Death Estimates Demonstrate Severity of Crisis, but Their Accuracy and Credibility Could be Enhanced*, GAO-07-24 (GAO: Washington, DC, Nov. 2006), p. 3.

[107] Guha-Sapir, D. and Degomme, O., *Darfur: Counting the Deaths—Mortality Estimates from Multiple Survey Data* (Center for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters: Brussels, 26 May 2005), p. 6; and Dealey, S., 'An atrocity that needs no exaggeration', *International Herald Tribune*, 12 Aug. 2007.

[108] 'Funding shortfall may force UNHCR to scale down operations in Darfur', *UNHCR News*, 25 Sep. 2007, <http://www.unhcr.org/news/NEWS/46f9313b2.html>.

El-Fasher, the capital of northern Darfur, and Nyala, the capital of southern Darfur were at full capacity by mid-2007. Tensions in the camps mounted during the year, with armed elements among the IDPs assaulting humanitarian workers and damaging facilities.[109] Despite an agreement reached between the UN and the government in March 2007 to improve humanitarian access, the proliferation of armed actors in Darfur threatened the security of humanitarian personnel and made it more difficult to negotiate the safe passage of workers and supplies.[110]

Underlying factors and implications

The most common explanations offered for the further fragmentation of violence and diversification of armed actors in Darfur are that it is 'chaos by design'—that is, an intended outcome of government policies—and that it is due to the destabilizing activities of Chad and other neighbouring states. The dynamic interaction of 'force and talks' typical of many complex peace processes—when armed actors try to make gains on the ground when the peace process is already under way in order to strengthen their negotiating position so that they can demand larger concessions—may be an additional explanation, in view of the hasty and unrepresentative DPA. Militias may have intensified their violent power play in an attempt to improve their positions before deployment of the AU/UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), which eventually took place in December 2007.[111]

While continuing violence in Darfur is not a product of the Sudanese Government's counter-insurgency strategy alone, government policy is central to addressing the problem. The government is unlikely to revise its position significantly as long as it thinks it is threatened by what it sees as open or creeping separatism in many peripheral regions that is backed by international involvement. From the government's perspective, the costs of chaos in Darfur are smaller than the costs of an internationally imposed solution. While Sudan may be considered a fragile state in terms of the chronic inability of its elites—both those in power and those in opposition—to build a more representative power-sharing system and to develop its marginalized peripheral regions, the government is not in danger of collapse but is firmly in power. It may resist external pressure and be unwilling to accept international standards in the area of human rights, but it actively engages in economic cooperation with Arab, Asian and other partners and maintains security contacts on anti-terrorism with the USA. With real gross domestic product (GDP) growing by 12.8 per cent and revenues growing by 11 per cent up to 17.5 billion Sudanese pounds ($8.7 billion in 2007), mainly due to oil exports, the government can mobilize enough resources to rule most of the country effectively.[112] Unable to

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[109] See UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (note 91).

[110] Natsios (note 85), p. 3.

[111] On the long planning process for UNAMID see chapter 3 in this volume.

[112] GDP growth is expected to slow in 2008–2009 but will still remain high at 8.9% in 2008 and 7.2% in 2009. Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), *Country Report: Sudan* (EIU: London, Jan. 2008), pp. 4, 14.

defeat the rebels militarily, the government actively combined divide-and-rule and stick-and-carrot approaches in Darfur and successfully manipulated the DPA to weaken the then most powerful faction, the SLA/MM. An internal regime change in Khartoum would only lead to the replacement of one group of traditional elites with another, without solving most of the country's underlying problems.

Another important issue is how the current dynamic of fragmenting violence in Darfur can be addressed if neither the unification of the rebels nor the disarmament of the Janjaweed is likely to occur in the near future. UNAMID can be expected to establish at least basic security in Darfur's urban centres and IDP camps and, in concert with the European Union deployments in Chad and the Central African Republic, to limit chaos along Sudan's western borders.[113] In Darfur, greater emphasis should be placed on inter-tribal peacebuilding initiatives that are largely overlooked by the international community. The SPLM/A will remain a credible mediator on Darfur, even as this role is complicated by the crisis in relations between Sudan's north and south that occurred in late 2007.[114] Limited external pressure could be put on the government by China, Sudan's main economic investor and trading partner, and, to some extent, by the USA, through its role as the largest humanitarian donor and anti-terrorism ties.

Much as the fragmentation of violence and the diversification of armed actors complicate the situation in Darfur, the relative ease with which former foes have become allies across tribal and ethnic divisions demonstrates that these divisions are surmountable. Many Arab tribes have the same grievances about the region's marginalization as the rest of the population of Darfur. While this may not be enough to reinforce the ambitious political demands of the rebel factions, it can facilitate indigenous inter-communal peacebuilding initiatives at the local level.

The underlying factors behind the Darfur conflict—deep political and socio-economic imbalances and the long-term effects of environmental degradation—are structural problems, and thus require a structural developmental solution as much as a political one. Key international actors should encourage the continuing gradual transformation of Sudan's rentier state economy and the enhancement of its development strategies in the peripheral regions. As such, the irreversible effects of Darfur's 'traumatic' conflict-accelerated modernization, such as rapid urbanization and the breakdown of traditional ways of life, often viewed only as problems, could also be mobilized as resources for development.

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[113] See chapter 3 in this volume.

[114] Dissatisfaction with the CPA implementation led the SPLM to suspend its participation in the government in Oct. Agence France-Presse, 'SPLM withdraw from Sudan national unity government', *Sudan Tribune*, 11 Oct. 2007.

V. Pakistan

In contrast to Iraq and Darfur, in 2007 Pakistan experienced neither a major armed conflict nor the fragmentation of a structured armed confrontation that qualified as major prior to 2007. Nevertheless, the proliferation and integration of various forms of violence—some of which have significant cross-border and transnational implications—could also be observed in Pakistan in 2007. While much of the violence in the major armed conflict in neighbouring Afghanistan was linked to instability in Pakistan's border areas, it would be wrong to view the complex web of tribal, Islamist, inter- and intra-sectarian and other armed violence in Pakistan only in the context of the situation in Afghanistan.[115] The political and religious violence in Pakistan has its own sources and dynamics.

'Talibanization' and cross-border violence

While the Taliban originated in Deobandi madrasas in areas of Pakistan along the border with Afghanistan,[116] in the 1990s the movement mainly spread in Afghanistan, where it became the de facto government in 1996. Following the US-led intervention in 2001 and the disintegration of the Taliban regime, many Taliban fighters found refuge in the Pashtun-populated border areas of Pakistan. However, the Taliban's recent revival in Pakistan has gone beyond the regrouping of the remnants of the Afghan Taliban. In 2007 a new generation of Pashtun Islamists, often referred to as 'neo-Taliban', were active in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), where they controlled North and South Waziristan, and were expanding their influence into North-West Frontier Province (NWFP).[117] 'Talibanization'—the spread of Taliban presence and influence—was as much a domestic problem for Pakistan in 2007 as the Taliban insurgency was for Afghanistan.

The neo-Taliban movement is rooted in radical Islamism merged with Pashtun tribalism. This combination filled a vacuum created by the erosion of traditional tribal structures and has stimulated their further transformation. From

[115] Rubin, B. R., 'Saving Afghanistan', *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 86, no. 1 (Jan./Feb. 2007), pp. 57–79; and Jones, S., 'Pakistan's dangerous game', *Survival*, vol. 49, no. 1 (spring 2007), pp. 15–32. The Uppsala Conflict Data Program records 2 ongoing minor armed conflicts in Pakistan in 2007: (*a*) between the government and the Baluchistan Liberation Army and Baluch Ittehad (Baluch Unity); and (*b*) between the government and Tehreek-e-Nafaz-e-Shari'at-e-Mohammad (Movement for the Enforcement of Islamic Laws, a neo-Taliban organization in Swat, North-West Frontier Province), with unclear involvement of other groups.

[116] Deobandi is a conservative strand of Islam in Afghanistan, India and Pakistan that advocates strict adherence to the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad and rejects the possibility of reinterpretation of Islamic texts to accommodate changing times or other religious traditions. The Afghanistan–Pakistan border, established by the 1893 Durand Line Treaty, is not recognized by Pashtun tribes. Afghan governments, including the Taliban regime, have refused to renew the treaty since it expired in 1993.

[117] Talibanization mostly affected the southern areas of NWFP in 2007 but was increasing in the north, particularly in Charssada, Dir, Kohat, Mardan, Swat and the provincial capital, Peshawar. Siddique, A., 'The pace of talibanization appears to accelerate in Pakistani tribal areas', EurasiaNet, 26 Mar. 2007, <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav042607.shtml>.

the end of the 1980s, a social system based on power-sharing between tribal leaders (*maliks*), landowning and merchant clans, and religious leaders started to give way to one dominated by Deobandi clerics supported by semi-tribal militias who were mostly trained in local madrasas.[118] While the neo-Taliban militias support the original Taliban of Mullah Mohammad Omar, they were in 2007 not a consolidated force and did not necessarily coordinate their actions.[119] The most influential neo-Taliban figure in 2007 was Sirajuddin Haqqani, leader of one of the strongest militias and based in Miram Shah.[120] As both a tribal leader and a senior Deobandi cleric, Haqqani was able to build alliances using both tribal and religious links. He supported military operations with funds raised from cross-border opium, arms and timber smuggling, semi-legitimate businesses, and the diversion of religious donations. Despite similarities and links between the Taliban-style groups in Afghanistan and Pakistan—and the futility of distinctions between 'Afghan' and 'Pakistani' in the Pashtun 'tribal belt'—the movements have distinct local roots.

The main cause of the erosion of traditional tribal structures and the rise of Islamist tribalism in the region has been the Pakistani Government's long-standing policy of sponsoring Islamist–tribal militancy—and its lack of control over the militias involved. Decades of conflict in Afghanistan have also contributed, for example, through refugee flows and increasing cross-border smuggling.[121] Pakistan's long-term strategic interest in maintaining a Pashtun 'buffer zone' between the two countries and in supporting Pashtuns in Afghanistan is partly driven by the need to mitigate problems with Pashtun nationalism among Pakistan's sizeable Pashtun population both in and outside the tribal belt, including in large cities such as Karachi. This was reinforced by concerns that the Taliban regime's defeat in 2001 would allow growing Indian influence in Afghanistan. These long-term interests conflict with the government's official goal of integrating the tribal areas into Pakistan's political and economic system.[122]

The resulting inconsistency in Pakistani policy in the border areas has been exacerbated since 2001 by a third factor. There may be between 85 000 and

[118] Rubin, B. R. and Siddique, A., 'Resolving the Pakistan–Afghanistan stalemate', US Institute of Peace Special Report no. 176, Oct. 2006, <http://www.usip.org/pubs/specialreports/sr176.html>; and 'Pakistan's military drift: Taliban all over', *The Economist*, 12 Apr. 2007.

[119] There may be 15–20 such militias operating in South Waziristan and 10–12 in North Waziristan.

[120] Sirajuddin Haqqani builds on the influence of his father, Jalaluddin Haqqani, who carried out anti-Soviet guerrilla operations in Afghanistan in the 1980s. Shahzad, S. S., 'Revolution in the mountains, part 3: through the eyes of the Taliban', *Asia Times*, 5 May 2004. Mullah Omar is highly respected by militias on both sides of the border, but the overall influence of the Taliban's older generation of commanders based in Quetta, Pakistan, is diminishing.

[121] Afghanistan has been racked by internal armed conflict since a communist revolution in 1978. In the wars of resistance against Soviet occupation and then the Soviet-backed regime of President Mohammad Najibullah, which was ousted in 1992, Pakistan supported, and provided a base for, Mujahideen insurgents. The Pakistani Government backed the Taliban until the 2001 US-led intervention.

[122] Currently, the FATA are under direct presidential authority, administered through a political agent in each tribal agency. The tribal agencies are represented in the national assembly. Basic services (health and education) are operated from the NWFP. 'FATA at a glance: administrative system', <http://www.fata.gov.pk/index.php?link=3>. The tribal areas have the worst socio-economic indicators in Pakistan and lack police and formal justice or tax-collection systems.

101 000 Pakistani troops deployed along the Afghan border, with much of their equipment and training provided by the USA.[123] Under US pressure, the Pakistani Government undertakes military operations against the neo-Taliban, while also trying to persuade some of the militias to come over to its side and promising broader reforms. However, the Pakistani Army is increasingly reluctant to fight in the FATA—where it suffers heavy casualties—in pursuit of what is widely dismissed in Pakistan as a US-imposed anti-terrorism agenda.[124] Another highly controversial issue is the covert support given to the neo-Taliban in Pakistan and to the insurgency in Afghanistan by parts of the Pakistani military and security forces.[125]

Militant activity other than clashes between government forces and the neo-Taliban groups also continued in the tribal areas in 2007. There was sectarian violence between Shias and Sunnis, especially in the Kurram tribal agency, the large Shia population of which is seen by the neo-Taliban as supportive of the Northern Alliance in Afghanistan.[126] In March and April, violent clashes in Wana, South Waziristan, between local Pashtun groups and the FATA-based militants of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan killed at least 250 people.[127] Also in April, approximately 100 people were killed in sectarian fighting around Kurram.[128]

A ceasefire between the Pakistani Government and pro-Taliban militants—part of the agreement signed with tribal and neo-Taliban leaders in Miram Shah, North Waziristan, on 5 September 2006—held until the middle of 2007.[129] Under the agreement, the government was also to withdraw its military checkpoints and troops, release militants captured since 2001, return their weapons and vehicles, pay compensation to tribe members for their losses, and allow them to carry small arms in exchange for a pledge to stop incursions into Afghanistan and attacks against the Pakistani military.[130] However, on 22 May Pakistani special forces attacked a compound in the village of Zargarkhel in North Waziristan, claiming that it was a training facility for for-

[123] Boucher, R. A., Statement before the US House of Representatives Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs, 12 July 2007, <http://nationalsecurity.oversight.house.gov/story.asp?ID=1389>, p. 5; and Burke, J., 'The new Taliban', *The Observer*, 14 Oct. 2007.

[124] Abbas, H., 'Pakistan's grip on tribal areas is slipping', *Asia Times*, 4 Oct. 2007.

[125] See Jones (note 115); and United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA), 'Suicide attacks in Afghanistan (2001–2007)', 1 Sep. 2007, pp. 85–89.

[126] The United Islamic Front for the Salvation of Afghanistan (Northern Alliance) was the main armed opposition to the Taliban regime. It is composed mainly of ethnic Tajiks and Uzbeks.

[127] Siddique (note 117); 'Pakistan's military drift: Taliban all over' (note 118); and 'Timeline: Pakistan', BBC News, 26 Mar. 2008 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/1156716.stm>.

[128] Abbas (note 124); and Hoodbhoy, P., 'Pakistan: the threat from within', University of Bradford, Pakistan Security Research Unit (PSRU) Brief no. 13, 23 May 2007, <http://spaces.brad.ac.uk:8080/display/ssispsru/Publications/>, p. 4.

[129] Khan, I. and Gall, C., 'Pakistan lets tribal chiefs keep control along border', *New York Times*, 6 Sep. 2007.

[130] The agreement followed the declaration of the establishment of the 'Islamic Emirate of Waziristan' on 14 Feb. 2006. Zissis, C. and Bajoria, J., 'Pakistan's tribal areas', Council on Foreign Relations Backgrounder, 26 Oct. 2007, <http://www.cfr.org/publication/11973>; and Hoodbhoy (note 128), p. 13. The Miram Shah agreement was just one in a series of controversial pacts between the Pakistani Government and pro-Taliban militias and tribal leaders in the FATA.

eign militants. A 'peace committee' of tribal leaders claimed that the raid violated the Miram Shah agreement. The neo-Taliban declared an end to the ceasefire on 15 July, after which incursions into Afghanistan surged and attacks on government forces and terrorist acts against civilians became daily occurrences. On 9–11 October the fiercest fighting in the area for several years, involving air strikes and artillery fire as the army confronted local and, reportedly, foreign militants in the Mir Ali area of North Waziristan, left over 200 people dead.[131]

Militants based in Pakistan's tribal areas also played a major role in the violence in Afghanistan. In addition to launching cross-border incursions, much of the training for suicide attacks in south-eastern Afghanistan took place in Pakistani madrasas, according to the UN.[132] In an attempt to counter this problem, the Afghan Government hosted about 650 tribal leaders from both sides of the border for a tribal summit, the 'peace *jirga*', in Kabul on 9–12 August. However, the participants were chiefly government-affiliated leaders, while major militant and radical political actors, including the Taliban and the Hezbe-Islami group led by Gulbiddin Hikmatyar, were either not invited or boycotted the gathering.[133] The *jirga* produced little practical result apart from President Pervez Musharraf's first public acknowledgement that the Taliban in Afghanistan received support from groups in Pakistan.[134]

In 2007 cross-border violence also involved the Afghan and Pakistani armed forces and often resulted indirectly from international pressure to step up anti-terrorist activity. For instance, Pakistan's decision, under pressure from the USA, to erect a 35-kilometre fence along a section of its border with Afghanistan provoked clashes between the two countries' armies in Afghanistan's Paktia province in May 2007.[135]

Islamist violence beyond the tribal areas

Prior to 2007 the impact of Islamist militancy on Pakistan's own politics and security was often dismissed as marginal by government officials and analysts. The problem in the tribal areas, however, is paralleled by Islamist radicalization, violence and sectarianism across Pakistan, including in large cities such as Islamabad and Karachi.

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[131] Khan, I. and Gall, C., 'Tribesmen urge Pakistan to halt air raids', *New York Times*, 11 Oct. 2007; Burke (note 123); and 'Timeline: Pakistan' (note 127).

[132] Equipment and explosives for suicide operations are mainly prepared in Pakistan's border areas, where the targets are also selected and funds raised. United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (note 125), pp. 86, 89.

[133] The *jirga* was boycotted by tribal leaders from North and South Waziristan and representatives of the Jamiat ulema-e-Islam—a prominent party in the hard-line Islamist coalition Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (United Action Front) that rules in NWFP and is in opposition to the government.

[134] Swisspeace, 'Pakistan: trends in conflict and cooperation', FAST Update, July–Aug. 2007, p. 1.

[135] Thirteen Afghan civilians were killed in the fighting on 13 May. Grare, F., 'Choosing sides: Afghan–Pakistani cross-border tensions rise', *Jane's Intelligence Review*, vol. 19, no. 7 (July 2007), pp. 28–29.

In mid-2007 Pakistan became a focus of international attention due to events at the Lal Masjid (Red Mosque) in Islamabad. This state-funded mosque was home to radical Islamists, led by brothers Abdul Aziz and Abdur Rashid Ghazi,[136] who openly supported the Taliban. Many of the students at nearby madrasas came from the FATA and the NWFP. The Islamists were known for their attempts to advocate and impose a strict Deobandi code of behaviour on the population and called for the rebuilding of illegally constructed mosques demolished by the city administration. On 6 April a sharia court was established at Lal Masjid and about 100 clerics from across the country gathered to call for enforcement of sharia in Pakistan.[137] On 18–19 May, four police officers were taken hostage at the mosque and Abdul Aziz threatened suicide attacks in response to any security operation. The stand-off escalated into street violence and ended on 10–11 July, when security forces stormed the mosque, where about 150 hostages were held. At least 102 people died in the attack, which provoked public demonstrations across the country and further Islamist political activism and violence.[138] The mosque reopened in October, broadcasting a recorded sermon by the incarcerated Abdul Aziz.[139]

The Lal Masjid crisis was the most evident manifestation of a broader process of Islamist radicalization in Pakistan. Musharraf's relatively secular policy of 'enlightened moderation' was increasingly compromised by his administration's support of the US-led 'global war on terrorism'—seen by many Pakistanis as submitting to US pressure—the high civilian death toll in the government's crackdown on Islamist militants, and the regime's growing authoritarianism. Sympathy with the neo-Taliban's support for Afghan insurgency—if not for the social and religious order that the movement advocated—spread even among urban middle class Pakistanis. Musharraf's government acquiesced to gradual Islamicization, trying to co-opt or channel it to the administration's advantage.[140] Musharraf had to tread carefully in order preserve the political dominance of the military, defend the interests of non-Islamist elites, avoid full-scale confrontation with radical Islamists and prevent their consolidation at the national level.

However, the potential for Islamicization in Pakistan has limits, and comparisons drawn by some observers between contemporary Pakistan and pre-revolutionary Iran are unjustified.[141] Radical Islamists consistently fail in national elections in Pakistan and are not a united movement.[142] Sectarian

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[136] Their father, chief cleric Maulana Abdullah, was close to former Pakistani president Zia-ul-Haq.

[137] On 9 Apr. the sharia court issued its first edict, against the Minister of Tourism, Nilofar Bakhtiar.

[138] 'A chronology of Lal Masjid saga', *Dawn* (Karachi), 11 July 2007; Hasan, S. S., 'Profile: Islamabad's Red Mosque', BBC News, 27 July 2007, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/6503477.stm>; and Hoodbhoy (note 128), pp. 4–5.

[139] 'Pakistan's Red Mosque open again', BBC News, 3 Oct. 2007, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/7025 477.stm>.

[140] E.g. the government's declared anti-terrorism campaign in practice had a limited impact on most of the armed Islamist groups active in Kashmir.

[141] E.g. Dalrymple, W., 'A friend of feudalism', *The Guardian*, 1 Sep. 2007.

[142] The success of the Islamist Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (United Action Front) in the NWFP and Baluchistan can be attributed to factors more specific to these regions: Islamist–tribal violence and ethno-confessional separatism, respectively.

intolerance among groups such as the anti-Shia Sipah e-Sahaba, the Shia Tehreek-e-Jaferia Pakistan and madrasas engaged in intra-Sunni violence is no less potent than Islamist dissatisfaction with the secular state.[143] In 2007 sectarian violence, in addition to ethnic tensions and regional divisions, continued to limit the prospects for radical Islamists to rise to power at the national level.[144]

Terrorism and anti-terrorism

The diversity of violent actors and the overlapping of four dimensions of political and religious violence in Pakistan—local, national, regional and transnational—is best demonstrated by the dynamics of terrorism and counterterrorism. While much of the low-scale terrorism in tribal areas is carried out by local militias, most of the large-scale attacks, especially suicide bombings, are organized by foreign militants. Suicide bombings were rare in Pakistan until 2005–2006 but became more frequent in the country's tribal areas and urban centres in 2007,[145] even as terrorism incidents declined overall.[146] Statements issued in July and September 2007 that were attributed to the al-Qaeda leaders Ayman al-Zawahiri and Osama bin Laden called for revenge on Musharraf's regime for the Lal Masjid operation and addressed the 'friends of Allah' in the tribal agencies.[147] In 2007 the USA did not rule out carrying out its own military strikes in Pakistan's tribal areas against the neo-Taliban and foreign militants.[148] Nevertheless, the presence of foreign Islamist militants affected security beyond the tribal areas primarily by galvanizing external pressure on Pakistan, mainly from the USA, to intensify action against Islamist militants in general. It also guarantees the continued flow of US aid to Pakistan and a degree of US tolerance towards the Musharraf Administration's authoritarian practices.

At the level of national politics, President Musharraf was accused of using counterterrorism for political ends when he cited terrorist attacks as one of the

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[143] International Crisis Group (ICG), *The State of Sectarianism in Pakistan*, Asia Report no 95 (ICG: Brussels, 18 Apr. 2005); and Riikonen, K., 'Sectarianism in Pakistan: a destructive way of dealing with difference', University of Bradford, Pakistan Security Research Unit (PSRU) Brief no. 2, 1 Mar. 2007, <http://spaces.brad.ac.uk:8080/display/ssispsru/Publications/>,

[144] Ethnic violence in Pakistan included Muhajir–Pashtun and Muhajir–Punjabi clashes in May 2007 during days of street battles between supporters of the pro-government, Muhajir-dominated Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) and opposition groups over MQM attempts to prevent the ousted supreme court chief justice, Muhammad Chaudry, from delivering a speech in the city. UN Integrated Regional Information Network (IRIN), 'Pakistan: Karachi violence stokes renewed ethnic tensions', 16 May 2007, <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=72145>.

[145] Hoodbhoy (note 128), p. 3. Suicide attacks directly targeting the military are not terrorist attacks.

[146] Terrorist incidents in Pakistan declined from 254 in 2006 to 104 in Jan.–Nov. 2007 and fatalities from these incidents dropped from 243 in 2006 to 86 in Jan.–Nov. 2007. In Kashmir, terrorism by Pakistan-based Islamist militants also declined. Terrorism Knowledge Base (note 9).

[147] SITE Intelligence Group, '"The aggression against Lal Masjid [Red Mosque]": an audio speech by Dr Ayman al-Zawahiri produced by as-Sahab Media', 11 July 2007; and SITE Intelligence Group, '"Come to Jihad": an audio speech from Usama bin Laden addressing the people of Pakistan, declaring war on the Pakistani Government', 20 Sep. 2007, <http://www.siteinstitute.org/>.

[148] See Boucher (note 123), p. 3.

main pretexts for declaring a state of emergency on 3 November 2007.[149] An overall decline in terrorist attacks in the country during 2007 was interrupted by the year's two largest terrorist bombings in Pakistan, which targeted the procession of former prime minister Benazir Bhutto, the leader of the opposition Pakistan People's Party, in Karachi on 18 October. While the attacks were blamed on unidentified 'Islamist militants', they also appeared to be tied to political struggle at the national level.[150] On 27 December, Bhutto was killed in Rawalpindi in a sniper attack combined with a suicide bombing. The assassination provoked violent anti-government protests throughout Pakistan, particularly in Sindh province, and national elections were postponed until February 2008. While the government blamed the attacks on pro-Taliban and al-Qaeda elements, Bhutto's supporters accused the authorities of a security lapse and complicity in the attack.[151]

VI. Conclusions

The diversification of militant actors and blurring of boundaries between different forms and levels of violence in and beyond the sites of major armed conflicts reflect a general trend of fragmentation of violence. They may partly explain the high civilian costs of violence and why so many countries relapse into violence when well into peace processes and post-conflict stages: armed violence becomes self-perpetuating and so deeply embedded in a society that it may not end, or even significantly decline, with the resolution of a conflict's main incompatibility.

The two most critical factors stimulating the fragmentation of armed violence and erosion of the boundaries between its various forms appear to be (*a*) state weakness, in terms of lack of functionality and legitimacy, and (*b*) external involvement, which can range from political and economic pressure backed by the threat of military power to actual military intervention and occupation. These two factors are often interconnected: state failure may be one of the reasons why external forces intervene, but, as in the case of Iraq, it may result from the dismantling of the state by the foreign intervention and the failure to replace it with a functional and legitimate system. Counter-insurgency strategies may also contribute to fragmentation of violence when the interveners or the government encourage internecine tensions in order to weaken the armed opposition.

[149] 'Proclamation of emergency issued by General Pervez Musharraf', *International Herald Tribune*, 4 Nov. 2007. Musharraf also cited judicial 'interference' in various spheres. Musharraf had met strong resistance from lawyers in his attempts to remove legal obstacles to a third presidential term, and his re-election in controversial elections in Oct. was contested in the Supreme Court.

[150] Gall, C. and Masood, S., 'After bombing, Bhutto assails officials' ties', *New York Times*, 20 Oct. 2007.

[151] At least 20 other people were killed in the attack. 'Violent protests rock Pakistan', Al Jazeera, 28 Dec. 2007, <http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/D804F355-D988-4EA9-9476-E049D6106BC6.htm>; and Khan, M. I., 'Bhutto murder: key questions', BBC News, 31 Dec. 2007, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/7165892.stm>.

In contexts where violence has fragmented in this way, even a minimal degree of state functionality and legitimacy can help to reduce the violence. However, this combination of functionality and legitimacy can only be provided by a domestically generated movement that has an appeal beyond its own ethnic or sectarian group, enjoys considerable popular support and whose activities embrace social, political, security and justice issues. Such political forces cannot be artificially constructed from outside. In some cases, the groups best prepared to play this role may be radical movements of a nationalist, religious or socio-political form, or a combination of these forms.

It is in the vital interest of international peace and security that external actors correctly identify these groups and encourage their further politicization and integration into political processes, rather than trying to marginalize or antagonize them. In weak, conflict-torn states, support to state building that combines functionality with local legitimacy should be a priority—even if the agendas and ideologies of the local groups most capable of moving the process forward are different from those promoted by the leading international actors.