

How Interventions Leads to blowback

Daniel Cervantez

California State University Maritime Academy

2018

Dr. Nincic

Abstract

The United States is currently involved three conflicts in the Middle East. The outcome of these conflicts did not go for what the United States originally wanted. The Question is why does the United States still keeps finding itself in the same situation that it did not originally wanted? The recurring elements that have continue to plaque the United States in the Middle East is from fear and hubris. The case studies are the Soviet Afghan War, the Iraq War in 2003, and the current Yemen Civil War were the United States is currently supporting Saudi Arabia's intervention in the country. The cost from these mistakes are that the United States reputation is damage, resources are wasted, and US citizens are harmed.

Introduction

The term blowback first appeared in the after a report of Operation Ajax, the operation that overthrew the democratically elected Mohammad Mosaddeq and placed Mohammed Reza Pehlevi, the Shah of Iran, into power. A report by Dr. Wilbur, who was the writing on behalf of the CIA, addresses problems that plagued Operation Ajax, such as the planning of the coup, information collection, and finding forces to carry out the coup. The report states, “Possibilities of blowback against the United States should always be in the back of the minds of all CIA officers involved in this type of operation. Few, if any, operations are as explosive as this type. This fact makes it imperative that the best trained and experienced officers who can be found be assigned” (Wilbur, 1964, 21-22) The blowback from the coup came 26 years later, in 1979, when the Shah was overthrown in a revolution that would lead to the rise of religious clerics such as the Ayatollah Khomeini.

Definition of blowback

The intelligence community, the Department Defense (DOD), and the State Department have their own definition of blowback. The intelligence community defines blowback as unintended consequences as a result of covert action. While the DOD and State Department define blowback as unintended consequences as a result from either covert or direct action. This paper would be using the definition of blowback from the academic community with the reason being that the academic community is more nuanced.

The following authors have the same definition of what blowback is. However, each of these authors has their interpretation of the term. Henriksen defines blowback as a “phenomenon, in which we become engulfed by the unintended consequences of our actions” (Henriksen, 2002). Henriksen uses this definition of blowback in his essay, “The “Blowback” Myth: How

Bad History Could Make Bad Policy,” to respond to allegations that the United States’ support for the Afghan resistance or mujahedeen would later haunt the US. Although Henriksen defines blowback, he believes that US actions during the Soviet-Afghan War did not cause blowback since the United States had no idea that the Taliban would rise to power in Afghanistan or that we would be enemies.

In his book, *Blowback: The Cost and Consequences of American Empire*, Chalmers Johnson defines blowback as “the unintended consequences of policies that were kept secret from the American people” (Johnson, 2000, 8). Johnson further elaborates his own definition of blowback by referring to several examples. One example occurred during the eighties when the CIA was assisting narco-traffickers in order to support the Contras in Nicaragua. The US public did not know about it, and the unintended consequences led to drug epidemics in US urban centers. Johnson has the same idea as Henriksen in defining blowback, however, unlike Henriksen, Johnson believes that our actions, whether they be supporting the Afghan Rebels or supporting the Contras, would later come back to haunt the United States. The Taliban were able to takeover Afghanistan, while our support for the Contras would come back to harm the American public directly when drugs started coming into the United States, leading to a cocaine epidemic.

In an academic article, “Covert Action and Unintended Consequences,” John Breen writes, “unintended or unanticipated consequences resulting from ill-conceived (or perhaps also well-conceived) covert operations are often called “blowback.”(Breen, 2017). Breen discusses covert action and how it is related to blowback. He uses two historical examples of blowback: a U-2 spy plane that was shot down in the Soviet Union leading to a coverup, and the Bay of Pigs invasion which failed because the planning was deeply flawed. Breen’s interpretation of

blowback is the same as Johnson's. However, it is much more nuanced and focuses on the CIA's activities and offers a solution to the problem.

In a monograph, "Hard Power and Soft Power: The Utility of Military Force as An Instrument of Policy in the 21st Century," by the Strategic Studies Institute, Colin Gray discusses blowback: "When soft power capabilities are strong in their values and cultural trappings, there is always the danger that they will incite resentment, hostility, and a potent "blowback." (Gray, 2011, 32). Grey interprets blowback differently than Johnson, Breen, and Henriksen. Grey views blowback as consequences from soft power capabilities, which are a mixture of forces whether it be covert action, military action, or economic action. Grey also states that resentment is caused by our actions and possibly by our cultural values, which he then claims is counterproductive.

In a journal, the Notre Dame of Law, Ethics & Public Policy, Charles Pena asserts, "In CIA or "spook" parlance, "blowback" is the unintended consequences of covert operations." (Pena, 2012, 119). Pena elaborates his claim by using the CIA's role in the Soviet-Afghan War, which included funneling aid and setting up training camps in Pakistan. Pena then explains that our aid to the Afghan resistance through Pakistan led to blowback, since the Taliban took control of the country and later provided sanctuary and training to jihadis. Pena states that our actions would later lead to 9/11. It should be noted that he is using blowback to explain the unintended consequences from military tribunals on terrorist.

In a report for the US Army War College Publication, Strategic Studies Institute, Hans Brands defines blowback: "A country's actions can be frustrated by those of its enemies; they can also produce blowback in the form of unpredicted (and perhaps unpredictable) third- or fourth-order reactions". (Brands, 2012, 14). Brands own definition of blowback is much more complex since he not referring blowback from covert action, but its general such as economic or

military action. Also, it should be known that the context that Brands is using for blowback is to discuss US Grand Strategy. Also, it should be noted that he uses the term third or fourth order reactions to describe reactions that are usually negative despite that the first and second order of reaction may not have been negative or even positive.

In an article, Drone Warfare: Blowback from the New American Way of War, both Leila Hudson, Colin S. Owens, and Matt Flannes define blowback as “the unintended consequences of policies not subjected to the scrutiny of the American public” (Hudson, Owens, & Flannes, 2011). Hudson, Owens, and Flannes cite the Middle East, where most of the drone campaigns have been taking place. These strikes have led individuals to join terrorist groups. The example the authors cite is the Camp Chapman bombing by Humam Khalil Abu Mulal al-Balawi, whose motivation in carrying out the attack was retaliation for the drone strike that killed Beitullah Mehsud in South Waziristan, Pakistan.

These authors have developed an understanding of what blowback is. By examining these case studies, we can see that When the US intervenes in the Middle East, it leads to destabilization in the region that undermines the US’ original intent. This is fully illustrated in the current conflicts that we are involved in such as Iraq, Afghanistan, and Yemen. If the United States had not intervened and violated their sovereignty, the region would be more stable.

Thesis statement

When the US intervenes in the Middle East, it leads to destabilization in the region that undermines the US original intent. This is fully illustrated in the current conflicts that we are involved in such as Iraq, Afghanistan, and Yemen. If the United States had not intervened and violated their sovereignty, the region would be more stable.

Research questions

I am particularly interested in this topic because we need to know under what conditions blowback occurs. What prevents the United States from successfully containing these events during foreign interventions?

Case studies

The Case Studies addressed in this paper include the US involvement in the Soviet-Afghan War, the Iraq Invasion in 2003, and the United States involvement in the ongoing Civil War in Yemen. In the case of Afghanistan, the United States supported the Afghan rebels in order to dislodge the Soviet Union's occupation. This indirectly led to the rise of both the Taliban and Osama Bin Laden. In the Case of Iraq, the United States invaded the country in the belief that it had WMDs and that Iraq was supporting Al Qaeda. The invasion would lead Iran to expand its influence, and the region became destabilized. In the case study of Yemen, the United States is supporting Saudi Arabia in Yemen. Indirectly, our actions in Yemen could lead Iran to expand its influence in the Arabian Peninsula. Furthermore, US action could lead to a rise of terrorist attacks in Europe, and of course retaliation against US personnel that are stationed in the Arabian Peninsula. Each consequence has threatened the United States interest in the region and has led to further destabilization.

Literature Review

The purpose of this literature review is to focus on US foreign policy actions that have resulted in blowback. Most of the literature is derived from think tanks, government reports, and academic books written on the subject. Also, it should be noted that the literature focuses on details of decisions that were made by policymakers and by the executive branch of the US government. The following subsections focus on Iraq, Afghanistan, and Yemen and how the three countries connect to blowback from US intervention.

Afghanistan

The literature on Afghanistan is focused on the United States interaction in the country from the Soviet-Afghan War to the present. An academic article by Harman discusses US foreign policy action in Afghanistan at the time of the Soviet occupation. The article provides a reason for the US to covertly intervene in Afghanistan and the blowback it created (Hartman, 2002). An academic book by Herring provides a history of the United States foreign relations from 1893 to 2014. The book provides a detailed look at US interaction with Afghanistan. Also, the book provides a detailed history of US interaction in both Yemen and Iraq (Herring, 2017). In a report by the CIA “USSR Domestic Fallout from the Afghan War,” goes into detail of the effects from the Afghan War on the Soviet Union society (CIAa, 1988).

Iraq

The literature on the Iraq War will be derived from government documents such as congressional reports and reports from think tanks. A publication from the National Security Council (NSC, 2005), provides the national strategy toward Iraq. The strategy discusses building Iraq as a democratic state and dealing with factions of an ongoing insurgency, such as Al Qaeda, the Saddamist, and the Sunni minority. A report from the US Senate Select Committee on Intelligence provides an assessment to the intelligence community findings on Iraq’s WMDs and links to terrorism. The report identifies the inaccuracies of the intelligence community findings and how these findings misled the public in order to justify the invasion of Iraq (Senate Report No 109-331, 2006). A policy analysis from the CATO Institute, published in 1999, five years before the Iraq War. The article discusses why the United States should not attempt to overthrow Saddam since it would lead to a power vacuum in the region or that the new Iraqi government would not be an ally to the United States. The article also addresses the problems of

overthrowing Saddam such as the power of Saddam's internal security apparatus and the fragmentation within the opposition groups (Isenberg, 1999,). A policy analysis by Charles V. Pena discusses why invading Iraq was a bad war which he goes through the reasons why the United States Invaded Iraq and debunks these reasons from Iraq having Weapons of Mass Destruction to Iraq being linked to Al Qaeda (Pena, 2003,).

Yemen

The literature in regards to the ongoing conflict in Yemen is derived from government reports. A report from the Congressional Research Service provides a detailed overview of the Yemen Civil War as to how the war began, the current situation, the humanitarian crisis, and the state actors that are involved in the conflict (Sharp, 2018, CRS No.). A monograph by Aftandilian focus on the Iran and Saudi Arabia's Cold War. The monograph is significant since it also details the conflict that is occurring in Yemen (Aftandilian, 2015) Another report from the Congressional Research Service goes into details of the attacks on US naval vessel station outside of the coast of Yemen.

Afghanistan

From 1979 to 1989, the United States was covertly involved in Afghanistan. The United States intention was to undermine the Soviet Union's occupation. The US covertly intervened in Afghanistan because of the fear that the Soviet Union would gain access to warm water ports in the Persian Gulf. The US support for the Mujahideen led to blowback as the Taliban and Al Qaeda emerged from the conflict. Al Qaeda would later be responsible for the 9/11 attacks in the United States.

US role in the Soviet-Afghan War

In 1979, both Saudi Arabia and Pakistan urged the United States to do something about Afghanistan. So, in January, President Carter authorized covert support for the Islamic rebels by providing aid, according to George S. Herring (2017) in *American Century and Beyond*. It should be noted that this was before the Soviet Union intervention in Afghanistan. The US was responding to the communist government in Afghanistan, and their repression of Islamists. Also, Carter was hoping that by doing this, The US would tempt the Soviet Union to intervene. The hope was that the Soviet Union would get bogged down in the Afghan insurgency (Herring, 2017). In December of 1979, the Soviet Union would invade Afghanistan in order to support the communist government, since it was near collapse. This would begin the Soviet occupation and this would also lead the United States to get further involved in the country, covertly.

At the start of the Soviet Afghan War, the Carter administration sought to sanction the Soviet Union for its invasion of Afghanistan. A congressional report from 1980, "US policy Implications", quotes Carter's response to the invasion in his State-of-the-Union address: "An attempt by an outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States. It will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force" (Afghanistan Task Force Foreign Affairs and National Defense Division, 1980, 18). Carter's reason for providing aid to the Afghan resistance was a fear that the Soviet Union would gain access to the Persian Gulf. This view is similar to Andrew Hartman's, author of the article "Red Template". According to Hartman, the United States' reason to intervene covertly into Afghanistan was if the Soviet Union had control of Afghanistan, they would gain an overland access to the Indian Ocean and possibly dominate the Asian Sub-Continent (Hartman, 2002). Also, another factor leading to the United States to intervene in Afghanistan was Pakistan. In a report by the CIA, "The Soviet Presence in Afghanistan:

Implications for the Regional Powers and the United States”, stated that if the Soviet Union were able to have a foothold in Afghanistan, they might try to influence a split between Baluchistan and Pakistan. If a split were to occur the Soviet Union would be able to have overland access to the Indian Ocean. The same report also reported that if the Soviet Union were victorious in Afghanistan it would change the strategic environment in the Middle East (CIA, 1985). This fear led the United States to covertly intervene in Afghanistan.

In a report, “US Sanctions over the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan Soviet, Polish and Romanian Reactions” (CIA, 1980), the CIA stated that they believed the Soviet Union’s decision to invade Afghanistan was based on assumption that the United States would be occupied with the situation in Iran. This was during the Iranian hostage Crisis, and the Western bloc did not have a unified policy for Afghanistan. The report also stated that the United States would take a strong objection to the invasion of the Afghanistan. The United States had placed sanctions on the Soviet Union and ended the détente between the two countries, but the sanctions would not force the Soviet Union into withdrawing from Afghanistan (CIA, 1980). This in turn led the United States to support the Afghan rebels as way to counter the Soviet Union in Afghanistan.

The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) provided covert support to the mujahideen during the Soviet-Afghan War. According to Herring, the CIA, working through the Pakistani intelligence services, the Inter-Service-Intelligence (ISI), provided the Mujahideen intelligence either from Human sources or from satellites, set up training camps for the fighters, and to a certain extent helped plan operations for the Mujahideen (Herring, 2017). Herring also states that in 1986, a decisive move in Afghanistan came when the US supplied the fighters with stinger missiles to take on the Soviet helicopters, providing the Mujahideen a fighting chance in dealing with the Soviet helicopters such as Mi-24 Hind.

The Afghan resistance were able to hold out against the Soviet occupation. The Mujahideen were using heat seeking missiles that were supplied by the United States. The Soviet Union adapted to this challenge by placing countermeasures. They utilized low flying jets and helicopters that were supported by the soldiers on the ground, who deployed flares in an attempt to keep the heat seeking missiles from hitting the aircraft. Because the Afghan resistance were being trained and funded by Saudi Arabia, the United States, and China, while Pakistan provided sanctuary and training to the Afghan resistance, the Mujahideen were able to hold out against the Soviet occupation.

The Soviet occupation came to an end in 1988-1989, when the Soviet Union withdraw from the Afghanistan. There are several reasons the Soviet Union withdrew from Afghanistan. One reason was that the Soviet people were tired of the War and wanted to withdraw from the country. The Russian people would refer Afghanistan as their own "Vietnam". According to a report from the CIA "USSR: Withdrawal from Afghanistan," the reason for the withdrawal stems from the Soviet agenda at home and abroad. The war had fed ethnic tension and fueled problems within the Soviet society. Furthermore, 12,000 soviet personnel had been killed. The growing soviet military budget also contributed to disillusionment in the war in Afghanistan (CIAb, 1988). A report by the CIA's Directorate of Intelligence, "Domestic Cost to the Soviet Regime of Involvement in Afghanistan," listed various factors that led to the Soviet Union withdrawal from Afghanistan. One factor listed: people were avoiding the draft. The report states that the youth, through their parent's intervention, used legal and illegal means to avoid the draft. Another factor is that the war created class tension since the upper echelons of society were able to find a way around to avoid the draft. This had caused tension from the people of the working class (Directorate of Intelligence, 1984).

The war in Afghanistan was taking a heavy toll on the Soviet Union's economy, which was near collapse, making economic recovery a priority. The war as whole is said to have contributed to the fall of the Soviet Union. Another report by the CIA, "USSR: Domestic Fallout from the Afghan War," reported that Gorbachev viewed the situation in Afghanistan as a bleeding wound when he was addressing his domestic reforms to 27th congress of the Soviet Union (CIAa, 1988). Also, the Directorate of Intelligence of the CIA stated that the military expenditures in Afghanistan were up to 20 percent (though that report noted that the Soviet Union's investment in Afghanistan was manageable). In a 1985 report by the CIA, the CIA reported that Soviet cost for the war in Afghanistan had been rising faster than their own defense budget, and in another report in 1988 (CIAb,1988), the CIA reported that the Soviet Union spent about 15 billion rubles on the war.

Blowback from the Soviet-Afghan War

The CIA did not directly support Bin Laden or the Taliban, however they indirectly supported them by funneling money through the Pakistanis. The United States figured that in order to conceal their activities in Afghanistan, they would fund and supply the Mujahedeen through Pakistan. Pakistan served to gain by kicking the Soviet Union out of Afghanistan since they viewed Afghanistan as an ally in the years after the Soviet Afghan War.

After the Soviet Union withdrew from Afghanistan, the Communist government in Afghanistan Collapsed and the Mujahedeen fragmented. That in turn led to a Civil War in the 1990's. The Civil War would last several years, until the Taliban took control of Kabul, the Capital of Afghanistan in 1992. The Taliban would later be infamous for providing sanctuary to Osama Bin Laden and the group he founded, Al Qaeda.

In 1994, the Taliban was founded during the Civil War in Afghanistan. In the long run, the Taliban would harbor Osama Bin Laden and his terrorist group, Al Qaeda. Bin Laden would be responsible for terrorist attacks against the United States throughout the 1990's such as the bombings in Kenya and Tanzania, the bombing of the USS *Cole*, and the 9/11 attacks. Bin Laden had declared a jihad against the United States because, during the 1st Persian Gulf War, the United States, along a coalition, had been stationed in Saudi Arabia, a religious breach according to the Muslim faith.

Conclusion

The original intent of the United States in Afghanistan was to combat the Soviet Union, which was a threat to US interests in the region. Ultimately it led to the Taliban rise of power in the region, who would later provide sanctuary Al Qaeda, who would be responsible for attacks against US citizens at home and abroad. The United States would later be involved in the Invasion of Afghanistan since the Taliban were harboring Al Qaeda in the country.

Iraq

In 2003, The United States invaded Iraq with the belief that Saddam Hussein had Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and was supporting Al Qaeda. After Saddam was removed from power, the United States experienced an insurgency that they could not win. After the United States withdraw from Iraq completely in 2011, Iraq remained an unstable country and over the following years the Islamic State came into power, nearly taking control of Baghdad.

The Iraq War

In a report in October of 2002, one year before the Iraq War, the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency stated that Iraq was continuing to develop Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs) in defiance of UN resolutions and restrictions. The report claimed that the Iraqis were

hiding large caches of WMDs. The report also claimed that Iraq was rebuilding its WMDs stockpile, including chemical and biological weapons (CIA, 2002). It would be one of the reasons for the United States to invade Iraq, since they had “evidence” that Saddam had Weapons of Mass Destruction.

In 2003, The United States invaded Iraq under the suspicion that Saddam had WMDs and had ties to Al Qaeda. In February 5, 2003, Colin Powell, Bush’s Secretary of State, provided a speech with photographs, voice recordings, and even a vial of anthrax to the United Nations in order to get support for the United States invasion of Iraq (Herring, 2017). During the speech, Colin Powell claimed that there was a connection between Saddam and Al Qaeda and that Saddam had WMDs. In March 2003, President Bush issued the final ultimatum to Saddam and his sons to leave Iraq in exile, or face invasion by a joint force of US and British troops who were at that time stationed across from the Iraqi border. In March 20, 2003, both US Army and Marine units crossed the Iraqi border from Kuwait, thereby starting Operation Iraqi Freedom. The fighting lasted until April 7, when US forces entered Baghdad (Herring, 2017).

However, during the Invasion of Iraq by the United States. The United Nations (UN) released a report in regards to Saddam's WMDs. The findings in the UN report stated that

The Director-General of the IAEA, Mr. ElBaradei, reported that, after three months of intrusive inspections, the Agency had found no evidence or plausible indication of the revival of a nuclear weapons program in Iraq. There was also no indication that Iraq had attempted to import uranium since 1990 or that it had attempted to import aluminum tubes for use in centrifuge enrichment (UN Security Council, 2003).

The UN report to the Security Council showed that Iraq had no Weapons of Mass Destruction and there was no evidence of Iraq attempting to export uranium in the 1990’s. This contradicted

the United States' claim that Saddam Hussein was rebuilding his WMD program since reports were starting to come out that there were no nuclear weapons to be found.

Earlier analysis also foreshadowed the United States' troubles in Iraq. A 1999 report by David Issenberg argued that the United States should not pursue the policy of regime change. He listed several problems with overthrowing Saddam. One problem was that Saddam had built up a ruthless internal security apparatus. This included the Republican Guard, whose mission was to protect Saddam and was under his command. The Military Security Service was a security agency that had its own agents infiltrate units within the Iraqi Army in order to check for dissent, and acted as a watchdog for the loyalty in the military. They also had their own paramilitary arm that worked closely with the Special Republican Guards while monitoring them for dissent. If there was a coup, the Republican Guard would provide units to the SSS. Finally there was the General Intelligence Service, which acted as both an intelligence and security arm of the Baath Party. The second problem was that the groups opposing Saddam's government were fragmented and would turn against each other. Issenberg uses the example of two opposition groups, the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriot Union of Kurdistan (PUK). Finally, Issenberg states that a fragmented post Saddam Iraq could lead to a power vacuum in the Persian Gulf (Issenberg, 1999). Issenberg's report was a warning, but the US government overlooked his advise. Even before the invasion began, there were documents that warned about gaps in planning for the reconstruction in Iraq.

Furthermore, the government's intelligence sources were flawed and unreliable. A report by the US Senate, "Report on The U.S. Intelligence Community's Prewar Intelligence Assessments on Iraq," focused on CURVEBALL. CURVEBALL or Rafid Ahmed Alwan was an Iraqi citizen who had defected from Saddam's Iraq. He became an informant to the CIA and

claimed that Saddam was building up his WMD stockpile. The “Report on The U.S. Intelligence Community's Prewar Intelligence Assessments on Iraq” (Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, 2004), concluded that the information CURVEBALL provided was proved to have been fabricated when the UN inspection teams reported their findings. CURVEBALL provided information that the United States would use to justify the invasion of Iraq in 2003, information that would later prove to be false. Also, there was signs that he proved to be unreliable.

The US invasion of Iraq was quickly criticized by US allies. They cited lack of evidence of WMD's in the country, and lack of evidence of Saddam's ties to Al Qaeda. In his article, “Blowback: The Unintended Consequences of Military Tribunals,” Charles V. Pena, states that the US made a mistake in invading Iraq. Pena lists several reasons why the invasion Iraq was a bad idea. First of all, Iraq was not a military threat. He elaborates this claim by using an assessment from a military analyst Anthony Coordain, which stated that the Iraqis lacked the capabilities to sustain its military, and that Iraq's military inventory, such as planes and tanks, was obsolete (Pena, 2003). Pena concludes that Iraq posed no threat to the United States.

The second reason Pena cites was that Iraq had no WMDs. Pena stated that the Bush administration exaggerated the threat of the WMDs, when in reality the WMDs were either useless or entirely destroyed. Finally, Pena argues that Saddam had no ties to Al Qaeda. In the report, Pena states that:

“Intelligence analysts inside and outside the government have pointed out that bin Laden (if the voice on the tape was indeed bin Laden's) went out of his way in the recording to show his disdain for Hussein and the Baath Party by referring to them as “infidels” and an “infidel regime” that should be aided only for the “sake of Allah” (Pena, 2003, 13).

Osama Bin Laden, the leader of Al Qaeda at the time, was no ally to Saddam Hussein or the Iraqi Baath Party. Saddam Hussein, at the time of his rule, was known to harbor some form of hatred against Islamists, since he feared that they would attempt to overthrow him. In the rest of the section, Pena goes on to provide more details illustrating that Saddam had no ties to Al Qaeda (Pena, 2003). He further elaborates his claim that Saddam had no connections to bin Laden by discussing the policy brief.

Even before the invasion of Iraq, there were concerns about post-Saddam Iraq. Lorne W. Craner, Arthur E. Dewey, and Paul E. Simons composed a diplomatic cable to then-Under Secretary of the US State Department, Paula J. Dobriansky, about the contingency plans for Iraq. In the cable, Craner, Dewey, and Simons expressed concerns that there were serious planning gaps for the security and humanitarian assistance near the end of the conflict and during reconstruction (US State Department, 2003). They also reported their findings to Central Command (CENTCOM), after which it was reported that the people at CENTCOM took the issues with the PCC. There was an after action report in regards to Iraq known as the Desert One Seminar. Desert Crossing Seminars were a series of war games to assess possible outcomes after deposing Saddam. The after action report from Desert One showed the pessimistic outcomes for post-Saddam Iraq, especially with one of the outcome being that by removing Saddam from power would it lead to the country to be destabilized (CENTCOM, 1999).

The United States overthrew the Saddam government, however after the fall of the Baathist regime, the insurgency began. The insurgency began when disgruntled members of Saddam's army were cut from the public sector. In April 16, 2003, Paul Bremer, Bush's Presidential Envoy to Iraq and coalition acting administrator, issued Coalition Provisional Authority Order 2, which ordered that the Iraq's military as well as Iraq's internal security

apparatus to be dissolved and called for the development of a small defense force for Iraq (Coalition Provisional Authority, 2003). When the Iraqi military and security forces dissolved without being payed, they became disgruntled and rebelled against the US occupation. Also, some of these soldiers who had served under Saddam would end up joining Al Qaeda in Iraq, known in the coming years as ISIS. An article by Bruce Riedal states that Al Qaeda became active in the Iraq after the invasion. He provides the example of Osama Bin Laden, who, in a video released to the press, encouraged Iraqi civilians to fight against the US occupation. Bin Laden also encouraged jihadists to work with the Baathists, who Bin Laden referred to as “the socialist infidels”, since they shared common goals at the time (Riedal, 2007).

In 2006, the United States Senate Select Committee on Intelligence launched an investigation into the pre-war intelligence findings on Iraqi WMD capabilities and the its supposed ties to Al Qaeda. The report found that the CIA had misled the policy makers and the American people on its findings in Iraq. The report had two conclusions in regards to the intelligence community findings on Iraq’s WMD programs as well as its supposed support for Al Qaeda. In regards to Iraq’s WMD program, the report concluded that Iraq was not reconstituting its weapons program, was not obtaining aluminum tubes for its program, nor obtaining uranium or yellow cake from Africa, and had no biological weapons. In regards to Iraq’s ties to Al Qaeda, the Senate Report concluded that Saddam was distrustful of Al Qaeda and viewed them as a threat to his government, seeing that he had refused to provide aid or operational support. The report also concluded that that there had not been meetings between Saddam and Al Qaeda, and that when Al Qaeda attempted to meet with Saddam, he rejected them twice through an AQ operative. Lastly, the report concluded that Iraq had no intention to use Al Qaeda to attack the United States. The report demonstrated that the intelligence community’s prewar findings in

regards to Iraq war were faulty. The report shows that the United States two main justifications for the invasion of Iraq were invalid, seeing as the information that the intelligence community acted on was proven to be false.

After Saddam was ousted, the United States attempted to set up a new government in Iraq, and chose Nouri Al Maliki to be the new Iraqi leader. This was an example of the soft power that the US had continually used to influence the region, as opposed to hard power, or coercion and use of military force. Soft power refers to the use of aid whether it be military or humanitarian aid, to protect or gain in the name of national security. Nouri Al Maliki would eventually get elected as the new president in Iraq and he would be the one most responsible for the corruption that occurred during the new Iraqi administration.

Blowback from the Iraq War

The blowback began as soon as the US invaded Iraq. With Saddam out of the picture, Iran was able to gain further influence in the area. An op-ed piece by Suzanne Maloney, published by Brookings Institute, stated that Iran had an advantage in Iraq since it was able to build relations with opposition groups during Saddam's reign. Also, she explains that the US failed to foresee that sectarian groups such as the Shia and the Kurds would fill the power vacuum in the wake of Saddam's downfall (Maloney, 2008). Also, with the Shia and Kurds filling in the power vacuum Iran was able to take advantage of the situation, since it had made contacts with these groups during the Iran-Iraq War.

The United States original intent for the invasion of Iraq was to depose Saddam Hussein's government and establish a democratically elected government that would be a bulwark against terrorism in the Middle East. This government was also meant to be a bulwark against Iranian influence in the Persian Gulf. However, following the United States' invasion of

Iraq, the region became destabilized, and Iran gained its own sphere of influence in the country through the Shia majority.

When Saddam was ousted by the United States, Iran was able to gain influence in the country. According to Gause III (2014), when the United States invaded Iraq back in 2003, it presented Iran an opportunity. Gause postulates that Iran was able to bolster its influence as the United States disbanded the Baath Party, disbanded the Iraqi military, and purged bureaucrats that were part of Saddam's government. Iraq had once served as a buffer between Iran and Saudi Arabia, and as Iran's influence grew, tensions between Iran and Saudi Arabia increased.

The After Action Report from Desert One had warned that if Saddam were to be overthrown or deposed it was likely that any outside state actor, including Iran, could take advantage of the situation in Iraq. This prediction was echoed in a monograph by Frederic Wehrey, Dalia Dassa, Kaye Jessica Watkins, Jeffrey Martini, and Robert A. Guffey. "The Iraq Effect: The Middle East After the Iraq War" stated that with the Iraq buffer state removed, Iran was able to take advantage of its strong ties with shiite community in Iraq. The authors also speculated that with Iraq under Iran's sphere of influence, they could potentially maneuver into the Middle East Crescent from Lebanon to the Gaza Strip. This is the region in which a Cold War between Iran and Saudi Arabia had begun. With Iraq as buffer state between Iran and Saudi Arabia gone, the two countries have been engaged in a series of proxy wars in the Middle East, in attempts to reduce each other's influence in the region. The two greatest examples of these proxy wars are Syria and Yemen, and these conflicts have further destabilized the region.

Furthermore, when Saddam was ousted Al Qaeda was able to gain a foothold in the region. Saddam Hussein did not like Islamism, and feared that the Islamists would attempt to undermine his regime, which is why he had them imprisoned. Bin Laden saw Saddam's exile as

an opportunity, and set up Al Qaeda in Iraq to fight the Americans. The Iraqi branch of Al Qaeda would later splinter from Al Qaeda due to a fallout with the main leadership. This splinter group would eventually become ISIS.

Through the course of these events, the United States' image at home and abroad was shattered. The discovery that there had been no WMDs in Iraq led to protest and disappointment in the eyes of the American public. Furthermore, as a result of these miscalculations, the US' image was damaged abroad and its allies, including Germany and France, revoked support for the United States' invasion of Iraq. The United States subsequently lost sympathy from the world, as most of the US' allies felt like they had been taken advantage by the United States after the 9/11 attacks.

The United States original intent was to depose Saddam from power and bring democracy in Iraq, a move that could have been a potential start of a democratic state in the Middle East. Instead, after Saddam had been ousted, three ethnic groups sought to fill the power vacuum. Iran was able to expand its sphere of influence in Iraq through the Shiite majority and, with that majority, started to oppress the Sunni minority which. This resulted in a sectarian conflict. Furthermore, with Saddam out the picture Al Qaeda was able to take advantage of the situation in Iraq and were able to recruit sunnis from Iraq. Al Qaeda in Iraq in the 2010's would later split from Al Qaeda and would become the Islamic State. The US expected to gain political control over the region via a sympathetic government. Instead civil war continues in Iraq, and the US maintains intervention.

Yemen

In 2015, the Houthis and the Salah supporters (people who supported the former president of Yemen, Ali Abdullah Salah) were able to oust Yemeni president, Abdrabbu

Mansour Hadi, and his government from Sanaa, the capital of Yemen. Hadi's government fled south to the coastal city of Aden where they were able to re-establish their government. Saudi Arabia formed a coalition and has intervened in the country to suppress the Houthi uprising. The reason for Saudi Arabia's intervention and the country's support for Hadi's government in Yemen is because of Iran. In a congressional report by William Sharp, "Yemen: Civil War and Regional Intervention" stated that the Saudi's view the Houthi's as Iran allies and they embody what Iran wants to achieve in the arab world a non sunni actor that would be able to put pressure on Iran's adversaries either politically or militarily (Sharp, 2018, CRS No. R43960). As for the United States . The United States has supported the Saudi intervention out of security concerns. In his article, "What is Next for Yemen," Andrew Terrill states that the United States had a strategic military investment in Yemen, and has worked closely with the Yemeni military and security services to put down Al Qaeda In Yemen (AQIN). For this reason, the United States viewed the anarchic Yemeni government to be a security threat. The United States has become involved in the Yemen Civil War because of national security reasons such as the rise of terrorism in the region and the Iranian influence in the Civil War.

The Civil War in Yemen

The Yemen Civil War started in 2015 when the Houthis and Saleh supports ousted the Yemen government that was backed by the Saudis. According to a congressional report, "The War in Yemen: A Compilation of Legislation in the 115th Congress", the United States involvement in the Civil War has evolved. During the Obama administration, the administration involvement in the Yemeni Civil War was minor, consisting of logistical and intelligence support for Saudi Arabia's coalition. At the same time, the United States resisted taking direct military action with Saudi Arabia in Yemen (Sharp & Blanchard, 2018). The report also stated that the

United States established a joint center with Saudi Arabia to coordinate military and intelligence support of the Yemen Campaign.

However, when Saudi Arabia began bombing civilian targets in Yemen, the United States started to distance itself from Saudi Arabia. First, President Obama decided to withdraw US personnel who were assisting Saudi Arabia's air campaign in Yemen. For example, when the Saudi's bombed a funeral in Yemen, the United States "put a hold on a planned sale of precision-guided munitions (PGMs) to Saudi Arabia and limited intelligence sharing" (Sharp & Blanchard, 2018). However, the report mentions that the United States still cooperated with Saudi Arabia in addressing counter-terrorism and continued to refuel jets for the coalition. The report speculates that the United States distanced itself from Saudi Arabia's air campaign because the country could have been implicated in war crimes by the International Criminal Court (ICC). It should also be noted that around final months of Obama's presidency, the Houthi's launched missiles at US Navy vessels at the Yemeni coast, after which the Navy, by orders from the president, launched cruise missiles at Houthi radar installations. The Obama administration described this action, according to the congressional report, as self-defense and did not want to be dragged into the conflict (sharp & Blanchard, 2018,).

The Trump administration's strategy in regards to Yemen has escalated US action in the country. According to the same congressional report, the Trump administration has lifted the ban, and has authorized selling Saudi Arabia self-guided missiles. The administration has also increased training for Saudi Arabia's Air Force, assisting with targeting, and providing information regarding the international laws and the conflict. The report goes on to say that the Trump administration fully supports Saudi Arabia's coalition airstrikes in Yemen ,and has provided refueling to the coalition's jets over Yemen. Only recently has the United States

stopped providing refueling platforms for the Saudis after the murder of a Saudi journalist in Turkey.

Both the Obama and the Trump Administrations had the same goal in Yemen: to reinstate the government that existed before Houthis and the Salah supporters came into power. Also, both administrations supported Saudi Arabia's coalition in order to curb and prevent Iran from gaining greater influence in Yemen, and in the region as a whole. And it should be noted that both administrations support a peaceful resolution to the conflict in Yemen.

That said, the two administrations differ in how the course of action that they have adopted in Yemen. When the Obama administration, seeing Saudi Arabia's indiscriminate bombing of civilian places, figured that the United States could be implicated for war crimes, they distanced themselves from Saudi Arabia from, pulling US personnel from training and halting weapon sales for Saudi Arabia. Ever since the Trump administration came into power, the United States has escalated its actions in Yemen, undoing the previous administration's actions in order to seek closer relations with Saudi Arabia.

The actions of both administrations in Yemen may eventually lead to blowback in the most severe way. The Yemeni people see the United States support for Saudi intervention, and all public support for the US has been lost. This is understandable when considering that the Saudis have indiscriminately bombed civilian targets in Yemen using missile and weapons purchased from the United States. Furthermore, at the start of his presidency, Donald Trump ordered an operation in Yemen which resulted in civilian casualties, among them an American girl, and a Navy Seal who was killed in action. These two administrations' actions in Yemen will likely lead to unintended consequences that are opposed to the United States' interests and goals in the region.

Blowback from the Civil War in Yemen

When considering the situation in Yemen, there are many scenarios that could lead to potential blowback for the United States. However, it should be noted that conflict in Yemen is still ongoing and that one possibility is that Iran will gain much more support from the Houthis in Yemen. Another is that the Civil War in Yemen could lead to further destabilization in the region. Lastly, with the United States supporting the Saudi's and its allies the US personnel could face retaliation in the region. Finally, the United States involvement in Yemen could lead to domestic consequences as well.

One possible result of the United States' involvement in Yemen is that Iran may gain further support from the Houthis. In a monograph by the Strategic Studies Institute that debates Iran's role in the conflict in Yemen, the authors acknowledge that by 2011 the US had known that Iran was supporting the Houthis in the region. Also, in a report from the Congressional Research Service, "Yemen: Civil War and Regional Intervention", Jeremy M. Shape speculated that the Houthis did not depend on Iran for armaments, manpower, or financing. However, the report further claims that both Iran and Hezbollah have provided aid to the Houthis through advising, training, and funneling in arms to the rebels (Sharpe, 2018, CRS No, R43960). There are already ties between the countries that may be strengthened during the current conflict if Iran steps in to provide support.

The United States may also face retaliation against US personnel in the region. This has already happened to some degree, and the intensity of this retaliation may increase. In another report by Jeremy M. Sharp titled "Yemen: Recent Attacks Against U.S. Naval Vessels in the Red Sea," and published by the Congressional Research Service, Sharp states that in October 2016 military groups that were aligned to Houthis and supporters of Saleh launched anti-ship missiles

at US vessels in the Red Sea. Although there were no casualties or damage to the US naval vessels, a transport from the United States that was leased to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) was attacked and received damage from the strikes. The report argues that the attacks were a response to a Saudi-coalition strike on a funeral gathering on October the eighth in Yemen's capital, Sana. The victims of that air strike consisted of Houthi leaders, including the Mayor of Sana, two Yemeni members of the UN mission to monitor the ceasefire, and several high ranking officers (Sharpe, 2016, N10599). The attacks could mean that US forces in the region are also at risk of attack from Houthi anti-ship missiles that are placed on the coast of Yemen as was the case with the 5th fleet.

The United States actions in the Yemeni Civil War could lead to further destabilization in the region. Yemen is a coastal state, adjacent to the Bab El Mandeb. Bab El Mandeb is an important choke point connected to the Suez canal. If Iran was able to gain control over and turn Yemen into a proxy state, they would also be able to disrupt an important shipping lane in the Arabian Peninsula. It is in the interest of the United States to keep that choke point open since the United States relies on oil from the Persian Gulf.

The US government is also risking the support of their own populace. When the American citizens learned that weapons made in the United States were being used by the Saudi's reckless bombing runs on civilian targets, they started to demand that the United States halt its support of Saudi Arabia's intervention in Yemen. There have been recent developments in the United States Congress that indicate this trend may continue. Bernie Sanders, a Senator from Vermont, has proposed a bill in the United States Senate that is calling for a withdraw of the United States involvement in Yemen.

Analysis

These three case studies indicate that a pattern continues to repeat itself in the Middle East. By first looking at the key decisions that were made in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Yemen, a pattern may be found as to why the United States intervention in those three countries led or may be leading to destabilization in the region.

Summary of key decisions made in Afghanistan

There were key decisions made in Afghanistan during the Soviet Union's occupation that would set in motion a series of reactions that were arguably indirectly responsible for the rise of Al Qaeda and ultimately ISIS. One of these decisions began with the Carter administration in 1979, when Carter approved covert action in Afghanistan. At that time, he began sending aid to the Afghan rebels in opposition to the communist government there. The Carter administration decided to throw their support to the Afghan resistance because the United States wanted to drag the Soviet Union into a unwinnable war, thereby turning the Soviet war in Afghanistan into their own Vietnam. Another factor that influenced this decision the Islamic Revolution in Iran, after which the United States feared they may lose a footing in the Middle East.

When the Reagan administration came into power in 1981, they escalated support for the Afghan resistance to the Mujahideen. This included providing funding and training to the resistance through Pakistan. The Reagan administration also provided stinger missiles to Afghan rebels, in order to provide them with a defense against the gunships and against jet fighters.

How these keys decisions would eventually lead to blowback for the United States is complex. When the United States and its allies kicked the Soviet Union out of the Middle East, the country failed to foresee how its involvement in Afghanistan would lead to the rise of jihadi terrorism. This becomes especially obvious after the First Gulf War, when the United States and the coalition it was leading sought to expel Saddam from Kuwait. At that time, Osama Bin

Laden, who also had fought in the Soviet Afghan War, declared war against the United States because of its presence in Saudi Arabia. According to fundamentalist religious belief it is blasphemy for a non-muslim to set foot on the holy land. Furthermore, after the Soviet Union withdrew from Afghanistan it took for a couple of years for the communist government in Afghanistan to collapse. During this time, the country underwent Civil War occurred with the Taliban emerging as the victor in 1996. The Taliban then provided sanctuary for Osama Bin Laden and Al Qaeda. Bin Laden would use Afghanistan as a training ground for Al Qaeda to wage war against the United States, hence the fatwa he issued against the United States in the late 1990's.

Summary of key decisions made in Iraq

There were several key decisions that led up to invasion of Iraq and to the occupation in Iraq that resulted in problems that the United States is facing today. One of the first key decisions for the seeds of the Iraq War goes all the way back to the Clinton Administration. In a 2001 diplomatic cable to then Secretary of State Colin Powell, Edward S. Walker Jr. stated that the origin for the Iraqi regime change came from the Iraq Liberation Act of 1998. The act stated that it would be the policy of the United States to support efforts to remove Saddam from power and promote a democratic regime in Iraq (Walker, 2001). This cable was unique because at the time there was no call for an armed intervention in Iraq and the overthrow of Saddam. A policy that the US did not actively pursue until after the 9/11 attacks and in 2003.

Another factor leading to the invasion of Iraq was the informant CURVEBALL. CURVEBALL provided information regarding Iraq's WMD program to the US intelligence community, information that the United States used to justify the invasion of Iraq. This information would later be proven false by the Iraqi inspections group. As for the occupation of

Iraq, one of the key actions that led to the insurgency was the provision order by the coalition to disband both the Iraq military and its internal security services. What influenced the United States to make these decision is complex. These motivations that led the United States to pursue regime change in Iraq were originally laid out in the Iraq Liberation Act of 1998. After the September 11 attacks, the United States had an opportunity to pursue that regime change policy in Iraq.

Also, there was the account of handling the occupation of Iraq. One of the most key important decisions that was made during the occupation in Iraq was the directive by the coalition government to disband the Iraqi military, Iraq's security services and government services. What influence the decision to disband the Iraq's military and security apparatus is that the United States wanted to build a democratic state by restarting the Iraq' society. The effects from this led to the people who once part of Saddam's government resentful toward the United States and since they could get pay for their services decided to rebel against the United States, with some of them joining Al Qaeda in Iraq.

Summary of key decisions made in Yemen

There were key decisions that led to the United States to support the Saudi intervention in Yemen. One of the key decisions was that the United States feared of the instability in Yemen since Yemen is next to a major choke point in the Arabian Peninsula, Bab El Mandeb. If the Houthi's were able to gain control Yemen, Iran would be able to spread their influence to the country, a move that could be a detrimental to US interests in the region. Furthermore, the United States feared Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula. As a result, the United States has chosen to support Saudi Arabia's aggression in the region. What influence the Trump administration to

further escalate its support to the Saudi coalition in Yemen is to make up for lost time since the Obama administration distanced itself from Saudi Arabia's

Commonalities Among the Case Studies

Each of the three case studies, presented in this paper shared four recurring elements that were common. One of the elements is hubris. In each of these cases, the US has demonstrated excessive pride or confidence. The second element in this mismanagement of US intervention abroad. The third element is miscalculation in each of the conflicts. Finally, the fourth is failure to analyze the strategic environment that is necessary in completing the United States objectives abroad.

Fear has been a critical factor that leads the United States to intervene in foreign countries. One historical example of fear influencing our decision to intervene is Operation PBSuccess. PBSuccess was the operation that ousted the Alberto Arbenz in Guatemala in 1954 in a coup that was sponsored by the CIA. The results of the coup were mixed. Although the operation was a success, the coup would have lasting repercussions in the following years. The CIA would use PBSuccess as a guideline for the Bay of Pigs invasion, which resulted in disaster as the whole brigade of Cuban exiles were captured by the Cuban Revolutionary army. Also, the coup would convince Che Guevara that the United States could not be trusted since it was acting on the behalf of the United Fruit Company. Finally, the coup in Guatemala would lead to the destabilization of the guatemalan government. When Armados Carrillo was placed into power, he was unpopular and became a liability for the United States. Ultimately, his actions would result in the Guatemalan Civil War, a conflict that lasted into the 1990's.

Another historical example of fear guiding intervention is TPAjax. The United States decided to engineer a coup against Mohammad Mossadeq because the Eisenhower

administration feared that he was a communist. Mossadeq was nationalising oil in Iran. Also, the Eisenhower administration feared that if Mossadeq was a communist he would grant the Soviet Union access to the Persian Gulf, thereby displacing the United States strategically in the Middle East. Although the operation was successful, the blowback did not come until 1979, when the Shah was deposed in a revolution and the Ayatollah Khomeini was able to seize power in Iran. Furthermore, the United States lost a strategic partner in the Middle East when students took over the US embassy in Tehran and took the embassy staff hostage for 218 days. It was this event where diplomatic ties were severed and the United States supported Iraq during the Iran Iraq War as to undermine Iran.

Hubris to a certain extent has influenced the United States' behaviour when it comes to intervention. The results of this blind pride have often been disastrous. One example is the Bay of Pigs Invasion in 1961. The Bay of Pigs Invasion was an attempt by the United States to use Cuban exiles to overthrow Fidel Castro. The Cuban exiles, or Brigade 2506, were trained by the Central Intelligence Agency in both Guatemala and in Nicaragua by veterans who took part in Operation PBSuccess. The CIA officers who planned the Bay of Pigs invasion were very confident that the Cuban exiles would be able to overthrow Castro by igniting a revolution. This invasion would include the use of bombers disguised as soldiers from the Cuban revolutionary airforce. However the operation did not go as planned. The airstrikes were called off by President John F. Kennedy when it became clear that Castro knew the area where the exiles would be invading. Also, as a result of the Bay of Pigs Invasion, Castro chose to seek support from the Soviet Union. This would later contribute to the Cuban Missile Crisis, during which the Soviet Union placed medium range ballistic missiles in Cuba after the United States placed missiles in Turkey.

Another historical example would be the United States intervention in Vietnam. With the Cuban Missile Crisis still in recent memory, US government officials thought that they could match the show of force. If the US Navy had blockaded Cuba to prevent missiles heading to the island, then they could show the same amount of force in Vietnam. What government officials failed to realize was that in Vietnam, both the Viet Cong (VC) and the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) had combat experience. They were experts in the terrain and had fought, not only the Japanese during WW2, but had also defeated the French in the 1st Indochina War as the Viet Minh. At the time, the US government was telling the people at home that the United States was winning the war, even while the media was showing what was really going on in Vietnam. The US felt particularly confident after the Tet Offensive, in which both the VC and the NVA launched attacks on key locations throughout South Vietnam, including Saigon. The Tet Offensive was failure for both the VC and the NVA, and a victory for the United States since the VC were almost wiped out. However, it was a strategic victory for the North Vietnam since it led the American people of further distrust what was happening in Vietnam. The populace witnessed, from their televisions in their living rooms, the VC and NVA troops attacking cities in South Vietnam. All the while, the US government kept informing its citizens at home that the US were winning in South Vietnam. This event marked a turning point in Vietnam.

This happened to the United States in Afghanistan during the Soviet Afghan War. The United States wanted to kick the Soviet Union out of Afghanistan due to the fear that would hamper the United States strategically in the Middle East, since Iran had become an adversary to the United States and its ties to Pakistan at the time was in decline. The United States covert action into Afghanistan would be a success since the Soviet Union withdraw from the country and the Soviet Union had collapse meaning that the United States had won the Cold War against

its adversary. However, despite the United States victory against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan, they failed for not taking into account the interest of what the Mujahadeen wanted. In the end, the United States underestimated the group that it was aiding against the Soviet Union and it would take 9/11 attacks to understand as to what type of people that the United States were going war with.

By reflecting on the United States past interventions as well as looking into current case studies that the United States is currently involve there is a parallel to these cases. The parallel is that these two elements of hubris and fear leads to other affects to set in motion. These three are mismanaging the intervention, the miscalculation or misjudgement, and failure to read the strategic environment.

How the two elements leads two

With the factors of both fear and hubris combined as one, there are effects that it can lead to as a result of intervention. One result of it may lead to mismanagement of the intervention. Another would be miscalculation, or misjudgement of intervening in a foriegn. Finally, last factor that both hubris and fear lead to is misreading the strategic environment.

Acting with fear and hubris, the United States has overlooked things that, in hindsight, would be considered unwise. For example, when the United States issued a coolitional order that disbanded the Iraqi political society and banned the Baathist people from having influence in the new government, they misjudged the reactions of the populace. Many of those banned from the government and the military felt abandoned and chose to join the insurgency and fight against the United States.

The United States misjudge the situations that was plaguing in the countries that it had intervene in. For example, the United States misjudge of what was going to happen when it

intervene in Iraq. Also, it misjudge the effects that the war would bring in the region as well as failure to understand the history, culture, and the ethnic groups that were oppressed by Saddam's government. For Afghanistan the United States misjudge the intention of the Mujahadeen as well as misjudge their attitude toward the United States. As for Yemen, the United States misjudged the situation in Yemen as well as the reason why the Civil War is taking place.

One of the recurring elements that have plagued the United States is failure to analyze the strategic environment. After the invasion of Iraq, the National Security Council during Bush Presidency published a strategy, "Our National Strategy for Victory in the Middle East". The strategy listed end state goals for the Iraqi government such being build up as a democratic state and being a bulwark against terrorism in the region. The problem with the strategy was that it was not really a strategy to begin with. It did not list guidelines of what to do in Iraq, let alone budget to which part of the occupation is going to . Also, the strategy was most likely given to the American people. Also, the strategy does not address Iraq's complicated history such as that of being an artificial state. Also, the strategy does not provide a way of handling the three major ethnic groups (Sunni, Shia, and Kurdish) in Iraq.

The same can be said about US covert action after Afghanistan. After the Soviet Union withdraw from Afghanistan the United States fail to come up with a strategy in dealing with the post soviet withdrawal of Afghanistan. Also, the United States failed to take account of the culture in Afghanistan as well as the fracturing of the Mujahadeen after the Soviet Afghan War. Also, the United States failed to take account of important figures in the Soviet Afghan War. For example, the United State government were not able to take account of who were the major figures of the Afghan resistance as well as other known figures such as Osama Bin Laden.

Academic literature of these case studies

The academic literature in regards to these three case studies have been mixed since there is no consensus with the literature. Also, most of the information about these three case studies came from reports from the US government. Also, some of the information regarding these case studies are still unknown since the reports, ones from the intelligence community, which some of the information is still redacted or still classify due to national security concerns. However, what the academic literature has to say about these three case studies is fascinating.

For Afghanistan there is much more information available since information from that time had been declassified. From the declassified information in regards to Afghanistan and CIA involvement in the country from 1979 to 1989 is that near the end of the conflict the CIA hinted that there was several weaknesses in the Mujahadeen. One of these weaknesses was that different members had different goals for Afghanistan. Eventually, the group splinter and it led to a civil war over the control of Afghanistan. In 1996, the Taliban took control of the Kabul thereby taking control of Afghanistan.

As for Iraq although some of the information is still classified, there is a lot that can go around of the US invasion in Iraq. However, what is known is that there were reports before the invasion began that warn the potential consequences of Saddam Hussein being removed from power in Iraq. Also, the same reports also noted circumstances or outcomes that could be a result from an intervention are the same outcomes that the United States are dealing to this day.

What the academic literature has to say about Yemen is complicated since US involvement in the country is still a recent event and that there is not enough information to go by. However, what is known is that the reason for supporting the Saudi intervention in the country is the fear that Yemen could become another sphere of influence of Iran that nearby a important choke point. However, another reason is that the United States fears of Yemen

becoming a destabilized state that would give Al Qaeda an advantage since with the country destabilized, they could be able to turn Yemen into a safe haven.

Although policy analyst do say it outright of blowback, but they have stated that the outcomes that the United States wanted did come as plan. Also, the example from the two case studies shows that after when the United States intervene in these countries, they became destabilized or that the intended outcome that the United States wanted became the opposite of that outcome. Also, it should be noted that blowback does not happen outright and it takes decade or two for the blowback to occur. For example, the blowback from operation TPAjax did not occur until the late 70's and early eighties. The same can be said about Afghanistan during the Soviet Afghan War that the blowback was starting to creep towards to the United States with attacks on the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, the attempted sinking of the USS *Cole* off the coast of Yemen, the bombing of the World Trade Center in the garage in the 1997, and finally concluding with the September 11th attacks on the world trade center, the pentagon, and attempted attack on the US capital.

As for Iraq policy analyst do not give blowback outright, but shows the effects of the invasion of Iraq that would be considered a blowback. When the United States ousted Saddam from power and disbanded not only the military and security forces of Baathist Iraq, but disbanded the infrastructure of Iraq that included government workers. By doing this, former members of the Baathist party took up arms against the coalition occupation forces with some of the members joining Al Qaeda in Iraq.

As for Yemen, policy analyst know to a certain extent were the Civil War is heading to. However, it's just speculating since the Civil War is still an ongoing event. The outcomes of the Civil War are that there is no end to the conflict. What can be known is that the government is

facing calls from Congress to withdraw the United States support for Saudi Arabia's intervention in Yemen. Also, the Houthis are increasingly relying on Iran for support, in which if the Houthis are able to control Yemen, Iran could find an important ally in Saudi Arabia's backyard.

Difference with these case studies

The difference of these case studies is fascinating. The case study in regards to Afghanistan focuses at the twilight of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union. Also, the case study about Afghanistan focus on the United States covert involvement from 1979 to 1989. As for Iraq the difference with this was that it was a recent event that took place. Also, unlike Afghanistan and Yemen, it was a direct intervention in the country with the purpose of removing a dictator of the country. As for Yemen its a civil war between two groups and the United States is on the sidelines of the conflict by providing aid and support to the Saudi Coalition in Yemen.

What these three case studies have in common is that recurring that had the United States to get involved had been shown increasingly. The elements of fear and hubris is influencing the United States not only to intervene but how the United States handle the aftermath of the intervention. When the United States decided to pull out of Afghanistan after the Soviet Union withdraw from the country, they failed to take account on the politics of the mujahideen as well as their attitude towards the United States. Also, the United States failed to foresee the sectarian issues between the Sunni, Shia, and the Kurds during Saddam's

The Cost of Blowback

The cost from the United States blowback in the three countries is that it has damage the United States reputation at home and abroad. For example, when the United States invaded Iraq in 2003, the world lost its sympathy toward the United States as they felt taken advantage by the

United States because of the 9/11 attacks. Also, the Iraq had an impact on the United States domestically with the American people protesting against the war in Iraq. Also this can be seen happening again in Yemen As the United States is currently supporting the Saudi Arabia's intervention in the country that has created not only a humanitarian crisis, but the United States might be implicated in war crimes as the Saudis have been indiscriminately bombing civilian targets in Yemen. This has led calls from congress for the United States to withdraw its involvement from Yemen.

Another aspect of the cost from blowback is that resources could be depleted or wasted. For example, the United States is still currently involved in Afghanistan, Iraq and Yemen, its resources are being depleted. These resources include manpower, logistics, and money. Also, with the United States still being involved in the Middle East, it has drawn resources were it should be in placed at such as China's rising dominance in the South China Sea, Russia's resurgence and its military buildup in the Arctic Ocean, or resources that could be well spent in the United States such as rebuilding infrastructure.

Finally, the last aspect from the cost of being involved in these countries is that the United States citizens can either be harmed or killed abroad. After the United States were able achieved their goals against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. However, the United States failed to take account of the situation with the Mujahedeen, which would splinter and formed the Taliban. When the Taliban came into power, they provided sanctuary for Osama Bin Laden and the organization that he founded, Al Qaeda. They would be responsible for attacks against the United States in Kenya, Tanzania, Yemen, and finally in New York. As for Iraq, US troops handling the occupation of Iraq as well as private contractors that were employed by the US

government sometimes were wounded or were killed, with the example of two employees from Blackwater being killed in Fallujah, Iraq.

Conclusion

The condition that make blowback inevitable is either or a combination of Hubris and fear. These two elements come to play is that it has led the United States to either led to mismanaged, miscalculated, and misreading the strategic environment of an intervention or even a combination of both. In the three case studies, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Yemen, the three case studies showed the elements of fear and hubris play apart leading up to a intervention. Also, its during the intervention that these two elements could lead to mis management, miscalculation, and failure to read the strategic environment. It's were these three affects led to the blowback sometime outright happening, or a whole decade to see the effects from the blowback.

What can be learned from these case studies and what can the United States do in the future is three things. one thing for the United States to do before it considers to intervene in a foreign country is that it needs to assess the strategic environment or in certain circumstance reassess the strategic environment. By doing this the United States will have a better understanding of the environment that they are engage in. The second thing that the United States needs to do is it must have an open outlook. With an open outlook, the United States would be able have foresight as to what could happen if the United States decides to intervene and possible be able to connect events that are taking place. Lastly, the United States must expect friction when its making strategy for an intervention in the country. By following these solutions, US policymakers could prevent a blowback from happening. However, blowback can still happen even with good intentions and its up to policy makers to proceed with caution in the area of foreign policy.

Bibliography

- Aftandilian, G. (2018). Maneuvering the Saudi-Iranian Rivalry in The Middle East: How the United States Can Preserve and Protect Its Long-Term Interests in The Region. Strategic Studies Institute. Retrieved from <http://ssi.armywarcollege.edu/pdffiles/PUB1395.pdf>
- Afghanistan Task Force, Foreign Affairs and National Defense Division. (1980). Afghanistan: Soviet Invasion and U.S. Response (Brief No. IB80006). 8-9 Retrieved from https://www.everycrsreport.com/files/19800502_IB80006_cdb9eeda3b49cdfce9a4d95a0bb0eb61bd4130cc.pdf
- Brands, H (2012). *The Promise and Pitfalls of Grand Strategy*. Strategic Studies Institute. Retrieved from <http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a565486.pdf>
- Central Intelligence Agency (1980). US Sanctions Over Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan Soviet, Polish and Romanian Reactions. Retrieved from <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP81B00401R000600200023-2.pdf>
- Central Intelligence Agency. (1985). The Soviet Presence In Afghanistan: Implications for the regional powers and the United States. Retrieved from https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/DOC_0005445963.pdf
- Central Intelligence Agency. (1987). The Cost of Soviet Involvement in Afghanistan. Retrieved from https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/DOC_0000499320.pdf
- Central Intelligence Agency. (1988a). USSR: Domestic Fallout from the Afghan War. Retrieved from <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP89T01451R000100090001-5.pdf>
- Central Intelligence Agency. (1988b). USSR: Withdrawal from Afghanistan. Retrieved from https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/DOC_0005564723.pdf
- Central Intelligence Agency. (1989). Afghanistan: The War in Perspective. Retrieved from https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/DOC_0005564725.pdf
- Coalition Authority. (2003). COALITION PROVISIONAL SUTHORITY ORDER NUMBER 2 Retrieved from <http://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAE/NSAE418/docs/9b%20-%20Coalition%20Provisional%20Authority%20Order%20No%202%20-%20208-23-03.pdf>
- Director of Central Intelligence (2002). Iraq's Weapons Mass of Destruction Programs. Retrieved from https://www.cia.gov/library/reports/general-reports-1/iraq_wmd/Iraq_Oct_2002.pdf
- Directorate of Intelligence. (1984). Domestic Cost of the Soviet Regime of Involvement in Afghanistan. Central Intelligence Agency. Retrieved from <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP85T00287R001401010002-5.pdf>

- Wehrey, F, Kaye, D. D, Watkins, J. Martini, J. Guffrey, A. R. (2010). The Iraq Effect: The Middle East After the Iraq War. The Rand Corporation. Retrieved from https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2010/RAND_MG892.pdf
- Guase, F, G. (2014). Beyond Sectarianism: The New Middle East Cold War. Brookings Institute. Retrieved from <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/English-PDF-1.pdf>
- Grey, S. H (2011). Hard Power and Soft Power: The Utility of Military Force as An Instrument of Policy in the 21st Century. *Strategic Studies Institute*. Retrieved from <http://ssi.armywarcollege.edu/pdffiles/pub1059.pdf>
- Hartman, A. (2002). 'The Red Template': US Policy in Soviet-Occupied Afghanistan. *Third World Quarterly*. 23(3). Retrieved from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/3993537.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3Af4ae68230c1d72bb6475d43840636b25>
- Henriksen, H. T, (2002). The “Blowback” Myth: How Bad History Could Make Bad Policy. *Hoover Digest*. (1). Retrieved from <https://www.hoover.org/research/blowback-myth-how-bad-history-could-make-bad-policy>
- Herring, C. G. (2017). *The American Century & Beyond: U.S. Foreign Relations, 1893-2014*. Oxford University Press. NY: New York.
- Hudson, L, Owens, S. C, Flannes, M. (2011). Drone Warfare: Blowback from the New American Way of War. *Middle East Policy*, 18(3). Retrieved from <https://www.mepc.org/drone-warfare-blowback-new-american-way-war>
- Isenberg, D. (1999). *Imperial Overreach Washington's Dubious Strategy to Overthrow Saddam Hussein* (Brief No. 360) The Cato Institute. Retrieved from <https://object.cato.org/sites/cato.org/files/pubs/pdf/pa360.pdf>
- Johnson, C. (2000). *Blowback: The Cost and Consequences of American Empire*. Henry Holt and Company. NY: New York.
- Maloney, S. (2008). How the Iraq War Has Empowered Iran. Brookings Institution. Retrieved from <https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/how-the-iraq-war-has-empowered-iran/>
- United Nations Security Council. (2003). United Nations Weapons Inspectors Report to Security Council on Progress in Disarmament of Iraq (SC/7682). Retrieved from <https://www.un.org/press/en/2003/sc7682.doc.htm>
- United States Central Command. (1999). Desert Crossing Seminar: After Action Report. Retrieved from https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB418/docs/1%20-%20Desert%20Crossing%20After%20Action%20Report_1999-06-28.pdf
- Pena, V. C. (2012). Blowback: The Unintended Consequences of Military Tribunals. *Notre Dame Journal of Law, Ethics, & Policy*, 16(1). 119 Retrieved from <https://scholarship.law.nd.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.com/&httpsredir=1&article=1284&context=ndjlepp>

- Pena, V. C. (2003). Iraq: The Wrong War (Policy Analysis No. 502). CATO Institute. Retrieved from <https://object.cato.org/sites/cato.org/files/pubs/pdf/pa502.pdf>
- Riedel, B. (2007). Al Qaeda Strikes Back. Brookings Institution. Retrieved from <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/al-qaeda-strikes-back/>
- Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. (2006). Postwar Findings About Iraq's WMD Programs and Links to Terrorism and How They Compare with Prewar Assessments (Senate Report No 109-331, 2006). Retrieved from <https://www.intelligence.senate.gov/sites/default/files/publications/109331.pdf>
- Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. (2004). Report on the U.S. Intelligence Community's Prewar Intelligence Assessment on Iraq. Retrieved from <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB129/senateiraqreport.pdf>
- Sharp, J. M. (2016). Yemen: Recent Attacks Against U.S. Naval Vessels in the Red Sea (CRS No. IN10599). Retrieved from <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/IN10599.pdf>
- Sharp, J. M. (2016). Yemen: Civil War and Regional Intervention. (CRS No. R43960). Retrieved from <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/R43960.pdf>
- Simmons, P, E, Dewey, A, E, & Craner, L, W. (2003). Iraq Contingency Planning. United States State Department. Retrieved from <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB163/iraq-state-03.pdf>
- Wilbur, D. (1969) "CIA, Report, Clandestine Service History: Overthrow of Premier Mosaddeq of Iran: November 1952 - August 1953, March 1954, Secret, CIA." Appendix E 21-22 *U.S. Intelligence on the Middle East, 1945-2009*, doi:10.1163/ejb9789004249028.b0209. Retrieved from <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB28>
- Walker, E. (2001). Origins of the Iraq Regime Change Policy. United States State Department. Retrieved from <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB418/docs/2a%20-%20Walker%20to%20Powell%201-23-01.pdf>