

# The Search for Exit Strategies from Neo-Colonial Interventions

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## Résumé de l'article

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## **The Search for Exit Strategies from Neo-Colonial Interventions**

by

*Frederic S. Pearson, Marie Olson Lounsbery,  
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### **ABSTRACT**

*In many respects the current US situation in Iraq is one that resembles a colonial or neo-colonial policy. This involves forced entry by external great powers bent on reshaping the political system and taking command of the economic resources and their use. Although the initial conflict was international in nature, a persistent insurgency continues to challenge these efforts. The United States, nonetheless, continues to work toward a successful withdrawal from Iraq. This article explores the potential for successful exit. Using a case set of 17 extra-state wars for the period 1945-99, the authors explore factors of international support, exit agreements, and additional conflict variables in relation to exit outcome. Although a clear pattern of successful exit does not emerge, our findings suggest that some of our assumptions regarding newly emerging states and external power withdrawal should perhaps be questioned.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The term “exit strategy” has reappeared forcefully in the American political and journalistic lexicon. Last seen mainly during the bitter days of the Vietnam War and to an extent during the Bosnian intervention, the term now is applied to increasingly costly and bloody nation-building operations carried out in the face of resistance and insurgencies in places such as Iraq.<sup>1</sup> Planned exit strategies are something that former Secretary of State Colin Powell posited as a

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prerequisite before military interventions would be undertaken. However, in the implementation of the Bush administration “regime change” doctrine regarding Afghanistan and Iraq, military intervention, predicated on supposedly overwhelming American military superiority, evidently proceeded in confidence without much thought of a way out if the situation deteriorated or proved untenable.

Exit strategies are generally conceived as one response to ongoing military opposition or sustained insurgencies against the occupying forces. The term is also applied to the quandary of how to remove international peacekeeping forces from seemingly interminable commitments.<sup>2</sup> Implied in the term “exit” is a way to withdraw from such situations relatively gracefully with honor intact, i.e., face saving, and with some semblance of lasting political stability in the immediate area and the region. This outcome is not always feasible, as the helter-skelter helicopter evacuation from the roof of the American embassy in Saigon in 1975 demonstrated; indeed, the term itself is also inherently vague – the half facetious line from Vietnam that we should just “declare victory and leave” has been resurrected by some for Iraq as well. Thus, a “successful” exit strategy has dual criteria – impact on the withdrawing power and impact on the formerly occupied territory.

Exit might mean a complete military pull out, a withdrawal to nearby enclaves, a military pull back with the continued involvement of advisors and aid missions, or pull out with the proviso of return if the situation deteriorates. It can mean unilateral withdrawal, as Israel demonstrated in Lebanon and Gaza, or negotiated withdrawal in the context of a peace agreement,<sup>3</sup> or phased withdrawal of a “tit for tat” nature with each phase implemented either according to a timetable or contingent on “good behavior” by the opponents. One pundit<sup>4</sup> has observed that the only true exit from Iraq will come with an exit from the global oil-based economy, as there will be an inevitable attraction for US and Western interests in that otherwise quite barren part of the world as long as we depend on petroleum as a primary fuel. Nevertheless, despite the definitional and conceptual ambiguities, in this article we shall take exit strategy to mean full, partial, or delayed military withdrawal and we will proceed to determine which type of exit in what types of circumstances appears to foster the greatest subsequent stability.

In Iraq, of course, one widely discussed criterion for US withdrawal is the ability of indigenous security forces to maintain order and secure the newly installed government. Presumably, this depends on the success and speed of training such forces and on their integrity, firepower, logistics, and devotion to duty. In Vietnam it was clear that massive attempts to sustain friendly indigenous forces and substantiate a sovereign South Vietnamese government came to naught. Thus, there is no guarantee that the local substitution strategy, in Vietnam dubbed “Vietnamization,” will work in terms of fostering a graceful exit, particularly because all counter-insurgency operations are complicated by political sympathies, and political and military realities. It proved impossible in South Vietnam to win the “hearts and minds” of the populace for the government, which

was seen as at least to some extent a neo-colonial implant. Therefore, the indigenous ARVN (Army of the Republic of Vietnam) forces were notoriously subject to corruption and dereliction of duty, perhaps in some cases even involving sympathies with the insurgents. Hoped for democratic and nationalistic reforms under President Ngo Dinh Diem quickly gave way to a series of military dictatorships – even Diem’s US-approved assassination – in the face of continued and growing resistance.

Vietnam was ethnically divided, with Buddhist, Catholic, and tribal elements and had strong ideological splits as well, but not nearly so potentially divided as Iraq, with its notorious Sunni-Shi’ite-Kurdish divisions, secular versus religious factions, and still smaller minorities and clans.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, it would appear that the greatest obstacle to Iraqi indigenous security is the challenge of putting together a functional common army and avoiding future civil wars among contending militia, a challenge seen as well in places such as Bosnia and Afghanistan. One other consequence of “Iraqization” could be the reemergence of a military class of strongmen who threaten and perhaps eventually topple the democratic structure being nurtured. This pattern has been endemic in Iraqi history, and has been seen in Afghanistan and Pakistan and throughout much of the region, ironically in many cases depending on outside support from major powers.

Given Iraq’s continued chaotic security situation, significant civil war potential, and a long-term viable insurgency, complete with audacious acts of terror, initially centered in the Sunni community which so far has largely rejected the US “occupation” and the electoral process, it might become necessary to conceive of a US and British exit strategy more akin to Israel’s Gaza policy or involving some form of negotiated withdrawal.<sup>6</sup> This scenario presumes that Washington and London decision makers ultimately conclude that whatever supposed advantages there are in the direct administration of Iraq pale in comparison to the costs. Should this calculus become clear, the question persists as to what form of exit might generate the “best” outcomes, with the least damage to the withdrawing powers’ image and the least subsequent disruption in the disputed territory and surrounding region. This question is best investigated historically at this point, in situations at least roughly comparable to the current Iraqi dilemma.

Despite great fanfare for democratic liberation, in many respects the Iraqi intervention resembles a colonial or neo-colonial policy. This approach involves forced entry by external great powers bent on reshaping the political system and taking command of the economic resources and their use. Iraqis of all political stripes appear to agree in public opinion polls that the basic interest of American and British forces in Iraq is oil. Hence, there is a strong undercurrent of distrust regarding the outside powers, which generally are characterized as “occupiers” rather than “liberators,” even as the populace turns out to vote and the newly emergent political elites depend on the interveners for immediate security needs. American, British, and “coalition” forces also inherited responsibilities typical of colonial administrations, from re-establishing water and electricity (still very

problematic in light of the insurgency and disorganized implementation), to rebuilding previously bombed infrastructure, reinstituting the bureaucracy, and providing viable employment prospects for the populace. These circumstances have added an anti-colonial factor to the insurgent and political calculus. Iraqis, like the Vietnamese, historically have been among the world's most anti-colonial people, having experienced and ultimately resisted centuries of foreign domination.<sup>7</sup> No outside intervention, however well intentioned, can escape the stigma of being viewed by Sunni, Shi'a, and Kurd alike as a foreign occupation. The occupier role further fuels Islamist contentions that the West continues to crusade in the holy lands and further complicates the "Iraqization" strategy noted above.

Thus, if we search historically for basically analogous cases from which to evaluate and categorize successful and unsuccessful exit strategies, it appears advisable to look first at the end game of colonial wars.<sup>8</sup> Exiting from colonial occupation has proved a complicated and in many cases prolonged process, even when the basic path toward independence was long assumed or accepted. Political realities at home for the colonial powers, economic interests, and political and violence patterns inside the colony tended to delay the process and weigh heavily on the minds of hesitant decision makers. The "sunken costs" and "entrapment" effects familiar to conflict theorists,<sup>9</sup> whereby commitments are sustained long after any rational calculus would have justified them because of the prior investment of blood, treasure, honor, and effort, would seem to be especially pertinent in ending colonial or neo-colonial occupations. It is accepted wisdom that one does not "cut and run" from unpleasant situations, that one must "bear the burden" even of prior unwise decisions, that one must "stay the course" and "keep faith" with clients and dependents in the country. Careful consideration of whether a continued presence makes the overall situation better or worse tends to give way to such nostrums, which themselves may provide cover for continued economic or political domination. In the case of many colonial exits these latter motives have been pursued indirectly in subsequent years through political and military interventions in the former dependencies and long-term base installations in or near the former colonies.

Despite such inertial tendencies, exit patterns of one sort or another have emerged in colonial or proto-colonial interventions gone sour, patterns that can be studied and inform those wishing to achieve face-saving peace in anti-insurgency situations. These appear to involve such facilitative factors as international mediation or underwriting of the pull out, and in some cases negotiated terms of accommodation; substitution of local, international, or peacekeeping forces for the occupying power; population movements and security guarantees; prior negotiation among competing factions inside the occupied territory to participate in the political process once the occupier leaves – of course the obverse can also pertain, as the internal factions facilitate the exit of the exhausted occupier so that they can contend militarily against each other; transition authorities; and arrangements to sustain the former colony while it recovers.

Stephen John Stedman, *et al.*, have examined the end game of insurgencies and civil wars from 1980 to 1997 where the parties reached agreement and outside guarantors entered in. They determined that two types of variables apparently led to successful settlements: those related to the conflict environment and those related to commitment by the international community.<sup>10</sup> On the other hand, failed settlements featured prominent roles for “spoilers,” i.e., rejectionist forces and extremists, as well as the presence of neighboring states opposed to the settlement, and the presence of valuable commodities or “spoils.” All of these negative factors would appear to be challenges for Iraq, but it is important to determine whether similar positive or negative factors prevailed in exits from colonial as well as civil wars, since colonial disputes by nature involve outside interveners as occupiers. We shall look, therefore, at cases of internal warfare in the midst of outside occupation, situations resembling the circumstances of Iraq as much as possible. While Iraq certainly has the potential for civil war among sectarian communities or between these and the central government, provisions in the newly approved constitution, such as the provincial veto rules, seem designed to preclude that outcome, at least in the short run. Yet, they do not preclude insurgent resistance by those who feel alienated from the process. Thus, at this point Iraq remains an insurgent war situation in an occupation context, a pattern most resembling neo-colonial cases. Violence is directed either at the occupation forces or collaborators, as well as at the emerging national forces, in order to deter their recruitment and disrupt their operations.

## **THEORY AND PRIOR FINDINGS**

Clearly, the criteria of successful exit can vary from sustaining the colony's post-exit stability and development to allowing the former occupying power to save face. Some would evaluate a good exit by the orderly nature of the intervener's withdrawal, as for example in the analysis of the UN-sanctioned American peacekeeping involvement in Haiti to overthrow the junta in 1995. The mission technically was accomplished with relatively little bloodshed, and the forces withdrew in an orderly fashion, certainly a more orderly and honorable exit than the scene of the American withdrawal from its UN peacekeeping participation in Somalia a few years earlier.<sup>11</sup> Yet, Haiti's political stability and economic viability remained tenuous and problematic. Was this technically a successful exit? One could say so, but it entailed elements of failure in not having fostered an atmosphere of peace and recovery. We tend here to concentrate on evaluating such longer-term consequences, though the two criteria of effects on the departing occupier and on the occupied country are necessarily intertwined.

Among the factors noted above that might contribute to positive exits is the underpinning of agreements by the “international community,” which can include either regional or global actors in concert and through inter-governmental organizations. In other words, successful exits can depend on third parties

making the exit feasible, easier and orderly, and helping pick up the pieces to assist new governmental authorities in the former dependency. In the context of war or violence-torn societies, such involvement, though difficult, can be relatively straightforward, i.e., an international group or body agrees to undertake responsibility for the state in the war's aftermath. This was relatively successfully engineered in the cases of Cambodia, Eastern Slavonia, Bosnia, and East Timor. Termed the "new trusteeship," this approach falls naturally within the state-building and largely moribund Trusteeship Council traditions of the United Nations.<sup>12</sup>

Unfortunately, while such trusteeships were in the past implemented in the context of retiring colonial administrations (note the ups and downs of Southwest Africa, for example), the question of picking up the pieces can be complicated by the very involvement of major powers in neo-colonial disputes. In other words, the major power, which already has defined a certain territory as "strategic" or "integral," may be reluctant to turn the vital area over to a multilateral administration it cannot control. In addition the willingness of states to relieve a major occupying power can be affected by that power's regional and global standing; it has been argued that Arab states are reluctant to join any Iraqi peacekeeping arrangement, for example, because of Washington's perceived one-sided partiality toward Israel and a potential image as American puppets. Major powers are by nature keenly interested in, if not all that skilled at, regional politics and thus may be loathe to retire from the fray or to adopt ameliorative foreign policy positions to an extent necessary to clear the way for international or multilateral support. Finally, factions in the formerly occupied state may bridle at the involvement of certain regional neighbors or even international organizations if they fear being victimized in the process.

Other major factors thought to impinge on the settlement of internal wars and thereby potentially affect intervener exit, include "favorable objective conditions."<sup>13</sup> These involve experiences of a decisive or prominent nature that raise the prospects of withdrawal, such as a consequential military defeat. Certainly, the Dien Bien Phu and Tet experiences, no matter their ultimate or strictly military implications, psychologically hastened French and American conclusions that their respective Vietnam footholds were untenable. Similarly, defeats at the hands of Cuban forces appeared to clear the way for South Africa's withdrawal and acquiescence to the effective consolidation of a government in Angola (if not for the downfall of the South African *apartheid* regime itself), as did the psychological trauma of having American soldiers dragged through the streets of Mogadishu in Somalia. Turning points and trauma can also occur in the intervenor state's domestic politics and condition their exit from foreign entanglements. The fall of the authoritarian Portuguese government conditioned and hastened Portugal's exit from its African colonial entanglements in Angola and Mozambique.



Indeed, leadership changes are thought to be one factor frequently leading to strategic withdrawals in general. As to the “sunken cost” problem and parties’ unwillingness to back off from causes for which great sacrifice has already been made, as well as wider domestic and international considerations such as a major power’s future foreign policy credibility, Roy Licklider’s results<sup>14</sup> seem to indicate that in addition to power balances, leadership change on one or both sides, or at least significant personnel or policy modification at the elite level, might be necessary to condition an exit decision. This could entail an election or replacement of old leaders, an existing leader’s adoption of a new gambit promising political benefits (as in Prime Minister Ariel Sharon’s decision to uproot from Gaza presumably in order to consolidate on the West Bank, or Prime Minister Ehud Barak’s earlier withdrawal from southern Lebanon), or consolidation of leadership among factions in the hands of one dominant party (on either the intervener or rebel sides). Such factors might be reflected in or stem from the overall change of “favorable objective conditions,” including key turning point events and international conferences and agreements to underpin the withdrawal and the political transition in the former colony, as outlined above.

Another crucial aspect of objective conditions is the stance of third party regional neighbors toward the impending neo-colonial outcome. “If these seek to exploit the internal turmoil for their own advantage, international efforts at state building process may be seriously undermined” or delayed.<sup>15</sup> Soviet, Chinese, Vietnamese, and ASEAN support for the UN-sponsored Cambodian regime was essential to its success. Conversely, continued fueling of insurgencies against occupying authorities through regional states’ and foreign patrons’ provision of arms, aid, and sanctuary to insurgent forces can either disrupt processes of orderly withdrawal or hasten the end by raising the cost for interveners to stay. Britain, which had technically resolved to withdraw from Rhodesia but which was saddled with responsibility for the peace process as colonial power, reportedly campaigned long and hard to win Mozambique’s and Zambia’s willingness to press the Zimbabwe rebels to settle by threatening to cut off assistance.<sup>16</sup> The overall impact of surrounding African “frontline states” on the Rhodesian settlement was prominent indeed, and indicates that sanctuaries can work either to facilitate or restrict insurgents’ freedom of action.

North Vietnam could rely on Chinese and Soviet arms and assistance and thus appeared to offer a serious long-term challenge to the US presence in Vietnam, thereby discouraging American attempts to remain. It is unclear how much foreign assistance the Iraqi insurgents enjoy, but they clearly have considerable potential for such tactical support across Iraq’s numerous borders. Any splits among the insurgents might work to the occupier’s advantage as factions are played off against each other, but the historical record seems to indicate that factions tend to unite against the outsider, resuming their competition once the occupier leaves. Of course, international and alliance assistance to the intervener might offset insurgent advantages and allow the occupier to stay longer.



A further set of factors considered integral to internal war end games involves “clarity and appeal of operational aims.”<sup>17</sup> If local parties do not share a common vision of the future and are not at a point of sufficient “ripeness” or hurting stalemate,<sup>18</sup> then the ensuing peace arrangements might have to be transitional, deferred, and minimalist at best (as they technically are in Bosnia and Kosovo, for example). In cases of major power intervention, the situation may appear so unsettled that the power does not fully exit. French troops remained based in or near former African dependencies and frequently intervened to prop up these states long after independence. It has been argued, in fact, that too precise a timetable for departure and strict deadlines for implementation of provisions can work against the viability of a transition, as parties are tempted to dig in and wait out the process as the occupier departs. However, imprecise timetables and open-ended involvements can also undermine international willingness to participate in transitional arrangements.<sup>19</sup> Similar considerations affect the willingness and effectiveness of international mediators and power brokers in helping settle disputes, and the acceptance of mediation by major power interveners and minor power actors.<sup>20</sup>

The willingness to proceed with end game processes is also affected by the nature of the disputes and the disputing parties themselves.<sup>21</sup> In situations of extreme ethnic tension and mistrust, as seen so often in post-World War II and post-Cold War internal wars, any arrangements for co-existence as part of the withdrawal of outside interveners can present tremendous obstacles. Britain walked away from such severe difficulties in the Palestine of 1947 and dropped the problem in the lap of the United Nations. This withdrawal was probably facilitated by the normative change overtaking world politics at the time that increasingly branded colonialism, even of a so-called mandatory nature, as unacceptable, thus providing a fig leaf of compliance for Britain’s exit, a move driven largely by the objective conditions of exhaustion, chaos, and terror – a cost/benefit ratio that was deemed too high.

A count of how ethnic wars have ended, referenced by Chaim Kaufmann, also pertains to the probabilities of successful exit by external neo-colonial occupiers under conditions of ethnic conflict. Ted Gurr<sup>22</sup> studied the ending of 27 ethnic civil wars and determined that among the 15 cases not ended by one side’s military victory, only eight ended with an agreement that did not partition the country or involve continued outside occupation (five cases involved some form of partition and two were suppressed by long-term third party occupation). Thus, the potential for continued ethnic disturbance can either discourage occupiers, hastening their withdrawal to escape the chaos (as in colonial Palestine or India), or delay that departure for fear of national dismemberment, as in the Iraqi-Kurdish (US-British involvement in 1991) and Lebanese disputes, and potentially in Iraq under American occupation. Major powers would seem more susceptible to the latter considerations than middle or small powers, since they have a larger presumed stake in regional stability that can be affected by such dismem-

berment. However, the chaos might be so great, or the regional benefits so negligible, as to overcome these concerns and lead to withdrawal. One would predict less likelihood of timely withdrawal from places deemed strategically crucial or resource rich (Iraq) than those deemed more marginal (Somalia). The position of key regional neighbors also affects these calculations; Iraqi dismemberment would disturb Turkey in view of its fears of an independent Kurdistan on its borders, while Iran might or might not welcome an independent Arab Shi'a state on its border. This is why regional summits seem important as preparatory moves toward withdrawal.

Much of the literature from which we theorize about viable exit strategies deals particularly with civil war end games. At least one study, though, has looked directly at how colonial wars, as distinct from international system and civil wars, end. Paul Pillar<sup>23</sup> analyzed data from the Correlates of War (COW) project for wars between 1800 and 1980 and determined that 29 percent (13) of extra-systemic wars ended in negotiation, while 44 percent (20) concluded through capitulation or military victory, and, disturbingly, 27 percent (12) terminated in regime extermination or expulsion. It does not sound as though graceful or timely exit was the norm, though perhaps some of the expulsions involved such moves. One can conceive of the colonial power leaving and its local allies going along into exile in situations of capitulation. Negotiated outcomes for colonial wars were fewer than the 68 percent (38) of interstate wars ending in negotiation and roughly at the same level (32 percent, or 6) of civil wars ending in negotiation<sup>24</sup>

One other COW category, withdrawal, might also have related to exit strategies, but was exceedingly rare in the wars under study. For extra-systemic wars withdrawal occurred only in the Spanish-Santo Dominican war of 1863-65, coming after unsuccessful prior negotiation efforts, and the Sudani Mahdist campaign of 1882-85.<sup>25</sup> One must remember, though, that since the United States incursion into Iraq in 2003 began as an international war between two sovereign states and ended in occupation (some would analogize to the US occupation of defeated Axis powers after World War II, but there are key differences in the nature of the target country's military defeat and the extent of sympathy for Western initiated reforms) there are grounds also for considering certain international conflicts with features of major power involvement, occupation, and withdrawal. There were four withdrawals from international combat noted: the Spanish-Chilean war of 1865-66, as "combat ceased when the Spanish fleet withdrew from the Chilean coast in May 1866" and "[a] formal armistice was signed in 1871, and a final peace treaty in 1879"<sup>26</sup>; the Franco-Mexican war of 1862-67, as the United States pressured Napoleon II to withdraw all French troops from Mexico in 1866 leaving the Emperor Maximilian to fight on and finally capitulate in May 1867; the Sino-Indian war of 1962, after Chinese forces had pushed Indian troops well back from their disputed border, sending an important symbolic message; and the Sino-Vietnamese war of 1979, as Vietnam proved a more resilient foe than China evidently expected.

One gleans from these examples the evident importance of cost-benefit calculations as well as the original intent of a war or invasion; when China determined that the campaign in India had proven its point, it withdrew rather than risk international consequences of an “aggressive” land acquisition and occupation. By way of contrast China seemed to calculate that having its eye blackened in a war to teach the Vietnamese a lesson was probably not worth it. In both cases Beijing did not appear to worry much about the lasting implications of withdrawal as some form of loss of face (indeed if anyone had lost face in the Sino-Indian encounter it was India). One also sees the potential importance of outside third parties in pressing for withdrawal and making it potentially palatable, as in American pressure on France to back out of the Western Hemisphere. Finally, there may be a considerable hiatus between a withdrawal or exit and the conclusion of final peace terms, as seen in the Spanish-Chilean case. Endings need not be neat; promised troop withdrawals can be played out over time with much back-sliding potential and many pressures brought to bear, and domestic conditions in the formerly occupied state can bear heavily on the prospect for an overall settlement and improvement in post-war conditions long after the exit occurs.

Clearly, then, the decision to seek exit as well as the modalities of exit can depend on both micro conditions “on the ground” in the conflict zone and on wider macro considerations in the regional, international, and domestic home environment for the intervener. The first key decision is the intervener’s calculation that continued presence is not worth the candle. It then seeks a means of convenient and palatable exit, either in the very short-term, or delayed and phased over time. Conditions on the ground can be quite complicated, as Licklider<sup>27</sup> discusses in a review of endings for selected civil wars. If orderly negotiated exit is to be sought, the intervener and insurgents must communicate, and thereby have established a modicum of mutual accommodation if not trust, a willingness to alter policy at the operational level. Ceasefires must hold; advantage taking during exit must be avoided. Communication can be direct or through third party channels. Constituents, including domestic audiences, must be brought around to accept such modalities with the “enemy.” Arrangements may depend on the ability of communicating parties to deliver their side’s cooperation, and this can be complicated if insurgents are significantly factionalized and diverse, if indigenous allies of the intervener object and make exit embarrassing (as in Vietnam), or if various parties retain the hope of defeating the enemy at all cost. Some factions might allow the intervener to exit without interference; others might seek advantage or pressure for more long-term influence by threatening the exit process; still others might seek to exact vengeance. Finally, the underwriting of departure terms and expectations in a regional summit of concerned states, each pledging some sort of non-disruptive association with the agreement, presumably further improves success probabilities.

In the analysis to follow, we shall try empirically to identify those factors that characterize successful versus unsuccessful exits, exits that appear to leave

the former colony better off in the near-to-long run. Thus, we seek to suggest optimum exit strategies that afford the greatest hope for benefits to the retiring intervener and the former target state. Necessarily this entails consideration of factors generally thought to underpin long-term successful resolution of international conflicts. Fen Hampson has outlined many such factors, and generally concludes that:

Greater levels of success are . . . associated with the comprehensiveness and durability of the confidence-building measures that are put in place during the postsettlement or peace-building phase of an agreement . . . the list of tasks includes (1) reconstructing civil society at both the national and local level, (2) reintegrating displaced populations into the society and economy, (3) redefining the role of the military and police forces in the maintenance of law and order, (4) building communities and allowing them to survive by bridging the gap between emergency assistance and development, and (5) addressing the needs of particularly vulnerable sectors and groups in society such as women and children . . . However, in the short term, if societies are to make this transition [from a state of war to a state of peace] the key considerations are these: Did civil strife and violence end? And did the parties fulfill the commitments they agreed to under the settlement?<sup>28</sup>

It is perhaps too much to expect that departing occupiers will be willing and able to engineer such peace-building missions, though some critics argue, for example, that American assistance to Iraq could be greater and more effective coming from outside rather than inside the country, i.e., following rather than during a military occupation.<sup>29</sup> Yet, the quality of an exit strategy might depend on the degree to which international support is gathered either at the time of exit or subsequently to address the five points Hampson specifies. And for our analytical purposes one key question would be the emergence or not of civil fighting in the society after exit. Certainly, influences in the post-conflict environment will have as much (or more) effect on long-term stability and the nurturance of civil society in the former colony as the exit strategy itself. The two can go hand in hand, and one will want to consider the extent to which the exit is embedded in a larger peace-building strategy.

## **METHODS AND ANALYSIS**

The conflict in Iraq is one that involves an insurgency pitted against the external coalition forces led by the United States, and by extension the new Iraqi government and developing Iraqi police force. Although the original insurgent force appeared to be drawn from the former Iraqi military and guardsmen loyal to the ousted Saddam Hussein, it became clear as the conflict progressed and Hussein was captured that these forces extended beyond the Sunni population to

the Shi'a population as well. It has become clear, both in statements by kidnapers but also in the commitment by the forces, that all insurgents appear united in their desire to see the United States and other coalition forces withdraw from Iraq. Therefore, in order to study successful exit strategies, we refer to the Correlates of War Extra-State Wars dataset.<sup>30</sup> We focus specifically on extra-state wars as potentially comparable cases to the current situation the United States is facing in Iraq. Extra-state wars are wars between a recognized member of the international system and a non-state entity, such as a dependent colony, involving at least 1,000 battle-related deaths for the system member.<sup>31</sup> Clearly, the potential for civil war in Iraq – Iraqi insurgents pitted against the Iraqi government or against each other – is imminent as the United States and its supporters move to withdraw themselves, at least militarily, from the country. Yet, the role of the United States, having militarily taken economic and political control of the country, and the insurgent opposition to such moves appears to closely mirror situations faced by former colonial regimes. The goal of this article is to examine the various exit strategies employed by these colonial regimes and learn from history in an effort to better understand which factors might assist in successful exits.

For the purposes of this study and in view of data availability, we concentrate on cases occurring between 1945 and 1999.<sup>32</sup> In order to measure the various indicators of a successful exit strategy, we derive contextual details from the following resources: *Keesing's Contemporary Archives*, [www.onwar.com](http://www.onwar.com), and the *New York Times* Historical Periodical database (the latter two available online), for cases 1960-2000,<sup>33</sup> and the *New York Times Index*, the *New York Times* Historical Periodical database, and [www.onwar.com](http://www.onwar.com) for cases 1945-59. For additional information not found within these sources, we use various academic historical sources available either online or in hard copy.

Before we begin our discussion of which factors may lead to successful exits, we must first describe and operationally define what exactly a successful exit entails.

## Exit Strategy Success

Identifying a successful exit is more complex than simply bringing your troops home and out of harm's way. We identify three factors that together characterize commonly stated definitions of successful exit, in terms of a reasonably stable post-independence state. First, a successful exit would be one that does not result in civil war in the formerly occupied state within the first five years following independence and exit. To identify the occurrence of civil war within five years of independence, we use the Correlates of War intra-state wars data set. COW uses a rather stringent definition of civil war in that the number of battle deaths must reach 1,000 during the course of one year in order for an episode of intra-state violence to be considered a war. The Peace Research Institute in Oslo (PRIO) has also created an armed conflict dataset that includes episodes of intra-

state violence with 25 battle-related deaths or more in a given year. For comprehensive coverage of internal disruptions, we use a combination of the two sources, identifying the period after the end of each extra-state war *and* in which independence has been achieved.<sup>34</sup> A five-year period following independence is studied to identify whether and at what level intra-state violence ensued in the newly independent state.

Second, examining whether the resulting regime in the newly formed state is reasonably democratic is integral to many neo-Liberal definitions of success, especially in light of stated US and British goals in Iraq and Afghanistan. To measure the level of democracy in the resultant regime, we use Gurr's Polity IV dataset<sup>35</sup> subtracting the state's autocracy score from its democracy score, with a calculation of six or better being considered a democracy. We measure a state's regime score five years after independence. We recognize, however, that the Polity IV measure has more to do with executive openness than measures of state repression. A successful exit, it would seem, would leave a state democratic, non-repressive, and civil war-free. As a result, we also include the Poe and Tate measure of state terror for each case under study. These data are time delimited in that scores which are calculated using Amnesty International data are included only for the years 1976 to 2003. Our dataset begins much earlier. In addition to our regime measure five years after exit, we are also concerned with long-term stability. We, therefore, take the average state terror score for the entire 1976 to 2003 period in order to assess overall state terror for each case.

The third relevant measure of exit success is economic growth and sustainability in the newly formed state within five years of independence. While it may be unreasonable to expect departing occupiers to guarantee or facilitate economic success, their legacy in departure may well depend on the conditions they leave behind. We measure economic growth by looking at the percent change of the real gross domestic product, or GDP, between years one and five post-independence. GDP data are available through the Pennsylvania State University's World Tables. In order for a newly emerging state to be considered minimally economically successful, we suggest that it must maintain an average of two percent growth per year for the four year period, meaning economic success is considered to have occurred if a state has a growth rate of eight percent or better.

Each of these variables is explored separately, but we ultimately define exit success using a measure that incorporates all three individual measures. "Success" is coded dichotomously with 0 meaning "unsuccessful" and 1 meaning "successful." For an exit to be coded as "successful," the formerly occupied territory must have remained civil war-free, have obtained a regime score of six or better, and obtained an economic growth rate of eight percent or better for the five year period following independence. These are admittedly stringent criteria and we shall also explore partial success patterns. Of course, exit success also entails both subsequent regional stability implications and the home front politics of the former intervener. We do not at this point include these measures,

but such factors are discussed in case studies surrounding the consideration of successful outcomes.

## **Predictor Variables**

We explore three categories of variables as potential predictors of exit success. As indicated above, we are interested in exploring international and regional support indicators and conflict variables. In addition, we include several measures of the actual exit agreement, as well as several control variables. There are several relevant measures within each of these categories, all of which are explored further below.

It is clear that support for various parties during the midst of insurgency and war can have a significant impact on conflict outcome. We include several measures of support in an effort to better understand which are more likely to be associated with successful exit, differentiating between diplomatic support and material assistance for either the intervener or the insurgents. Material assistance may include aid in the form of financial assistance, weapons, troops, training, or havens. We also differentiate between major power support (either diplomatic or material) and non-major power support. We would expect that international support for the external power would likely delay and prevent a successful exit, while international support for insurgents could potentially facilitate the exit and result in de-colonization, particularly if that support involves material assistance from a major power.

We also examined whether or not there had been a major or defining political event within the external power (such as political coup) or major military defeat on the battlefield on the part of the external power. Such events are thought likely to hasten exit, forcing states to potentially withdraw quicker without regard for effective institution building or necessary trust-building measures. Also included is a measure of international or regional organization involvement. We would expect that such involvement would provide a sense of legitimacy and improve chances of successful exit.

We consider as well the polarization of factions within the rebellious territory. Obviously, fractionalization among insurgents has the potential to derail goals of independence, as well as create the potential for future animosity among competing factions within a newly developing state. As a result, we created a measure of "polarization" seeking to identify both political factions prior to independence, which could be viewed as a healthy form of competition in some instances and possibly unhealthy in others, as well as the presence of various armed factions working against each other prior to the exit of the external power.

Looking more closely at types or aspects of exit agreements, we note options ranging from internal power sharing to external guarantees. Power-sharing mechanisms have been employed in several divided societies, with some



experiencing more success than others. It is recognized that post-colonial states are particularly prone to intra-state conflict due to the divide-and-conquer techniques employed by colonial powers.<sup>36</sup> Through the use of power-sharing techniques, such as formal allocation of offices or parliamentary representation to ethnic or identity groups, newly emerging governments purportedly are able to provide security for minorities who otherwise might feel threatened. As a result, we include several measures of exit agreements designed to capture security arrangements that could help thwart future conflict. The first of these variables is a dichotomous measure indicating whether or not the exit agreement includes some form of power sharing among domestic groups in the newly emerging state. We also include two measures designed to identify military enforcement and external supervision of the agreement and/or exit. Both are coded dichotomously as well.

It has been argued by conflict resolution scholars that including all stakeholders in negotiations will produce more viable results. We thus hypothesize that failure to include all relevant parties in negotiations will result in the breakdown of talks and/or failure to abide by the agreement arrived at through negotiation. As a result, we include a measure indicating whether or not negotiations for exit included all parties, including the occupying powers, and any competing political or military groups within the territory.

It has also been suggested that post-colonial states struggle economically due to continued economic ties with their former colonial powers. Some have even suggested that political colonialism may have ended for many, but economic colonialism remains. On the critical side one might hypothesize that exit agreements tying the newly emerging state to the former occupying power economically might have potentially detrimental political effects in the new state, though of course accruing economic benefits might also improve the political standing of the new government. As a result, we include another dichotomous measure that indicates whether or not exit agreements include such provisions.

### **Potential Intervening Variables**

We include several control variables. It is possible that conflicts with longer duration, more battle deaths, and higher intensities are more likely to experience difficult exits. As a result, we include the duration in number of war days. We also include the number of battle-related deaths and a measure of violence intensity measured by the average number of deaths per day. All of these variables are available using the Correlates of War Extra-State dataset.

We include a measure of major power involvement, expecting that who the external power (i.e., intervener) is might influence exit outcome. The Correlates of War project has identified major powers for the period from 1945 to the present. We also created a nominal level variable in order to code the external power. Exit strategy success for one country might differ from that of another.

Finally, we include measures for demographic polarization and disarmament. We would expect that demographically polarized states are more likely to experience ongoing post-colonial conflict than states that are relatively homogeneous or states that are very diverse. As a result, we follow an expanded version of the polarization variable developed by Errol Henderson and David Singer.<sup>37</sup> We code states with populations approximating anywhere from a 50/50 split to an 80/20 split.<sup>38</sup> We consider populations to be demographically polarized if their majority and minority populations approximate the ratios described either ethnically, religiously, or linguistically.

Our final control measure is disarmament. Although disarmament data are difficult to collect, we code instances of disarming when it is clear that it occurred to some extent, was attempted unsuccessfully, or noted when armed factions were reintegrated in the national army. We would expect that successful disarmament would bode well for a newly functioning regime.

## FINDINGS

The approach of studying cases comparable to the United States' current predicament in Iraq through the exploration of extra-state war resulted in only 13 cases for the period 1945 to 1999; while this can be considered a population of colonial exit cases, it is too small a number for sophisticated statistical analysis. Four additional cases of extra-state war were dismissed from the analyses either because they did not result in exit of the external power (Hyderabad and Tibet) or the territory has not achieved independence (East Timor, currently a UN protectorate, and Western Sahara, where Morocco currently maintains part of the territory as well). All cases are listed in the Appendix.

It is not surprising that exit strategies of external states often "fail" if one hopes to leave behind an independent, democratic, economically viable state reasonably free of intra-state violence. Of the 13 cases of exit and independence, the case that comes closest to full "success" is the Malaya insurgency (1948-57). Although Malaysia continued to experience internal strife, these were minor struggles short of war, even short of intermediate intra-state violence for that matter. We can also identify Namibia (1975-88) as a successful exit when South Africa left the state independent. After five years of statehood, Namibia was rated a six on the Polity IV regime scale and had not experienced civil war. The country's economy was strained, however, with a four-year post-independence growth rate of 7.8. Although Namibia's average state terror score is a relatively unimpressive 3.11, and despite lingering socio-political challenges for both Malaysia and Namibia, we will include them as cases of "full" success despite the limitations.

How do these two cases compare to the 11 unsuccessful exits? A clear predictor variable does not appear. There was no clear pattern of external support of

colonial powers in successful exits; in one case, Britain in Malaysia had external support, and in the other, South Africa in Namibia, did not. There was also a mixed pattern in cases of unsuccessful exits; four had no support and seven had support. This might yet indicate that external support tended to complicate or delay exits, but the evidence is still uncertain. The majority of our cases (all but one) involved some form of outside support for the insurgent group in their independence campaign. Of course, this is partly a function of the time in which many of these cases took place. Following the creation of the United Nations and the expressed rights of self-determination for colonial states, support for decolonization was widespread. Both of our success cases had diplomatic and/or material support for insurgents from major powers, but so did a number of unsuccessful exits as well; it will be instructive to determine the external assistance pattern in future analyses of earlier colonial cases.

As indicated earlier, key events either within the occupying power, as in France and Portugal, or significant military defeats contributed significantly to the decision by the external powers to make an exit. There were four cases of unsuccessful exits resulting from each of these types of events, but there were also five cases without major political or military events, two of which were successful exits. We might suspect that such events tend to sway support in the direction of a more rapid exit, which it appears, may have undesirable consequences.

Our remaining support variables, pre-exit polarization and the involvement of international or regional organizations, were even less compelling. Both unsuccessful and successful exits exhibited these characteristics somewhat evenly. Clearly, in Iraq pre-exit polarization exists. The good news is that armed factions also existed in Malaya prior to the British exit. Although low-level violence continued to exist periodically, all out war was avoided. Of course, the armed factions within Malaysia were actually defeated by the new government with the assistance of the British. This will be discussed further below.

We might also speculate that the involvement of the United Nations could help with issues of exit and post-exit legitimacy. The results of our analysis, however, showed one UN involvement in the two successes, and six (of 11) in the failures. Thus, there is no clear historical evidence of consistent UN success in exit facilitation. The United States has already made attempts to work with the United Nations in Iraq, although significant UN military involvement has failed to materialize up to this point given the strained US-UN relationship.

Arrangements surrounding the agreement for exit and independence have proved revealing. We would expect that agreements that provide for internal (power sharing, see Table 1) and external security arrangements designed to protect minorities, as well as mechanisms for guaranteeing that protection, would be associated with successful exit. Our findings, however, did not support this assumption.

**Table 1**

Power-sharing or Internal Security Arrangements and Exit Outcome

		Security Arrangements	
		No Arrangements	Arrangements Included
Exit Success	Unsuccessful	2	9
	Successful	2	0

Although the majority of cases included security or power-sharing arrangements, the two cases of success did not. It is clear that power-sharing arrangements can help protect minorities, but they can be problematic as well. Although Malaysia and Namibia both experienced internal armed factions prior to independence, neither agreement for exit involved security arrangements for minority groups. In Malaysia, however, while there was no formal agreement for post-exit power sharing among ethnic groups, appreciable Chinese electoral representation did take place in a united front electoral coalition. Britain had participated in talks prior to the formation of this coalition. Neither Malaysia nor Namibia experienced post-exit civil wars.

Given that power-sharing/security arrangements were not included in successful exit agreements, it is not surprising that these two cases did not include all relevant stakeholders in negotiations for exit either. Only six of the 13 cases included all relevant parties, but all of those were in unsuccessful exits. Other security arrangements involving exit agreements include military or peacekeeping enforcement and external supervision of the agreement implementation. The two success cases were split on these variables and the majority of non-success cases did not include these elements. Namibia was one of the three cases to include such provisions in the agreement for exit, but Malaysia was not.

**Table 2**

Economic Favors and Exit Outcome

		Economic Favors	
		No Favors	Favors Included
Exit Success	Unsuccessful	6	5
	Successful	2	0

One final agreement variable can be linked closely with the economic growth component of our measure of full success. Five of our exit agreements included economic favors for the exiting power (see Table 2); eight of our cases did not, including both Malaysia and Namibia. This would seem to support the notion that economic ties to the external power might complicate the newly emerging state's chances of success.

Our control variables include conflict intensity, major power status of the intervening party, identification of the external power, and demographic polarization of the newly emerging state. None of these variables emerged as associated with exit success, with the possible exception of identification of the external power ( $n=5$ ). External powers involved in extra-state wars (where exit and independence occurred) during the 1945-99 time period include France, Great Britain, Portugal, South Africa, and the Netherlands. Although France and Portugal account for eight of our 13 cases, none of their exit strategies resulted in success as we have defined it. Both of these states, as indicated earlier, however, experienced political changes within their countries that facilitated or hastened exit, which did not necessarily benefit their former colonies except to afford independence. The two cases of success include the former British colony of Malaysia, as well as Namibia, which was able to obtain independence once South Africa left amidst strong pressure from the United Nations.

Not surprisingly, reliable information on conflict disarmament is somewhat elusive. We can assume to some degree that when disarmament occurs, or armed factions are incorporated and integrated into a national army, we will hear about it. If disarmament is not even addressed by the exit agreement or implementation of the agreement, we are less likely to find that fact included in case narratives. Disarmament was attempted and successful in two of the 13 cases. One of these cases was Namibia, a success. Five cases involved the integration of armed forces into a national army. These were all unsuccessful exits. We lacked sufficient information to assess levels of disarmament for the remaining six cases, including Malaysia. This other case of success, however, did involve successful amnesty offers for communist rebels, which presumably would have involved some disarmament.

We can conclude that cases which meet our stringent definition of success can be characterized as those in which the insurgent group(s) received external diplomatic and/or material assistance, and their exit agreements did not involve a major political or military event, did not involve formal security arrangements for competing groups within the newly emerging state, and did not involve economic favors for the exiting power. Using "success" as our only outcome measure is clearly problematic. Ideally, the US will want to leave Iraq independent, free of civil war, democratic, and economically viable. If that proves possible, we will be able to add the Iraqi case to the very small list of "successful exits." It might be helpful, however, to explore the dependent variables in isolation so as to get a better understanding of which factors appear to be associated with other, albeit less comprehensive, forms of success.

**The Occurrence of Civil War as an Outcome Variable**

Analysts clearly are concerned with the potential of civil war occurring in Iraq. Exploring civil war and intra-state violence short of war seems imperative. Only four of our 13 cases experienced civil war within five years, and all of the cases were quick transitions from extra-state war to civil war. Our civil war cases include Indonesia, Indochina (Vietnam), Angola, and Algeria.<sup>39</sup> The remaining nine cases can be considered successful exits if we are only concerned about a newly emerging state’s potential for civil war. Lowering our battle-death threshold, however, adds two additional cases of intra-state violence within five years of exit and independence: Malaysia (thus amending our earlier unqualified “success” label) and Mozambique. Mozambique involved minor levels of conflict with Renamo forces opposed to the government that developed into a major civil war in 1981 lasting until 1992, according to PRIO.

**Table 3**

International Support of the External Government and Intra-State Violence Post-Exit Success

		International Support for External Government	
		No Identifiable Support	Diplomatic or Material Support
Intra-State Violence	Did Not Occur	6	1
	Did Occur	2	4

About half of the civil war cases (unsuccessful exits according to this definition) involved external states giving the occupying power at least diplomatic support, whereas all but one of the cases where civil war did not occur did not involve such external support. It is clear that in Iraq support for US intervention has been limited but does exist. Other support-type variables did not produce differences between cases with intra-state war after exit and those without. The same can be said for some of our agreement variables. Security arrangements, military enforcement, and external supervision of exit agreements produced similar results for both sets of cases (those experiencing intra-state violence and those that did not). On the other hand, two variables did provide some suggestive (though not statistically strong) associations. These are presented in Tables 4 and 5 on the following page.

**Table 4**

Parties Included in Negotiations and Intra-State Violence Post-Exit Success

		Negotiations	
		Did Not Involve All Parties	Involved All Relevant Parties
Intra-State Violence	Did Not Occur	3	4
	Did Occur	4	2

**Table 5**

Economic Favors to External Power and Intra-State Violence Post-Exit Success

		Economic Favors	
		Did Not Involve Favors	Did Involve Favors
Intra-State Violence	Did Not Occur	6	1
	Did Occur	2	4

It appears that when negotiations involved all relevant parties, subsequent intra-state violence was slightly less likely to occur. No clear distinction occurred when negotiations did not involve all parties. Similarly, when violence occurred it was more likely that discussions had not involved all parties. This is consistent with our expectations as it relates to involving all stakeholders constructively in settlement negotiations.

Similarly, we find that agreements that did not involve economic favors were less likely to result in intra-state violence situations post-exit. This particular finding is consistent with what we found earlier lending considerable support to the argument that mandated economic ties to external powers can result in unstable, less peaceful newly emergent states.

None of our control variables appear to be associated with exit strategy success (when defined as no intra-state violence within five years of exit and independence) with one exception. Demographically polarized states appear to exhibit less intra-state violence than states that are not polarized, as seen in Table 6.



**Table 6**

Demographic Polarization and Intra-State Violence Post-Exit Success

		Demographic Polarization	
		Non-Polarized	Polarized
Intra-State Violence	Did Not Occur	2	5
	Did Occur	4	2

This finding is somewhat surprising, although the time frame under study offers us insight here. Many of the cases of intra-state violence involve clashes over ideology as opposed to ethnic, religious, or linguistic issues. The impact of social polarization may or may not have to do directly with the policies adopted by the occupying power, but historically it appears that it often does, as for instance in many African and Asian states where ethnic groups had been pitted against each other.

### Regime and State Terror as Outcome Variables

Another measure of an exit strategy's success involves the type of regime (five years post-independence), as well as the level of state terror exhibited after exit and independence. Clearly, the goal of instilling a thriving democratic regime is highly ambitious and challenging, as demonstrated in our findings. The only two countries to achieve democracy (identified as a Polity IV regime score of six or better) were Malaysia and Namibia, which we have already covered in earlier discussion of successful exit. We are also revisiting covered territory when we explore average state terror levels (between 1976-2003). State terror levels appear to be closely linked with the occurrence of intra-state violence within five years of exit. All of our cases averaging four or worse (higher) on the terror scale are states that also experienced intra-state violence or war. Given the lag in measuring state terror (due to the limitations of available data) we cannot be confident that state terror was a response to exit by the external power as opposed to a response to the internal security situation following exit.

Regime type is clearly a major barrier to exit success. To be fair, leaving thriving democratic states has not always been of much concern to external powers as they decolonized. It is a stated US goal in Iraq today, but the push for democratization has been a relatively recent development, and could conceivably give way if that democratic transition, for example, were to involve the likely electoral empowerment of a militant Islamic regime (note Algeria). We are also aware that desires for a democratic state free of civil war in a newly emerging

state may be somewhat contradictory. Several civil war studies have shown that semi-democracies and transitional democracies are the most war-prone of all regime types.<sup>40</sup> Mature democracies have the advantage when it comes to maintaining peace among competing groups within the state.

### **Economic Growth as an Outcome Variable**

Our final measure of success is economic growth. Realistically, economic growth could be viewed as both an independent and dependent variable. A poor economy has been linked to the outbreak of civil war.<sup>41</sup> We include it here as a dependent variable because we view state economic growth as one component of an overall healthy post-independence state. Economic growth data were not available for the cases of Indonesia, Indochina, and Tunisia. As a result, we can include only 10 of our original 13 cases in the economic analyses. Our economic outcome variable (percent change in GDP from year one post-independence to year five) was not associated with most of our support, agreement, or control variables. As indicated, economic growth is but one component of a successful exit, and makes more sense when combined with measures of regime and internal conflict. We did find, however, that economically successful post-colonial states were more likely to emerge when the exiting power was a major power as demonstrated in Table 7.

**Table 7**

Major Power Involvement and Economic Success

		Major Power Involvement	
		Smaller Power	Major Power
Economic Success	Did Not Occur	3	1
	Did Occur	1	5

These findings would seem to bode well for a post-American exit from Iraq. Whether or not exit agreements included economic favors for the exiting power did not vary relative to economic success. This is somewhat surprising given our earlier findings. We might speculate that our missing cases, particularly given our small N, could potentially produce different results.

### **MALAYSIA AND IRAQ – A COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY**

As we indicated above, there were only two cases that came close to a successful exit leaving behind a functioning democratic, economically viable coun-

try with limited internal strife. The case of Namibia, however, did not involve a major power as the external intervener. Malaysia, on the other hand, exhibits similarities with the current US situation in Iraq worth pursuing further.

Interestingly, this case is one in which the primarily Chinese communist insurgents actually failed in their quest. Although they had initiated the rebellion against the British, the ethnic Chinese were defeated by both the British and ethnic Malay forces, as the British strategically played on intense internal rivalries and fears. Independence was achieved in 1957. The country quickly became democratic with a five-year post regime Polity score of 10 and an average terror score of 2.46. It had a respectable growth rate of 27.7 from year one to year five post-independence. Although Malaysia has not experienced civil war since independence, it has experienced minor levels of intra-state violence as battles with the Communist Party of Malaya continued periodically (1958-60, 1974-75, and 1981). Malaysian authorities also engaged in minor conflict with the Clandestine Communist Organization in the territory of North Borneo (1963-66). Evident regional instability due to Malaysia's independence was confined to the initial split of Singapore. Britain experienced no negative internal disruptions from its exit.

Despite the relatively minor skirmishes, the case of the Malayan insurgency comes closest to a successful exit. In terms of support, the British had been assisted by the ethnic Malay, as indicated earlier, but also by New Zealand and Australia, both of which sent troops following the collapse of talks between the British and the communist leader, Chin Peng.<sup>42</sup> The insurgents, on the other hand, received diplomatic support from the USSR and China, but lacked the material assistance needed to defeat a well-armed and supported British coalition.

The success of the exit, perhaps, comes from the efforts made by the British to prepare and work with the Malayan people. During the course of the insurgency, the British high commissioner had been assassinated by the Malay Races Liberation Army (MRLA) in October 1951. The replacement for Henry Gurney, Gerald Templar, worked with Malayan groups seeking to establish their trust, providing the right to vote to ethnic Chinese, and promising independence.<sup>43</sup> UK plans for independence included continued economic and military aid for the newly emerging Malayan government, although no clear cut economic favors for the exiting country. It is clear that the communist insurgents were relatively isolated during this process and all party talks did not actually take place.

Similarly, in Iraq the Americans are working closely with the provisional government and there have been promises of financial aid. The United States is also clearly involved in assisting the Iraqi police and security forces. Further, the Sunni-led boycott of the January 2005 elections has had the effect of further isolating an already apprehensive and distrustful Sunni population (estimated at 32-37 percent of the entire Iraqi population). Indirect talks have taken place with Sunni political authorities, and to a much lesser extent insurgent leaders. In

Malaysia, the British had extended discussions to the ethnic Chinese in an effort to diminish insurgent support and limit their potential for expansion. It appears that there remains room for the US and Iraqi authorities to extend the same consideration to the Sunni population in Iraq, and that it is crucial that they do so in such a way as to involve leaders with at least a modicum of influence with the insurgent forces. Plans for repeated trials of Saddam Hussein on various charges would not seem to bode well for the success of such talks.

The current situation in Iraq is also complicated by the election results. It is clear that the United States would have preferred a more secular Iraqi government, yet results indicate Shi'ite clerics are more popular, at least among those who voted. Kurdish political parties constitute a secular counter-balance (as would Sunni parties), but their participation comes at the price of guaranteed stringent autonomy for their "Kurdistan" provinces, potentially creating further tension both inside Iraq and on the Turkish border. The British did not face quite the same regionally complicated scenario in the Malaya Republic circa 1957, though the ultimate split of Singapore constitutes a warning of potential political dismemberment in future exit scenarios.

## **CONCLUSION**

Although our findings did not produce a clear pattern of successful exit, with our small number of cases, exploring past insurgencies in light of the current situation in Iraq does raise some questions about the theoretical expectations raised earlier in the article. We had suspected that international support for the occupying power and for the exit and independence agreement would more likely be associated with exit success. Our findings, however, did not clearly support that notion. Successful exit cases did not vary significantly from the unsuccessful ones on these scores. We did, however, find initial indications that continued economic dominance of former dependencies did not bode well for successful exit. This finding seems to support the frustration expressed by scholars that have suggested that political colonialism was replaced in many states by economic colonialism.<sup>44</sup>

The current US situation in Iraq and with the international community is somewhat different than what was experienced during the time period under study. Often, support for insurgents in the 1950s and 1960s was complicated by the Cold War. Where one superpower was providing diplomatic or material assistance to a rebel group, we would find counter pressure being applied by the other superpower. The current international environment is structured quite differently. It appears there is consensus over the issue of Iraqi independence and few major power alternatives to the US and Britain for significant logistical support. So-called terror networks and smaller powers interested in opposing Western dominance are present to fuel the fires of insurgency, however. As a result, although Iraqi insurgents evidently are not supported by major or superpowers,

there is adequate potential for their re-supply across Iraq's numerous borders. Their fate could work in much the same way (defeat) as the communist insurgents in Malaysia (although even they had received some support from China), as compared to the Vietnamese (victorious) insurgents. Yet, the political challenge of winning Iraqis' "hearts and minds" remains significant. In Malaysia it was possible to play on racial fears and hatreds, associating the Chinese minority with communism. In Iraq there is plenty of ethnic suspicion and certainly a Sunni association with the previous Ba'athist regime, but the polarity is not necessarily of such magnitude as to discredit the insurgency as "counter-nationalist."

We also speculated that large-scale military defeats or major political events experienced by the external power might alter plans for exit. This appears to be the case in our sample of cases. External powers that experienced these events in the midst of insurgency in one or more of their territories made moves to change course rapidly, seemingly increasing the pace of exit without perhaps working through the measures necessary for a stable emerging state. It appears that strict timetables and deadlines for withdrawal, for example, could be potentially dangerous if appropriate trust building and security measures are not in place. Although the insurgency in Iraq is primarily focused on facilitating the exit of external powers, the threat of civil war upon exit remains. Quick exit without the necessary third party security guarantee identified by civil war settlement scholars as crucial to maintaining peace<sup>45</sup> might spell more disaster for an already devastated country. One could argue that a well-prepared exit, not accelerated by domestic political events within the intervening state, might allow for the necessary comprehensive negotiations and internal security arrangements thought important by civil war researchers. Interestingly, however, some agreement factors or measures we thought would contribute to exit success did not appear to do so. We expected that power-sharing arrangements, third party guarantors, internal security arrangements, and comprehensive negotiations would help move these rebellious territories toward stability. Our expectations were not generally supported, and worse; neither of our success cases included all parties in negotiations nor did they have power-sharing arrangements. This leaves us wondering if perhaps such measures are not as necessary as we had originally thought. There is much room for further study of these intriguing patterns of exit, and the ensuing political successes or failures.

## Endnotes

The authors would like to thank J. David Singer and Ottawa Sanders for their comments as the project developed.

1. The term also has great currency in the business and financial world in referring to ways to pull out of faulty or played-out arrangements and investments.
2. See Kevin C. Benson and Christopher B. Thrash, "Declaring Victory: Planning Exit Strategies for Peace Operations," *Parameters: US Army War College Quarterly* 26, no. 3 (1996), pp. 69-77.
3. On negotiations with insurgents, see Marie Olson Lounsbury and Frederic S. Pearson, "The Possibility of Negotiated Settlements in Major Power Insurgencies," Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the International Studies Association, Montreal, March 2004.
4. Edwin Black, *Banking on Baghdad: Inside Iraq's 7,000-Year History of War, Profit, and Conflict* (New York: Wiley, 2004).
5. On the fragmentary yet nationalistic nature of Iraqi society, and its colonial and anti-colonial experiences, see Sami Zubaida, "The Fragments Imagine the Nation: The Case of Iraq," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 34, (2002), pp. 205-15; to extend such discussion comparatively to other regions, see Robert Cribb and Li Narangoa, "Orphans of Empire: Divided Peoples, Dilemmas of Identity, and Old Imperial Borders in East and Southeast Asia," *Comparative Study of Society and History* 46, no. 1 (2004), pp. 164-87.
6. In a telling admission, the head of the British Army reported in October 2005 that insurgent forces had infiltrated the nascent Iraqi security forces, thus forestalling a conclusion that indigenous troops could safely secure the country. "General Rules Out Iraqi Exit Date," *BBC News UK Edition*, online, 20 October 2005.
7. On the pervasive effects of colonialism and now a post-colonial political discourse on Arab and Middle Eastern/Central Asian thought, see Deniz Kandiyoti, "Post-Colonialism Compared: Potentials and Limitations in the Middle East and Central Asia," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 34, no. 2 (2002), pp. 279-97.
8. Admittedly, the Iraqi war is not technically a colonial or "extra system" war. It began as an interstate war with Western forces invading the sovereign state of Iraq, citing a long litany of supposed grievances and threats. Previously, there had been a war between a much wider and UN-sanctioned international coalition and Iraq to liberate occupied Kuwait. This was followed by a decade-long airborne intervention in Iraq to secure Kurdish and Shi'a enclaves and deny President Saddam Hussein unfettered use of Iraqi air space as well as to enforce a controversial trade embargo. Nevertheless, with the capitulation of Saddam's forces in 2003, an occupation regime was established. Iraqi "sovereignty" was restored by turning the titular government over to an interim authority drawn from handpicked factional representatives from both inside and outside the country. The United Nations, which had not sanctioned the legality of the initial invasion, came to recognize the transition arrangements as legitimate and assist in the preparation of a January 2005 election of a national assembly to design a new constitution. Thus, Iraq remained a member of the international system, but uncertainty even over the question of whether the new authorities could ask coalition forces to leave meant that sovereignty was fundamentally compromised. Today, we see a number of situations around the world with "failed" or war-decimated states that resemble non-self governing territories.
9. Jeffrey Z. Rubin, Dean G. Pruitt, and Sung Hee Kim, *Social Conflict: Escalation, Stalemate, and Settlement* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1998).
10. Stephen John Stedman, Donal Rothchild, and Elizabeth M. Cousens, eds., *Ending Civil Wars: The Implementation of Peace Agreements* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2002).

11. Benson and Thrash, "Declaring Victory."
12. Richard Caplan, *New Trusteeship? The International Administration of War-torn Territories*, Adelphi Paper no. 341. (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press/International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2002).
13. Caplan, *New Trusteeship?*, p. 81.
14. Roy Licklider, ed., *Stopping the Killing: How Civil Wars End* (New York: New York University Press, 1993), p. 229.
15. Caplan, *New Trusteeship?*, p. 82.
16. Licklider, *Stopping the Killing*, p. 230.
17. Caplan, *New Trusteeship?*, p. 82.
18. I. William Zartman, *Ripe for Resolution: Conflict and Intervention in Africa* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985)
19. Caplan, *New Trusteeship?*, p. 83.
20. Marieke Kleiboer, "Understanding Success and Failure of International Mediation," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 40, no. 2 (1996), pp. 360-89.
21. Chaim Kaufmann, "Possible and Impossible Solutions to Ethnic Conflicts," *International Security* 20, no. 4 (1995), pp. 139-40.
22. Ted R. Gurr, *Minorities at Risk: A Global View of Ethnopolitical Conflicts* (Washington, DC: US Institute of Peace Press, 1993).
23. Paul R. Pillar, *Negotiating Peace: War Termination as a Bargaining Process* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983), p. 25.
24. Some interstate wars were classified as extra-systemic if one party was not yet a full-fledged member of the state system.
25. Pillar, *Negotiating Peace*, pp. 18-23.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 22.
27. Licklider, *Stopping the Killing*.
28. Fen O. Hampson, *Nurturing Peace: Why Peace Settlements Succeed or Fail* (Washington, DC: US Institute of Peace Press, 1996), p. 10.
29. See, for example, *Slantpoint*, 19 September 2004, at [www.slantpoint.com/mt-arx/2004/09/exit\\_strategy.php](http://www.slantpoint.com/mt-arx/2004/09/exit_strategy.php).
30. Meredith Reid Sarkees, "The Correlates of War Data on War: An Update to 1997," *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 18, no. 1 (2000), pp. 123-44.
31. Melvin Small and J. David Singer, *Resort to Arms: International and Civil Wars, 1816-1980* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 1982), pp. 56, 210.
32. We plan to extend our data collection to include colonial exit cases occurring between 1900 and 1999.
33. *Keesing's Contemporary Archives* is not available electronically prior to 1960. As a result, we have utilized additional sources in order to supplement data collection.



34. This is true for all cases except the case of the French war in Indochina. The French made their exit shortly after 1954, well before Vietnamese independence in 1975. Because we are concerned with identifying successful exit strategies, we choose to focus on the French exit for this case rather than independence. For the rest of the cases, however, independence and exit are relatively close to one another in occurrence.
35. Monty G. Marshall and Keith Jagers. 2002. *Polity IV Dataset*. [Computer file; version p4v2002] (College Park, MD: Center for International Development and Conflict Management, University of Maryland, 2002).
36. Errol A. Henderson and J. David Singer, "Civil War in the Post-Colonial World, 1946-92," *Journal of Peace Research* 37, no. 3 (2000), pp. 275-99.
37. Henderson and Singer, "Civil War in the Post-Colonial World, 1946-92."
38. Henderson and Singer would not consider a state with a majority population of 80 percent to be polarized. Other research, however, has suggested that such a division can be just as volatile. See Marie Olson Lounsbury, *Discriminatory Policy Change and Ethnopolitical Violence: A Cross-National Analysis*. Ph.D. Dissertation, Wayne State University, 2003. As a result, we follow the Henderson and Singer example, but expand the measure.
39. The case of Algeria, although technically meeting the COW definition of an intra-state war, was a rather short-lived event occurring between the time of independence (28 July 1962) and 15 January 1963 involving former rebel leaders. The Armed Conflict dataset of PRIO does not include the civil war identification of this case. We have identified it here as such because the conflict involved 1,500 battle-deaths according to COW.
40. See, for example, Havard Hegre, Tanja Ellingsen, Nils Petter Gleditsch, and Scott Gates, "Towards a Democratic Civil Peace? Opportunity, Grievance and Civil War 1918-1992," Paper presented at the DECGR Launch Workshop "Civil Conflicts, Crime, Violence in Developing Countries," 22-23 February 1999, Washington DC; Errol A. Henderson and J. David Singer, "Civil War in the Post-Colonial World, 1946-92," *Journal of Peace Research* 37, no. 3 (2000), pp. 275-99; and Edward D. Mansfield and Jack Snyder, "Democratization and the Danger of War," *International Security* 20, no. 1 (1995) pp. 5-38.
41. See, for example, Richard C. Eichenberg, Brigitta Widmaier, and Ulrich Widmaier, "Projecting Domestic Conflict using Cross-Sectional Data: A Project Report," in J. David Singer and Richard J. Stoll, eds., *Quantitative Indicators for World Politics: Timely Assurance and Early Warning* (New York, NY: Praeger, 1984); Paul Collier, "Primary Commodity Dependence and Africa's Future," *World Bank Papers*, www.worldbank.org (2002); and Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, "On Economic Causes of Civil War," *Oxford Economic Papers* 50, no. 4 (1998), pp. 563-73.
42. Keesing's Worldwide, *Keesing's Contemporary Archives* (London: 2001).
43. *Keesing's Contemporary Archives*.
44. Johan Galtung, "A Structural Theory of Imperialism," *Journal of Peace Research* 8, no. 2 (1971), pp. 81-117.
45. Caroline Hartzell, Matthew Hoddie, and Donald Rothchild, "Stabilizing the Peace After Civil War: An Investigation of Some Key Variables," *International Organization* 55, no. 1 (2001), pp. 183-208; Frederic S. Pearson, Marie Olson Lounsbury, Scott Walker, and Sonja Mann, "Rethinking Models of Civil War Settlement," *International Interactions*, forthcoming.

**Appendix**  
**CASES OF EXTRA-STATE WAR**  
1945-1999

Extra-State War	Years
Indonesian War	11/10/45 to 10/15/46
Franco-Indochinese War of 1945	12/1/45 to 6/1/54
Franco-Madagascan War of 1947	3/29/47 to 12/1/48
Malayan Rebellion	6/18/48 to 8/31/57
Indo-Hyderabad War	9/13/48 to 9/17/48
Sino-Tibetan War of 1950	2/?/50 to 4/?/51
Franco-Tunisian War of 1952	?/?/52 to ?/?/54
British-Mau Mau War (Kenya)	10/20/52 to ?/?/56
Moroccan Independence	?/?/53 to ?/?/56
Franco-Algerian War of 1954	11/1/54 to 3/17/62
Cameroon War	?/?/55 to ?/?/60
Angolan-Portuguese War	2/3/61 to 11/11/75
Guinean-Portuguese War	12/?/62 to 12/?/74
Mozambique-Portuguese War	10/?/64 to 11/?/75
East Timorese War	12/7/75 to 7/4/77
Namibian War	10/17/75 to 12/13/88
Western Sahara	12/11/75 to 12/23/83

Source: Sarkees, Meredith Reid, "The Correlates of War Data on War: An Update to 1997," *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 18, no. 1 (2000), pp. 123-44.