INTERNATIONAL SECURITY IN A WORLD OF FRAGILE STATES

ISLAMIC STATES AND ISLAMIST ORGANIZATIONS

S. YAQUB IBRAHIMI

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S. Yaqub Ibrahimi

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For Noorin

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"Human beings cannot live and exist except through social organization and cooperation."

—Ibn Khaldun, The Muqaddimah

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Contents

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Illustrations

Figures

Tables

Ibrahimi, S. Yaqub. *International Security In a World of Fragile States: Islamic States and Islamist Organizations.*
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Preface and Acknowledgments

This book is the result of a personal and academic inquiry for understanding fragile states and their international security consequences. I started writing this book when Islamist violence in the fragile Islamic states was considered the most serious threat to international peace and security. With the territorial and organizational defeat of Islamic State and al-Qaeda and the rise of other security concerns, Islamist violence is categorized as a marginal threat to international peace and security. However, theories of international relations and political violence informs us that no security threat will disappear without the elimination of its root causes and socio-political context. Therefore, Islamist violence is examined and presented in this book as a constant threat to international security that will resurge in different forms, shapes, and levels of intensity in the coming years and decades—because the causes and the conditions fomenting the threat has not changed at all.

There are many to thank for their support during the process of writing and publishing this book. Without their support and contribution, this book would not exist. First of all, I thank Elinor Sloan for her unlimited support and friendship during the long journey of writing and publishing the book. I also thank Brian Schmidt, a great IR scholar and my friend, who was always there when I needed help concerning IR theory, IR literature, and IR methodology. Alex Wilner and David Carment provided enriching feedback on earlier drafts of the manuscript. I sincerely thank them. The book also benefited from comments of many other scholars and graduate students at Carleton University and at international conferences, including ISA and CPSA. Hans-Martin Jaeger gave critical feedback on

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early drafts of my work. I also learned a considerable amount from critical viewpoints shared by Fiona Robinson, Ajay Parasram, and many other IR scholars. I sincerely thank them as well. I also thank Rob Curry-Wood, a PhD student at Carleton University, for reading and editing a draft of the manuscript.

Publication of this book took many years. I submitted the first draft to the University of Michigan Press in early 2019. The manuscript went through several peer review and editing processes. Throughout the process, my editor Dr. Elizabeth Demers of the University of Michigan patiently worked with me to make the manuscript publishable. I am deeply grateful for her support, effort, and time.

I also thank many anonymous peer reviewers who patiently read the manuscript and provided constructive and critical feedback to several drafts. I am sure that without their feedback, recommendations, and critiques, this book could be incomplete. I truly appreciate their time, expertise, and generous comments. I would like to also thank the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada for generously funding my research. Finally, I owe an enormous debt of gratitude to my wife, Noorin, the first reader and critic of my every single work who understood and supported me during the long process of writing and re-writing. Thank you!

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Since the end of the Cold War, fragile states have posed serious security threats to the world. In addition to dealing with civil wars, ethnic conflicts, sectarian violence, and authoritarianism, fragile states have contributed to the formation and expansion of international crime networks, drug cartels, and terrorist organizations. Today, the Islamic world contains the greatest number of such states that are home to a variety of international security problems. In addition to providing sanctuaries and operational environments to a variety of crime organizations, the Islamic fragile states have been home to violent Islamist organizations that in this book are called Jihadi Salafi Groups (JSGs).

Since al-Qaeda's formation in Afghanistan and its attacks on New York and Washington, DC, on September 11, 2001, the nature of JSGs and the ways they rise and function have received close scrutiny (e.g., Choueiri 2010; Gerges 2011; Gottlieb et al. 2013; Jackson et al. 2009; Jackson and Pisoiu 2018; Lutz and Lutz 2005; Pedahzur 2006; Richardson 2006; Schmid 2011; Schuurman 2018; Silke 2018). These scholars have examined the root causes of JSGs at specific levels of analysis. In this context, JSGs are regarded as the outcome of a personal desire for jihad at the individual level (Horgan 2007; Kruglanski and Fishman 2006; Post 2007), of Salafi ideology or religiosity at the group level (Esposito 2006; Gerges 2005; Sageman 2004; Sedgwick 2004; Tibi 2012; Wiktorowicz 2006), and of the U.S. post-Cold War foreign and military policies in the Islamic world at the international level (Gerges 2011, 2016; Ismael and Terry 2014; Murden 2002; Nasser 2006; Pape 2006).

If we put this literature together, it suggests that the formation of JSGs requires determinant causes on all three levels of analysis. If this argument

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is to hold, it raises the question of why these jihadi organizations do not emerge in every Islamic country where these causes persist. For example, why did JSGs emerge in Afghanistan and Iraq but not in Saudi Arabia or Qatar? What can explain this contradictory outcome? This book discovers that the answer lies in the level of state fragility in Islamic countries.

Empirical observation and data show that all major JSGs have emerged in Islamic countries that fall into the *alert* category of the Fragile States Index (FFP 2006–2021). The alert category includes states that are the most fragile of all. For example, al-Qaeda emerged in Afghanistan, al-Shabaab was created in Somalia, Islamic State (IS) was established in Iraq and Syria, Boko Haram emerged in Nigeria and Chad, al-Qaeda in Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) flourished in Yemen, Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) grew in Algeria, and several al-Qaeda and IS affiliates burgeoned in Islamic fragile states in Africa.[1] By contrast, no JSG has emerged in Islamic countries that stand outside the alert category of the Fragile States Index. In countries like Saudi Arabia, Jordan, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Qatar, Oman, Turkey, Morocco, and Senegal effective statehood deterred the formation of such organizations. As a result, thousands of jihadi militants left their countries of origin that lacked the necessary conditions for the creation of JSGs, infiltrating the extremely fragile states to create or join violent jihadi organizations (Ambah 2003; Hegghammer 2007; Obaid and Cordesman 2005, 4–7).

Despite the significant role of state fragility in the formation and expansion of JSGs, the literature on the relationship between the two phenomena is highly diffuse. Much of the existing literature has developed general hypotheses on the nexus of state fragility and terrorism by drawing on quantitative and broad observations. For the most part, this body of the literature addresses *why* terrorist organizations took refuge in fragile states, but it fails to explain *how* state fragility contributed to the formation of those organizations (e.g., Coggins 2015; George 2018; Howard 2014; Patrick 2011; Piazza 2007; Piazza 2008; Rotberg 2003). This body of the literature focuses on why fragile states provide safe havens and operational facilities to JSGs, but it does not address the question of *how* those groups emerged under the state fragility conditions in the first place.

Likewise, the qualitative body of the literature examines state fragil-

1. Algeria is no longer listed in the "Alert" category of the Fragile States Index. AQIM emerged in Algeria in 2007 when the country was ranked as one of the top 20 fragile states of the world. See Marshall and Goldstone 2007, 15.

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ity as a root cause of terrorist organizations, instead of assessing the root causes of those organizations in a systematic connection with aspects of state fragility (Dorf 2005; Kittner 2007; Newman 2007; Rotberg 2002b; Rotberg 2003). Moreover, a critical part of the literature that questions the existence of any relationship between state fragility and terrorism engages exclusively in debates about cause-effect relationships between the two phenomena (Chandler 2006; Hehir 2007; Simons and Tucker 2007). By focusing on whether state fragility is or is not a cause of terrorism, both the mainstream and the critical literature fail to examine the interconnection between the root causes and the conditions of JSGs and their combined contribution to the emergence of these violent Islamist organizations.

In sum, no volume of the existing literature stands out as a seminal work on the interconnection between the root causes of JSGs and state fragility conditions and their amalgamated role in the formation and evolution of these organizations. This book tries to fill the gap by developing a comprehensive but readily understandable narrative of the rise of JSGs in Islamic countries. To this end, the book examines JSGs in an analytical framework in which their root causes are categorized on the individual, group, and international levels, and the dimensions of state fragility are treated as necessary conditions that *magnify* but do not *multiply* the original cause-effect relationship (van Evera 1997, 11).

By concentrating on the conditional role of fragile states in the formation and expansion of JSGs, this book adds state fragility as a *condition variable* to the causal explanation of these jihadi organizations (van Evera 1997, 11). Thus the book not only assesses *why* a series of causes produces JSGs but also explains *how* it does so. Addressing the *why* and *how* questions, together, is an effort for providing a *complete explanation* of the problem (Gehring and Uberthur 2009; Gerring 2010).

Three events form the empirical basis of this study: the establishment of al-Qaeda in Afghanistan in 1998, the rise of IS in the post-Saddam Hussein Iraq, and the failed al-Qaeda effort to establish a base in Saudi Arabia. The first two serve as *positive cases*, while al-Qaeda's failed effort in Saudi Arabia is a *negative case* in this theorization (George 1979; Gerring and Cojocaru 2016; Ragin 2014; Seawright and Geering 2008). The two positive cases explain how specific aspects of state fragility in Afghanistan and Iraq provided the necessary conditions for the rise of al-Qaeda and IS, respectively. The negative case study, as a prerequisite for a controlled comparison, reinforces conclusions drawn from the two positive case studies (George 1979, 44; Ragin 2014, 41). These three *crucial* cases contain

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major aspects and features of the rise of JSGs and, together, explain the contribution of state fragility to the process of the formation and expansion of these organizations (Gerring 2007, 118).

Beyond the two distinct categories of cases that support my view of what generates JSGs, there are *hybrid* cases that may contribute to a counterargument. While a detailed examination of these hybrid cases might highlight the limitations of the key arguments, they are either outside the scope of this study or influenced by *case-specific* variables that are neither generalizable nor pose a methodological challenge to the research design of this study.

The hybrid cases can be categorized into two clusters. The first includes relatively stable Islamic states that do not fall into the alert category of the Fragile States Index yet have produced violent Islamist organizations (e.g., Indonesia has given rise to Jemaah Islamiyah). In the second cluster are highly fragile Islamic states, particularly in North and West Africa, that have not produced JSGs (e.g., Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, Gambia, and Mauritania). For the following reasons, I have chosen not to cover the *hybrid* cases at greater length.

Indonesia provides a good example of the first category of hybrid cases. The Indonesian state has ranked more effective than Saudi Arabia and China but it hosts Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), which is confused as a JSG by some observers. JI has a complicated background, with its origins dating back to the anticolonial movement of Darul Islam in the 1940s. The organization was officially established in 1993 when its leaders were hiding in Malaysia to escape the persecution of Suharto's New Order government. JI infiltrated Indonesia following the fall of Suharto's regime in 1998 when the situation for Islamist activities was eased under the transitional government. The study of this organization, its complicated history, and its evolution from an older Islamist organization will add more insight to the debate on state fragility-terrorism nexus in a broader sense. However, JI falls outside the scope of this book because it does not fit the definition of JSGs that is outlined in the following section and is articulated in greater detail in chapter 2. Despite having cross-border cells in neighboring countries, JI is not a jihadi Salafi organization with a pan-Islamic and caliphate-based objective. Moreover, JI's periodic ties to al-Qaeda and other JSGs have been based more on interpersonal associations than on ideological or organizational ties (Collier 2006). Therefore, despite the conventional categorization of JI as an al-Qaeda franchise in Southeast Asia, the group is not a far-enemy-centric jihadist entity. It has operated throughout its life-

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time as a domestic jihadi organization aiming for a transition of power in favor of Islamists in Indonesia (Abuza 2003, 122; Collier 2006; Gunaratna 2002, 192–93). Moreover, JI's resilient recruitment policy, which has expanded its membership to various segments of the society, has blurred the boundaries between its militant and nonmilitant structures, connecting it to many formal and political Islamist organizations in the country. Considering JI's indigenous nature, its local politics, and its domestic objectives, the group falls outside the scope of this study that is concerned exclusively with JSGs as pan-Islamic and far-enemy-centric violent organizations that aim to establish the Islamic caliphate by waging jihad against real and imagined enemies throughout the globe.

The second category of hybrid cases includes several Islamic states, particularly in West Africa, that fall into the alert category of the Fragile States Index but have not produced JSGs. The absence of JSGs in those countries is the outcome of country-specific factors. Among those factors is Sufism, a theosophical branch of Sunni Islam and a historical rival of Salafism, which has provided religious deterrence to JSGs and developed new forms of domestic counterterrorism (Seedemann 2010; Ridgeon 2015).

For example, Sufi movements in Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, Gambia, and Mauritania have protected those countries from the dangers of jihadi Salafism (Mazzini 2018).[2] Sufism and Sufi movements have not only delegitimized jihadi Salafism but have also filled the legitimacy gap left by state fragility. Thus terrorist activities have failed to produce JSGs in any of these countries. Even in more stable countries of the region like Senegal the secular state has interacted with Sufi networks to shield the country from the expansion of the jihadi Salafi ideology and activities (Diouf 2013; Cummings 2017). Sufism and Salafism, as two main streams of Sunni Islam, have a long history of conflict and confrontation that is broadly studied by historians and social scientists (Ridgeon 2015; Laremont 2018).

Besides Sufism, other factors are also specific to many countries that have proved crucial in countering JSGs in West Africa. In Mauritania, for example, Sufism has effectively delegitimized the Salafi cause. However, the absence of JSGs in this country is also the outcome of other factors, including the extensive internal security apparatus that arose from the tribal nature of the state, the religious and ethnic mosaic of the coun-

2. Mauritania exited the alert category of the Fragile States Index in 2020. But it was mostly an alert case during the 2010s when the country was a target of both domestic and international jihadis. It is still one of the top three cases in the high-warning category of fragile states.

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try, and their role in politics (Simons and Tucker 2007, 399). Relying on these factors, counterterrorism in Mauritania has followed a two-tiered approach. First, jihadi fighters are co-opted through ethnoreligious politics that includes intra-ethnic relationships and social cooperation through ethnic ties. Second, the internal security apparatus is used effectively and uncompromisingly in suppressing those that refused to co-opt (Wehrey 2019). Thus, despite persistent jihadi activities and increasing state fragility, jihadi violence in Mauritania is "contained through a mix of coercion and co-option" (Wehrey 2019).

Beyond the two categories of hybrid cases, there are violent Islamist groups that have emerged in fragile Islamic states but cannot be categorized as JSGs. Algeria provides a good example of this category. Many violent Islamist groups were established during the country's civil war of the 1990s. The most significant among them was the Armed Islamic Group (GIA, from French Groupe Islamique Armé). GIA and other Islamist groups like Islamic Armed Movement (MIA) emerged in reaction to the suppression of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) following the 1991 legislative election. After it was clear that FIS was winning Algeria's "first multiparty election after the country's independence," the army intervened in the process, canceled the election, and officially dissolved the FIS (Gilles 2003, 174; Speetjens 2017). Following this military coup, several jihadi organizations emerged to challenge the military government. However, many of those organizations soon negotiated with the government to partake in the country's political development. GIA was an exception in this process. It remained as one of the most uncompromising and hardline jihadi organizations in the country. From its creation to its dissolution in 2002, GIA aimed to overthrow the Algerian government and replace it with an Islamic regime (Hafez 2000). Thus the GIA, unlike regular JSGs, did not adhere to an international jihadi agenda and the establishment of a pan-Islamic caliphate as its priority and goal. Therefore GIA can be categorized as a near-enemy-centric Islamist organization with a core objective of power transition within the context of Algerian national politics. Although a small branch of GIA, the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC), joined al-Qaeda in 2003, and in 2007 it changed its name to AQIM, GIA does not originally qualify as a JSG (Boudali 2007; Gilles 2003, 260; Hafez 2000).

The hybrid cases and the various categories of Islamist and violent movements that do not qualify as JSGs are potential research topics. Separate research in the future will provide scrutiny about those cases and their con-

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tribution to the formation and expansion of JSGs. Such inquiries will help expand the debate on the state fragility-terrorism nexus and its international security consequences. Likewise, there are many JSGs like AQIM, AQAP, al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent, Al-Shabab, Jabhat al-Nusra, Islamic State Greater Shahra, Islamic State West Africa, Islamic State Khurasan, Islamic State Libya, Islamic State Sinai, and many others that are in the scope of this study but are not included in this book because the three case studies are sufficient for addressing the key questions and developing the core argument. The remainder of this introductory chapter is organized as follows. First, state fragility and JSGs are described, and next, the methodology of research is explained and the organization of the book is outlined.

State Fragility

State fragility is an anomaly of the modern sovereign state. In other words, when a state does not function according to its foundational requirements, it can be categorized as a fragile state. Therefore a conceptualization of the fragile state requires an articulation of the sovereign state and the process of its formation and fragility.

The sovereign state refers to a territorially based political entity that emerged out of the great transformations from the medieval to the modern era in Europe (Jackson 2005, 82; Tilly 1985, 179). Scholars consider the Peace of Westphalia that settled the Thirty Years War (1618–1648) as the best historical marker of the establishment of the sovereign state (Jackson 2005, 82). However, it should be clear that the Peace of Westphalia is not the beginning of the formation of sovereign states but a critical moment that directed the several centuries' efforts toward the creation of territorially based political entities to put an end to religious disputes.

Essentially, the sovereign state consisted of several institutional and functional elements. The institutional elements are about "what a state looks like," while its functional elements are about "what a state does" (Mann 1984; Jackson 1998, 2; Collier 2009, 220). Thus a sovereign state can be defined as a territorially specific entity that operates through various hierarchies and institutions to fulfill its fundamental duties, which involve maintaining effective and legitimate institutions of governance, preserving the state's monopoly over the legitimate use of violence, and providing security and services in return for taxation (Mann 1984; Tilly 1985; Weber 1946). The state's capability in carrying out these duties is

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defined as "statehood" or "stateness," which is measured by three variables of legitimacy, authority, and capacity (Carment and Samy 2019; Tikuisis and Carment 2017). Accordingly, a fragile state refers to any sovereign state that suffers from a lack of or a low level of legitimacy, authority, and capacity (Bilgan and Morton 2002, 56).

In this conception, legitimacy refers to the extent to which a state respects the social contract and enjoys popular and international support. Authority refers to the state's level of ability in exercising what Weber calls the "monopoly over the use of legitimate violence" in its territory. Hence authority is mainly about the ability of the state's defense and security institutions to provide and maintain security in the country and enforce the law. Finally, capacity includes the human and financial resources that a state has at its disposal. Capacity, in this context, refers to the availability of resources, the size of the economy, the state's ability to acquire the necessary means of governance, and its willingness and ability to provide essential services to its citizens (Carment, Prest, and Samy 2010, 86). Fragile states lack or are short of the three elements of statehood.

It is important to note that state fragility is basically about the deficiency of the *empirical* but not the *juridical* statehood. Therefore a fragile or failed state continues to be a member of the international community because "firstly, the procedural norms of equal sovereignty and non-intervention (juridical statehood) are observed regardless of domestic conditions—in accordance with the UN Charter, Article 2 (4, 7)." And "secondly, the substantive qualification for international recognition and UN membership (empirical statehood) has been disregarded—Article 4 (1) which declares that member states 'are able and willing to carry out their Charter obligations. That presupposes the capabilities as well as the volitions of empirical statehood and a diplomatic regime of constitutive rather than declaratory recognition'" (Jackson 1998, 3; Peterson 1997, 68–71).

State fragility has been more evident since the end of the Cold War, although it is a not post–Cold War phenomenon per se (Carment 2003, 407). Since the 1990s, when dealing with fragile states became a serious international issue, multiple terms like failed state, failing state, weak state, and collapsed state were used by scholars and policymakers to describe the problem (Carment, Prest, and Samy 2010, 7). These terms basically "emerged as ad hoc conceptual responses to what seemed to be new sorts of armed conflicts and problems in the wake of the Cold War" (Call 2010, 305). The new terms were used interchangeably and with ambiguous definitions that resulted in a chaotic conceptual environment in the literature.

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In this environment, the term *fragile state* was constructed as an inclusive concept to incorporate previous terms within a single conceptual framework in which the previous terms are treated as subsets of fragile state with every subset describing only a particular level of state fragility (Carment, Prest, and Samy 2010, 6–7). Today, fragile state and state fragility are broadly used in academic publications and by many research institutions in explaining and assessing various levels of the sovereign state's anomalies like state failure, state weakness, and state collapse. The adoption of state fragility as the key term of this study is informed by this academic consensus.

Data from the FFP and the CSP is used to provide categories and patterns of state fragility and explain the logic of case selection. The FFP has created a comprehensive index of state fragility that reports and categorizes the fragile states of the world annually since 2005. This index was initially based on the Conflict Assessment System Tool (CAST) that was created as a framework for understanding conflict and conflict management in the 1990s (FFP 2021). In 2004, the FFP used the CAST framework as the basis for developing a new index of ranking and assessing fragile states. The new index was created based on three convectional sources of social sciences research, including preexisting quantitative data sets, qualitative expert studies, and content analysis (FFP 2021). This index, first, provides a rank and analysis of fragile states and, second, categorizes them into three general clusters including stable cases, warning cases, and alert cases.

The two case studies of this book, Afghanistan and Iraq, are selected from the alert category that includes states that are the most fragile of all. The third case study, Saudi Arabia, is selected from the warning category that includes moderately fragile states. Table 1 illustrates the alert category of fragile states in 2021 in which number "1" indicates the most fragile state of the world, number "2" the second most fragile state, and so on. Almost all of the states that are on the alert list of 2021 have been in the same category for years (see FFP 2006–2021).

In addition to the FFP index, the CSP index of fragile states is also used for analyzing patterns of fragility in case studies that require data for a longer period. This index provides annual fragility scores for each country since 1995 (CSP 1995–2018). The index ranges from 0 "no fragility" to 25 "extreme fragility" and breaks down the overall score into three specific categories, including a 0–8-point category that presents no to low fragility, a 9–16-point category that indicates moderate fragility, and a 17–25-point category that indicates high to extreme fragility (Marshall and Cole 2014,

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TABLE 1. The Alert Category of Fragile States (2021)

State Fragility Rank	Country
1	Yemen
2	Somalia
3	Syria
4	South Sudan
5	Congo (DRC)
6	Central African Republic
7	Chad
8	Sudan
9	Afghanistan
10	Zimbabwe
11	Ethiopia
12	Nigeria
13	Haiti
14	Guinea
15	Cameron
16	Burundi
17	Eritrea
18	Libya
19	Mali
20	Iraq
21	Niger
22	Mozambique
23	Myanmar
24	Uganda
25	Venezuela
26	Congo (Republic)
27	Guinea-Bessau
28	Côte d'Ivoire
29	Pakistan
30	North Korea

Source: FFP (2021).

51–54). Patterns and scores of state fragility in the three case studies are assessed and compared by using this data.

Jihadi Salafi Groups

Jihadi Salafi Groups (JSGs) refer to violent organizations that follow a particular strand of the Salafi doctrine that proposes unique principles and methods for applying religious beliefs to international politics. The doctrine uses religious reasons to justify particular strategies for influenc-

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ing international relations and Islamic affairs. It encompasses four key elements related to international politics. The particular definition of those elements by JSGs characterizes and distinguishes them from other strands of the Salafi movement. Those elements include the definition of an international problem that Muslims face at present, the definition of an enemy that causes the problem, the articulation of a method to fight the enemy and resolve the problem, and the definition of a goal. JSGs interpret these elements within a particular international political context that is evident in their main official documents, declarations, and statements (e.g., Al-Adnani 2014a; Al-Zawahiri 2008; bin Laden 1996; bin Laden et al. 1998). This internationally focused method of interpretation and action distinguishes JSGs not only from non-jihadi Salafis such as the purist Salafis and the politico Salafis (Wiktorowicz 2006) but also from the non-Salafi jihadis including the conventional mujahidin groups that aimed to overcome secular regimes in their countries.

A comparison of jihadi Salafis that form JSGs with non-jihadi Salafis like purist Salafis and politico Salafis helps explain the unique characteristics, structure, and objectives of the former. The purist Salafis are broadly known as traditional preachers that avoid politics and are easy to distinguish from other types of Salafi movements, particularly the jihadi Salafis. However, the distinction between the politico Salafis, also known as activists, and the jihadi Salafis remain controversial and therefore crucial in debates concerning JSGs (Wiktorowicz 2006). The politico Salafis include near-enemy-centrist individuals and organizations that follow domestic agenda and even peaceful methods of power transition whenever possible, whereas the jihadi Salafis include far-enemy-centrist individuals and organizations that follow a pan-Islamic international agenda and exclusively rely on violence and militarism as the means of politics (Choueiri 2010; Meijer 2009; Wiktorowicz 2006). Hence politico Salafis can be categorized as the near-enemy-centric and jihadi Salafis as the far-enemy-centric movements that take different approaches in interpreting the key elements of the Salafi ideology.

From the establishment of the Muslim Brotherhood until the end of the Cold War, the far-enemy-centric jihadi Salafis were marginalized when the near-enemy-centric politico Salafis provided the most attractive narrative of domestic and international politics in Salafi communities (Gerges 2005, 43–55). The near-enemy-centrists of this period conceptualized the four core elements of the Salafi doctrine in a way that presented and justified their domestic agenda and defined their struggle against local secular regimes in the Islamic countries. In this worldview, the secular rule in the

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Islamic world was defined as the main international problem that Muslims faced; the secular regimes were described as the enemy; a peaceful struggle whenever possible, or a violent jihad whenever necessary was defined as the method of solving the problem; and the formation of Islamic states within the nation-state boundaries was described as the goal.

With the end of the Cold War, the near-enemy-centric politico Salafis were marginalized when the jihadi narrative of the far-enemy-centrists dominated the Salafi communities (Choueiri 2010, 223–36; Gerges 2005, 43–55). The sudden popularity of far-enemy-centrism in this period had specific historical and political reasons. It was an outcome of the expansion of a generation of jihadis that were radicalized during the anti-Soviet Afghan war in the 1980s, inspired by the "rhetoric of an absolutist and textualist Salafi ideology" called the Qutbian Doctrine, and motivated for a global jihad to end the suppression of Muslim communities by non-Muslim powers from Palestine to Bosnia to Chechnya to Kashmir and elsewhere in the 1990s (Gerges 2011, 67; Murden 2002, 197). The desire to fight a far enemy was also produced in an international environment defined by the United States expansionism in the Middle East in the wake of the Cold War. The deployment of U.S. troops in Saudi Arabia during the Gulf War, in particular, exacerbated the expansion of the far-enemy-centric jihadi movements that redefined the four key elements of the jihadi Salafi doctrine as follows:

The American domination of the Muslim lands was defined as the main international problem, the United States and its allies were described as the enemy that had caused the problem, a global jihad was prescribed as the method of fighting the enemy and solving the problem, and the formation of a pan-Islamic state or a caliphate was considered the goal. The founding doctrine of all JSGs is shaped around this narrative that provides religious justification for jihad beyond national boundaries. Most fatwas, founding declarations, and official statements of the major JSGs including al-Qaeda, IS, and their affiliates are reflections of this far-enemy-centrist and violent worldview. The background, the theoretical and political structure, the historical and organizational evolution, and the objectives of these jihadi organizations are explained in detail in chapter 2.

Theory and Methodology

Conventional approaches to the study of fragile states and terrorism do not clearly explain *why* and *how* JSGs emerge and expand in highly fragile

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Islamic states. To address these questions, this book develops an analytical framework in which the root causes of JSGs are organized and scrutinized at the individual, group, and international levels and state fragility is examined as the context that facilitates the formation and expansion of these organizations. In this analytical framework, individual jihadis' consideration and desire for jihad at the individual level, jihadi Salafism as a collective ideology at the group level, and the United States military and foreign policies in the Middle East at the international level are categorized and studied as the root causes of JSGs and the three key elements of state fragility including the lack of legitimacy, the lack of authority, and the lack of capacity are scrutinized as the necessary conditions that magnify the original cause-effect relationship.

This analytical framework is developed initially by using the levels of analysis theory of IR that originally emerged from debates on the causes of war and conditions for peace in international politics (Most and Starr 1989; Singer 1961; Waltz 1954). The debate initially resulted in the generation of a theoretical model that helps investigate the causes of war and the conditions for peace on the individual, the group/state, and the international levels of analysis (Homer-Dixon 1991; Ibrahimi 2018). Every level includes several factors that serve as the root causes of international events. On the individual level, human nature, individual psychology, and personal considerations/desire are categorized as the root causes of international events such as inter- and intrastate conflicts, revelries, revolts, and terrorism. This level of analysis suggests that individuals become aggressive and go to war against something or someone that they believe is "blocking them from fulfilling a strong desire" (Homer-Dixon 1991, 104). On the state or group level, a series of factors including national interest, nationalism, ethnicity, ideology, and religion are assessed as causes of international events (Homer-Dixon 1991, 104). These factors motivate individuals, groups, and states to go to war or create alliances and collective mechanisms of defense and offense. On the international level, the international system and politics are considered as a determinant force behind international events. Theories belonging to this level of analysis suggest that international politics and external constraints encourage actors to cooperate or engage in war (Homer-Dixon 1991, 104; Waltz 1979).

This book organizes the root causes of JSGs initially on the three levels of analysis. However, it does not argue that these independent determinants are enough for a comprehensive explanation of the formation and expansion of jihadi Salafi organizations. Rather it argues that the relationship between the three-level causes and the emergence of JSGs is influenced by

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the level of state fragility in Islamic countries. Therefore a comprehensive explanation of why and how JSGs emerge and expand requires an analytical framework that should integrate both the causal determinants and the state fragility conditions and allow for studying them together.

Van Evera's formulation of *condition variable* in causal models is borrowed for integrating state fragility in the original framework of the rise of JSGs. The condition variable, in this model, is indicated by using the multiplication symbol "×" that explains how state fragility *magnifies* but does not *multiply* the impact of the root causes on the outcome (van Evera 1997, 13). This model helps develop a theory that can explain how the impact of independent variables on the dependent variable is magnified by a "high value on the condition variable and reduced by a low value for it" (van Evera 1997, 13). Figure 1 illustrates this analytical model. This model helps explain how a higher level of state fragility in Islamic countries increases the likelihood of the formation of JSGs while a lower level of state fragility decreases the likelihood (fig. 2). The three case studies of this book are examined within this analytical framework.

Figure 3 indicates the theoretical model of the rise of al-Qaeda. It presents both the causes of al-Qaeda on the three levels of analysis and the state fragility conditions in Afghanistan in the 1990s that facilitated the establishment of the terrorist organization. Figure 4 illustrates the theoretical model of the emergence of IS in post-Saddam Hussein Iraq. In this case, only two aspects of state fragility, including the poor legitimacy and the lack of authority, played a crucial role in the process of the evolution of IS. Although the lack of capacity as a third dimension of state fragility in Iraq played a meager role in this framework, it reinforced the impact of other state fragility conditions on the rise of IS.[3] Chapters 5 and 6 elaborate on this case study.

Figure 5 illustrates the causal model of the failed al-Qaeda campaign in Saudi Arabia in 2003. This case study explains how effective statehood, despite the existence of the root causes of JSGs, deterred jihadis to create an al-Qaeda base in Saudi Arabia. This model highlights the Saudi state's effective authority and its political capacity in preventing the establishment of an al-Qaeda branch on Saudi soil. The figure also presents the effective role of religious legitimacy as another aspect of the Saudi state's political capacity in deterring jihadism. In the absence of democratic legitimacy, the Saudi

3. In a previous study, the lack of state capacity in Iraq was not included in the model. However, regardless of its meager role in the model, the variable is integrated in the causal framework here (see Ibrahimi 2020).

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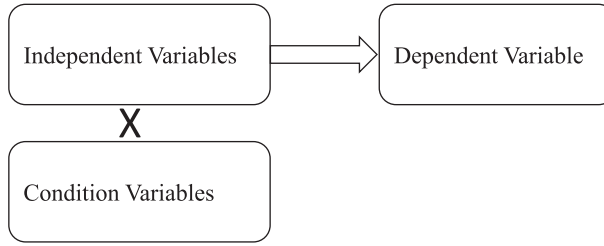

Fig. 1. The Causal Model

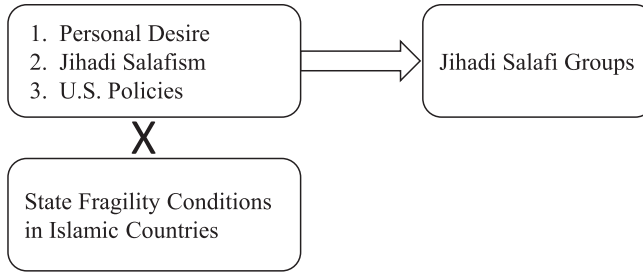

Fig. 2. Causal Models of JSGs

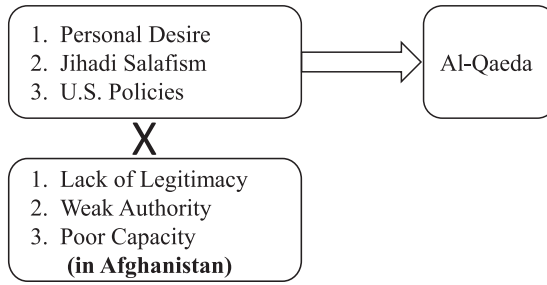

Fig. 3. Causal Model of al-Qaeda

state broadly used its official religious institutions and unofficial Wahhabi networks to justify counterterrorism and delegitimize al-Qaeda causes.

Informed by the *structured focused* comparative methodology, the three case studies together are intended to generate a general narrative of the rise of JSGs. This method allows for the study of a larger number of factors identifiable in a small number of cases and helps open up the *black box of causality* by going beyond the simplistic hypothesis testing approaches and the linear causal logic (George 1979, 43–50; Collier 1993; Lijphart 1971). Three factors inform case selection. First, every case contains some major aspects of JSGs and together

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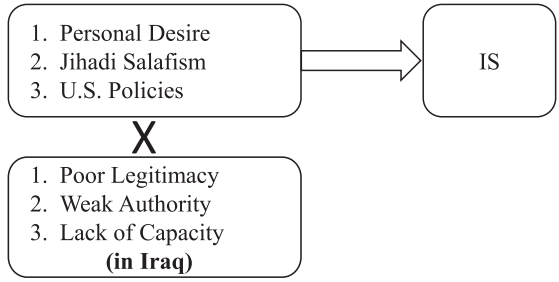

Fig. 4. Causal Model of IS

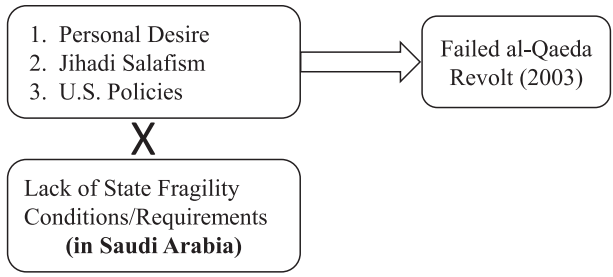

Fig. 5. Causal Model of al-Qaeda Revolt in Saudi Arabia

are intended to capture descriptive features of the problem. Second, these cases represent both *positive* and *negative* instances and therefore are intended to provide a representative image of the problem. Third, firsthand and secondary data in original languages are available to develop the case studies.

The case studies are conducted by a combined research strategy that includes historical analysis, content analysis, and fieldwork. The first case study is based on historical analysis and archival research in Afghanistan Center at Kabul University, in Kabul, Afghanistan. Original data on state fragility in Afghanistan in the 1990s and the establishment of al-Qaeda is collected from the former Mujahidin and the Taliban's official newspapers, magazines, and documents. The second case study is conducted by using a combined historical, archival, and online method of data collection. Following a historical analysis of state fragility in Iraq, original data on the rise of IS was obtained from *Dabiq* and *Rumyiah* (IS's online magazines in English), and several domestic and international newspapers. Plenty of chronological data, observations, eyewitnesses, and interviews on state fragility and the formation of IS are documented in those papers. This case study is supplemented by secondary sources that are available in online archives of international research institutions. The

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third case study, al-Qaeda's failed revolt in Saudi Arabia, is based on secondary sources and previous research. Following historical research on the root causes of the 2003 revolt and the key aspects of state fragility in Saudi Arabia, the case study is completed by online research.

Organization of Book

This book is organized into nine chapters including this introduction. Chapter 2 provides a historical analysis of state fragility and JSGs in Islamic countries. This chapter approaches Islamic states as a unique subgroup of sovereign states. It concentrates on both the domestic and international factors that have challenged statehood in this part of the world, discusses how these states became highly fragile over time, and describes the characteristics of JSGs as a subset of the Salafi movement.

Chapter 3 analyzes the root causes of al-Qaeda on the three levels of analysis. It begins with a historical overview of the establishment and development of al-Qaeda in the wake of the Cold War and formulates the root causes of this terrorist organization on the individual, group, and international levels of analysis. What particular causes did factor in the rise of al-Qaeda? What are the underlying forces behind the decision of individual jihadis to form al-Qaeda? How did jihadi Salafism, at the group level, contribute to the rise and expansion of this terrorist organization? Why did the United States design its foreign and military policies in a way that facilitated the emergence of al-Qaeda? Chapter 3 addresses these questions.

Chapter 4 explains the formation of al-Qaeda by adding state fragility in Afghanistan in the 1990s as a condition variable to the original causal model. The chapter begins with a brief overview of state formation and state fragility in Afghanistan and then explains how specific aspects of state fragility in the 1990s interacted with the root causes of al-Qaeda. How did the lack of state legitimacy, the lack of state authority, and the lack of state capacity in Afghanistan provide the necessary conditions for the establishment of al-Qaeda? How did international jihadis, using the state fragility conditions, infiltrate Afghanistan and create al-Qaeda? How did the civil war and the absence of an effective state facilitate bin Laden's effort to mobilize international jihadis in his terrorist camps and unify them under an umbrella organization named al-Qaeda? How did state fragility in Afghanistan interact with the root causes of al-Qaeda in the process of the formation of this terrorist organization? Chapter 4 addresses these questions.

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Chapter 5 investigates the root causes of IS on the three levels of analysis. First, it provides a historical overview of the Iraq-based insurgency that emerged in the aftermath of the U.S. invasion in April 2003, and next, it investigates the evolution of the insurgency to IS. Why did the diffuse and divided insurgency develop into a uniform and global jihadi movement? How did causes on the individual, group, and international levels result in the formation of IS. How did the jihadi Salafi ideology contribute to the development of the insurgency into IS? How did international factors including the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan in 2001 and the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003 result in the emergence of IS? These questions are addressed in chapter 5.

Chapter 6 concentrates on state fragility in Iraq and its contribution to the formation and expansion of IS. This chapter begins with an overview of state formation and trajectories of state fragility in Iraq and explains how the poor state legitimacy, the weak state authority, and the lack of state capacity in post-Saddam Iraq facilitated the establishment of IS. Why did the Coalition's state-building policy fail in building a legitimate and effective state in Iraq? How did the failure result in a political system that contributed to the rise of the Iraq-based insurgency and its evolution to IS? Chapter 6 addresses these questions.

Chapters 7 and 8 are dedicated to the case study of the al-Qaeda revolt in Saudi Arabia in 2003. The two chapters provide a broad overview of both the causes and conditions of JSGs in Saudi Arabia and explain why and how effective statehood prevented al-Qaeda from establishing a branch in this country. What are the historical root causes of JSGs in Saudi Arabia? How did the Saudi state approach the jihadi threat at home? How did the Saudi citizens' personal desire for jihad at the individual level, jihadi Salafism at the group level, and the United States policies in the Middle East at the international level result in al-Qaeda's revolt of 2003? Why did the revolt fail? How did effective authority, political capacity, and religious legitimacy, as three aspects of effective statehood, prevent al-Qaeda from establishing a base in Saudi Arabia? The two chapters address these questions.

The concluding chapter reports the key findings and discusses their contribution to international relations theory, international security, and political development. This chapter highlights the importance of state-building in deterring the rise and expansion of JSGs as a serious threat to international security. The chapter also highlights the limitations of the key arguments and discusses future research opportunities on the relationship between state fragility and terrorist organizations in a broader context.

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CHAPTER 2

Fragile States and Jihadi Salafi Groups in the Islamic World

State fragility is a situation where the sovereign state fails to use its institutions and regulations to fulfill its key duties and operate effectively (Mann 1984; Milliken and Krause 2002, 753; Pierson 2011). The state fragility concept is essentially related to the assessment of a sovereign state, which is based on the assumption of what a state is and what it does (Mann 1984). Therefore a comprehensive conceptualization of state fragility should start with the assessment of the sovereign state's institutions and functions.

The institutional definition of the sovereign state is about what a state looks like, while its functional definition articulates the state's ability to execute the provision of its fundamental duties in return for taxation (Mann 1984, 188; Jackson 1998, 2; Collier 2009, 220; Milliken and Krause 2002, 753). In this conception, a sovereign state refers to a territorially specific entity that functions through a variety of hierarchies and institutions to fulfill its fundamental duties. Those duties include the maintenance of effective and legitimate institutions of governance, the preservation of monopoly over the legitimate use of violence, and the provision of security and services in return for taxation (Mann 1984; Tilly 1985; Weber 1946). The institutional and functional aspects of the sovereign state are typically measured by the three variables of legitimacy, authority, and capacity (Carment, Prest, and Samy 2010). The three measurements reflect and conclude the broader literature and discussions on the sovereign state and set the stage for analyzing state fragility.

Weber (1946 [1919]), for example, defines the state as a form of human community that lays claim to the monopoly of legitimate physi-

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cal violence within a particular territory. All other organizations within a state can use violence only insofar as the state permits them to do so (Weber 1946). Therefore the state is the sole source of the right to use violence in a given territory. However, Weber emphasizes that to prevent social disorder and anti-state revolts, the use of violence by the state has to be legitimate and people should obey it by consent, rather than coercion. A durable state requires a legitimate authority that is historically produced by traditional, charismatic, and rational-legal sources of legitimation (Weber 1946). It seems that Weber mainly focuses on two sources of statehood, legitimacy and authority. Capacity in his conception seems to be dependent on the quality of interaction between elements of legitimacy and authority in a sovereign state. Thus all three measurements of statehood are included in the Weberian definition of what a sovereign state is and how it should function.

Likewise, Tilly's (1985) conception of the state also reflects the three measurements. In Tilly's conception, the state carries out four major duties: warmaking or the elimination of the state's external enemies, statemaking or the elimination of the state's internal rivals, "protection" or the elimination/neutralization of the enemies of its clients, and "extraction" or "acquiring the means of carrying out the first three activities" (181). Warmaking yields physical force including a modern army, statemaking includes necessary institutions for the durability of governance, protection requires security and law enforcement capabilities and mechanisms, and extraction refers to the state's taxation capacity in return for services (181; Tilly 1990, 17–20). The three first duties are linked to the state authority, while the fourth duty reflects the state capacity. Tilly emphasizes that the successful execution of the four duties requires legitimate state institutions and agencies. Together, all three measurements of statehood are reflected in Tilly's conception.

Another important conceptualization of the sovereign state is provided by Mann (1984). Although Mann takes a unique approach in distinguishing between the essence and the duties of sovereign states, his general conceptualization of what a state is and how it looks includes all three measurements of legitimacy, authority, and capacity (1984, 188). In Mann's discussion, the state refers to a given territory and a variety of institutions, hierarchies, and personalities, the functionality of which depends on the state's three ideological, military, and economic bases (188). In this conceptualization, ideology refers to legitimacy as it aims

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to justify the state's rule and functions, the military is about authority as it facilitates the rule of law and the monopoly over the use of violence, and economy relates to the capacity of the state that aims to provide the financial and material basis of public services in return for taxation. Overall, this literature emphasizes legitimacy, authority, and capacity as the three key variables of statehood.

Since this chapter elaborates on the state and state fragility in the Islamic world, a brief overview of the "territoriality" of the state helps understand the nature of the Islamic states, the process of their failure, and the meaning of the three measurements of statehood in those countries. More importantly, this overview helps clarify the key differences between the Islamic states and the states that originally emerged in Europe. Following the formation of the sovereign states in the 17th and 18th centuries in Europe, social organizations and movements expected that these new entities would legitimately and broadly represent their desire and objectives and exercise monopoly over the use of force on their behalf. This literature is based on state formation in modern Europe where the modern states emerged as a result of the great transformation from the medieval to the modern era (Jackson 2005, 82; Tilly 1985, 179). These states were supposed to develop institutions of legitimacy, authority, and capacity as key elements of the new political entity named the sovereign state. Therefore what we know about state formation and the key elements of the sovereign states entirely relates to the European context. For the assessment of state formation, statehood, and state fragility in other parts of the globe, particularly the Islamic world, it is important to include extra-European literature, variables, and historical facts in the debate that will help understand why state formation beyond Europe followed a different process and resulted in a different end. In the Third World, particularly in the Islamic world, the sovereign state emerged as the "quasi" or the "postcolonial" state that was not able to develop its legitimacy, authority, and capacity institutions comparable to the European states (Jackson 1990). This means that the process of state formation in the Islamic world was fundamentally different from the European states, and therefore the anomalies of the former are fundamentally different from the latter.

The modern sovereign state in the Islamic world is a colonial legacy where the imposed territoriality as the basic requirement of state formation neither gave rise to rational-legal systems of legitimation nor produce effective institutions of authority and capacity in early stages of state-building.

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The early modern states in the Islamic world were initially created as "dependent states" by the European colonial powers in the aftermath of the First World War (Hurewitz 1979; Rogan 2015). The boundaries of the sovereign state in the Islamic world were originally imposed by the colonial powers' wartime diplomacy for the partition of the Ottoman territory and domination over the broader Islamic lands. In other words, it was a part of the colonial powers' postwar settlement on the Ottoman territories and beyond (Rogan 2015). The new states initially rose as "juridical entities" that reflected more the colonial powers' postwar interests than the realities on the ground, and therefore they were immediately challenged by domestic forces such as the pan-Islamists, the pan-Arab nationalists, and separatists that shaped politics and power in the region ever since (Gegres 2018; Hinnebusch 2019; Mandaville 2019).

The process of state formation in the Islamic world was not uniform. Every state emerged when the domestic and international conditions allowed them to survive and consolidate against domestic challengers. In the immediate aftermath of the First World War only one independent state, the Mutawakkilite Imamate of Yemen, was established as the outcome of the defeat of the Ottoman Turks (Jackson and James 1993, 90, 116). The state formation process was accelerated in the interwar period. Afghanistan gained independence from the United Kingdom in 1919 and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was created in the 1920s. Iraq achieved independence in 1932 and Egypt in 1936. At the creation of the United Nations in 1945, there were seven Islamic states among the founding members, namely Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Turkey (Jackson and James 1993, 117). Decolonization and the struggle for national self-determination in the aftermath of the Second World War unleashed another wave of independence and state formation in the Third World (Jackson and James 1993, 116). By 1971, thirty more Islamic states secured membership in the United Nations, including Afghanistan, Yemen Arab Republic (1946), Pakistan (1947), Indonesia (1950), Jordan and Libyan Arab Jamahiriya (1955), Morocco, Sudan and Tunisia (1956), Malaysia (1957), Guiana (1958), Burkina-Faso, Chad, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Somalia (1960), Mauritania and Sierra Leone (1961), Algeria and Uganda (1962), Kuwait (1963), Gambia (1965), Democratic Republic of Yemen (1967), Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates (1971). By the beginning of the third decade of the 21st century, the number of sovereign states in the Islamic world, according to their

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membership in the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, reached fifty-seven.

Most of the contemporary Islamic states were either former colonies of European powers or internal administrative units of regional empires, particularly the Ottoman caliphate and the Soviet Union. They were built over highly divided societies that contained numerous minority groups, and therefore were prevailed by intrastate aspirations. For instance, Iraq, Syria, and Turkey contained Kurd minorities; Lebanon was divided by Sunnis, Shiites, and Christians; and Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan included several minority groups. These states, in the meantime, contained transnational movements such as Islamism, pan-Arab nationalism, and communism that overlapped the identity politics to a great extent. Thus the new state system in most parts of the Islamic world was challenged by both intrastate and supra-state players, including pan-Islamism, pan-Arab nationalism, and ethnic-based separatism among many others.

The pan-Islamic movement, which emerged as a direct response to the postwar colonial settlement in the Middle East, praised the restoration of the Islamic Caliphate (Lapidus 1997, 444–45). The Muslim Brotherhood, which was created in the 1920s, represented this movement for the most part. By contrast, the pan-Arab nationalists represented the idea that all Arabs could and must be united in a single Arab state. Unlike European nationalism, where the focus was on maintaining and strengthening national unity within individual sovereign states, the pan-Arab nationalism emphasized the unity of all Arab societies and their incorporation in a single pan-Arabic state beyond sovereign territory (Rubin 1991, 535). In addition to the two transnational movements, several separatist movements also challenged the newly established states. For example, Baluch and Pashtun movements in Pakistan, Baluch and Kurd movements in Iran, and Kurd movements in Turkey and Iraq posed serious challenges to the centralization of power by the ruling ethnic majority groups. Separatists, unlike the supra-state movements, sought to separate from existing states and create new juridical entities based on identity. The common ground of the three movements was to challenge sovereign states by emphasizing the importance of domestic and sociocultural ties/realities in international politics.

Today the mainstream pan-Islamic and pan-Arab movements are dissolved into the sovereign state structures and most of the separatist movements are drastically suppressed by the state's security apparatuses.

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As a result, all three movements gradually transformed into domestic or national parties that function within sovereign boundaries. This means that the historical competition between sovereign states and transnationalism and subnationalism resulted in the domination of the former. There are several domestic, regional, and international reasons for this outcome.

In domestic and regional contexts, national politics played crucial roles in consolidating the new states' position vis-a-vis their challengers. The oil industry in the Middle East, which eventually came under the control of the sovereign states, provided the oil-rich countries with huge resources for the development of the state administrations and consolidation of the state armies. Moreover, the oil wealth created divergent state-based interests that empowered the desire for the prioritization of state interests. These divergent outcomes and the possibility of external threats to the state interests strengthened the sense of nationhood in every single state. For example, the Iranian threat created a sense of national resistance in Iraq and vice versa (Jackson and James 1993, 133). As a result, in the Islamic world states created nations obliged to protect the state interests, not the other way around. Moreover, regional politics gradually factored against the nonstate actors. In particular, the pan-Arab movement lost its support in the aftermath of the Arab-Israeli wars. The repeated defeats of the Arab armies for a transnational cause against Israel resulted in national disagreements among the Arab states on the issue of prevailing nationalism and inter-Arab politics over transnationalism. As a result, state-based solidarity behind the Palestine cause replaced the pan-Arab unity (Jackson and James 1993, 133). Likewise, the Pan-Islamist movement lost its credibility after the ideological failure of the Iranian Ayatollahs to project power beyond national boundaries which were defined as the primary objective of the Islamic revolution (Mellon 2002). As a result, the sovereign states that highly utilized ideologies and resources in favor of national interests prevailed. For example, during the Iran-Iraq War (1980–88), one sovereign state (Iran) with a Pan-Islamic cause fought another state (Iraq) that had adopted the Pan-Arabic cause. Moreover, during the Gulf War, almost all states in the region supported the United Nations resolution against Iraq's pan-Arabic cause (Mellon 2002).

On top of the domestic and regional factors, authoritarian regimes also played a crucial role in violently suppressing the Muslim Brotherhood and the pan-Arab nationalism. As a result of the authoritarian regimes' severe use of violence against their domestic challengers, both Islamism and pan-

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Arab nationalism fragmented into national parties mainly struggling for political power within sovereign boundaries. For instance, the pan-Arab Baath party fragmented into such parties as the Iraqi, Syrian, Lebanese, Jordanian, and Libyan Baathist parties, and the pan-Islamic Muslim Brotherhood fragmented into several national parties such as the Muslim Brotherhood in Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Egypt, and Tunisia and its subsets in many other countries. While the use of coercive means strengthened the sovereign states of the Islamic world against their domestic challengers, it also paved the way for more authoritarianism in those countries. Therefore, while the domestic and regional factors helped the sovereign states increase authority and capacity, they did not contribute to the development of the state legitimacy that would allow those states to rule by consent rather than coercion. By the end of the Cold War, there was no single democratically elected regime in the Islamic world.

In the international context, most sovereign states in the Islamic world played the role of *proxy allies* to the two superpowers of the Cold War in exchange for financial and military support for decades. The remarkable amount of support turned the states into dominant players vis-a-vis their intrastate and supra-state rivals. The international aspect of state formation in the Islamic world should be considered as a significant explanatory variable of state formation and state fragility. For example, Iraq from the rise of the Baathist Party in 1968 until the fall of the Soviet Union depended on Soviet support particularly in areas of the military and the nationalization of the oil industry. The military dependence was apparent in different situations, including the October 1973 Arab-Israeli War, the war in Kurdistan in March 1974, and the Iran-Iraq War of 1980 to 1988 (Fukuyama 1980). Iraq's dependence on the Soviet Union military support peaked during the last two years of the Iran-Iraq War, when the Soviet support for the Iraqi army reached 8.8 to 9.2 billion dollars (Mesbahi 1993, 89). The Soviet support of the Iraqi Army in this period included 2,000 tanks, 300 fighter aircraft, almost 300 surface-to-air missiles, and thousands of pieces of heavy artillery and armored personnel vehicles (89). The Soviet support not only allowed the Iraqi state to make territorial gains during the war but also increased the state authority in the postwar era. The collapse of the Soviet Union had an enormous impact on the Iraqi state's military and security capabilities in the 1990s, which led to a significant erosion of the state's armed forces at the beginning of the 21st century. According to Western experts that assessed Iraq's military capability before the U.S.

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invasion in 2003, Iraq's armed forces "were down to about 40% of their 1991 Gulf War levels" (Otterman 2003).

Likewise, the amount of support Syria received from the Soviet Union was remarkable. For example, from 1955 to 1960, the Soviets provided Syria with more than 200 million dollars in military aid to solidify the USSR-Syria alliance and to counter the U.S. influence in the eastern Mediterranean region (Sharnoff 2009). Moreover, following the defeat of Arab armies in the Arab-Israeli war of 1967, the Soviet Union provided Syria with an urgent 2.5 billion dollars in military aid (Sharnoff 2009). In general, the Soviet Union's support for Syria during the three-decade rule of Hafiz al-Assad reached billions of dollars.

Moreover, to balance the United States' influence in South Asia, the Soviet Union also provided enormous support to states such as Afghanistan. Although the Soviet aid to Afghanistan before the 1978 military coup by the pro-Soviet People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) roughly totaled three billion dollars, it increased remarkably following the coup (Rubin 2002, 20). According to a CIA report, in addition to the Soviet Union's immense financial aid to the Afghan government in the 1980s, "arms transfer from the USSR to Afghanistan place[d] the country behind only Vietnam and Cuba in terms of value received by Marxist Third World states since the start of the Afghan war" (The Cost of Soviet Involvement 2000, 2498). International aid enabled the Afghan state to strengthen its security and military institutions and resist the Islamist rebellion until the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The Soviet Union's support to Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, and many other countries was part of a great strategic game between the United States and the USSR in the Islamic world. The Kremlin supported the secular nationalist and socialist governments in Egypt, Libya, Sudan, Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan, among others. Comparable to the Soviet Union influence, the United States attempted to secure and equip its strategic allies, particularly Iran (before the 1979 Islamic Revolution), Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Pakistan through all means of arms supply, intelligence, training, and finance (Otterman 2003). Like the USSR, the purpose of the United States' support of its Islamic ally states was to maintain a balance of power with the Soviet Union. For example, according to a CIA report, the United States spent the equivalent of 330 billion dollars (in 1984 price) only in South Asia over the 13 years from 1964 to 1976 (The Cost of Soviet Involvement 2000, 2498). Following the Soviet invasion

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of Afghanistan, the U.S. concentration in South Asia and its support of the Afghan mujahidin and international jihadis against the Soviet occupation remarkably increased. Those supports were mostly channeled through ally states such as Pakistan, which resulted in further consolidation. This means that the prevalence of the sovereign states over their domestic challengers in the Islamic world significantly benefited from international support besides domestic and regional factors.

State Fragility in the Islamic World

Historicism, traditionalism, and postcolonialism dominate the study of fragile states in the Islamic world. These conventional approaches to state fragility in the Islamic world that emphasize historical factors such as sociological contradictions within the sovereign boundaries, sectarian and ethnic disputes, and domestic resistance to authoritarian regimes have made states fragile and vulnerable to internal threats. This conventional wisdom is based on a simple assumption: sovereign states in the Third World, which includes almost all of the Muslim majority states, emerged as an outcome of colonization, decolonization, and the breakup of empires rather than being the result of domestic political development as it was the case in Europe. These states emerged essentially fragile and therefore failed to acquire a meaningful statehood and use domestic norms and divisions in favor of sovereignty (Bayart 1993; Berman 1998; Collier 2009; Jackson 1990; Taylor 2013, 118–40; Young 1994). While this analogy connects state fragility to the origins of state formation, it overlooks the differences in domestic characteristics of states and the international environment that have produced various outcomes and affected the process of state formation under particular conditions. If this analogy is to hold, then it raises the question: why are all states in the Islamic world not highly fragile? Today, many Islamic states are ranked more stable than established states such as China and Russia (FFP 2021).

While historical factors are important in state formation and the process of their failure, the international context of state-building in Islamic countries is also significant in explaining both statehood and state fragility. Historical variables can explain part of the state fragility problem in the Islamic world, but a complete explanation of this puzzle requires the inclusion of international variables in the analysis. This is particularly impor-

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tant while state fragility became more common in the aftermath of the bipolar international system (Carment 2003, 3). Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, which resulted in the cutting of aid to all its proxy allies, most pro-Soviet states underwent severe fragility. The end of the Cold War also resulted in U.S. disengagement from many pro-American Islamic countries because they had lost their strategic significance as Cold War proxies. For instance, the United States provided Somalia with a great amount of military and financial aid during the Cold War to balance the USSR's influence in the Horn of Africa (Parson 1995, 198–207). In the 1990s, because of the end of Soviet influence in Ethiopia, Somalia was no more important for American policymakers. As a result of losing their international support, both Somalia and Ethiopia became severely fragile. State fragility, in this context, became a chronic problem in most Islamic countries. Afghanistan and Somalia were immediate cases that underwent long-lasting civil wars, and countries such as Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Egypt, Sudan, Pakistan, and many other Islamic states gradually joined the caravan of fragile states of the world.

By contrast, many pro-American countries, where the United States remained engaged and domestic variables, such as identity politics and intra- or supra-state desires, did not undermine state-building, did not experience severe state fragility under the new world order. Examples include the Gulf Arab region where both the oil economy and adjustment to the new world order introduced more stable states to the new international system. Moreover, the adjustment of states such as Malaysia, Indonesia, Turkey, Maldives, Jordan, and Tunisia to the new international order prevented critical state fragility in these countries.

This comparative observation shows that domestic factors, such as economic underdevelopment or identity politics, are not the only underlying force of state fragility. Rather this observation suggests that domestic factors in a historical interaction with domestic politics and the international environment produce various results in different places under unique conditions that lead to state fragility. For example, while domestic factors such as sectarian politics and authoritarianism in Iraq and Syria during the 1970s and 1980s did not directly factor into state fragility, they contributed to extreme state failure in a different international environment in the 2000s and 2010s. In cases like Afghanistan and Somalia, statehood suffered initially because of international causes, particularly the significant reduction in international aid. Domestic factors such as underdevel-

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opment and identity politics, in the two cases, exacerbated the already existing state fragility that was initially caused by international factors, not the other way around. Therefore both international and domestic factors are important in explaining aspects of state fragility in the Islamic world. The Islamic states that became highly fragile gave rise to JSGs, besides many other international security problems. For example, al-Qaeda and IS-Khorasan emerged in Afghanistan, al-Shabaab was created in Somalia, IS was established in Iraq and Syria, Boko Haram emerged in Nigeria and Chad, QAP flourished in Yemen, AQIM grew in Algeria, and many other al-Qaeda and IS affiliates burgeoned in fragile Islamic states in Africa and elsewhere. In other words, all JSGs emerged and flourished only in highly fragile states in the Islamic world.

JSGs

Jihadi organizations that use jihadi Salafism as their system of belief and behavior, historicize jihadi activities against a foreign "other" in a modern context, and re-interpret Islamist prospects in the modern international context are called JSGs. These organizations are ideological and therefore "non-pragmatist" in the sense that they do not seek to produce a "practical consequence" (Hawkes 1996; James 1963; Malachowski 2010). Their objective to establish a caliphate does not seem to be practical in the contemporary international system that is based on sovereignty. They have broadly propagated to change the international status quo in favor of an Islamic caliphate or a pan-Islamic state, but their practical approach to international politics has been nonpractical, unreal, and imaginary. Reliance on jihadi Salafism has descended JSGs into a wilderness where IR does not make sense and therefore it must be redefined and reorganized in the Salafi worldview.

Jihadi Salafism includes two key elements: *jihad* and *Salafism*. These elements define the JSGs' belief and behavioral frameworks, make sense of their organizational structure and their transnational activities, and provide an image of their objectives and the way forward. The concept of jihad that means striving and its various definitions are initially derived from the Quran and the Hadith (Bonner 2006; Bonney 2004; Cook 2005). This book exclusively draws on the definition of jihad as the "jihad of the sword." In this conception, jihad refers to the militant struggle for both

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survival and conquest or the "futuhat" (Bonney 2004, 53–90; Wiktorowicz 2005). Based on this definition, jihad could be defensive or offensive and domestic or international depending on who uses it and what their goals are. The history of waging jihad reaches back to the dawn of Islam, making it a key component of both the Islamic religion and politics (Bonner 2006; Kepel 2003). Muslims waged numerous offensive and defensive jihadi campaigns between the 7th and 21st centuries, against both local rulers and external enemies that they considered a challenge to the *Dar al-Islam* or *Darussalam*, meaning the Islamic world or the abode of peace.

Following the death of the Prophet, the four caliphs of the Rashidun (632–661) and the first Islamic empire, the Umayyad caliphate (661–744), waged numerous offensive jihadi wars to conquer territory in the neighboring Byzantine and Sassanian empires and beyond. When the Abbasid Caliphate (747–1258) came to power, Muslims had already eliminated most of the regional power centers and expanded the Dar al-Islam from Arabia to North Africa and Spain in the west, to the South and Central Asia in the east, and to the Asia Minor and the Caucasus in the north. To exert effective authority over the vast and diverse territories and populations, the early Abbasid rulers changed the Umayyad's offensive and expansionist strategy to an internal state-building strategy that did not last long. With continued attacks and invasions on Islamic territories by the Crusaders from the west and Mongols from the east, the Abbasids soon returned to the conventional far-enemy-centrist jihad (Jamieson 2006).

Challenges from the European Crusaders led to a four-century war between Christians and Muslims that began in the 1090s and continued to the end of Muslim rule in Iberia in the 1490s with the Spanish defeat of the Moors. The Crusaders' advances (in this period) were due to the rise of military and naval power of the Western European states, on the one hand, and the Abbasside state's declining military strength and its failure in uniting Muslims against the invaders, on the other (Jamieson 2006). Islamic scholars and preachers that witnessed the Abbasid failure in uniting Muslims against foreign invaders interpreted the failure as the caliphate's betrayal of the Prophet and his righteous predecessors, the *Salaf*, who emphasized Islamic unity against external enemies. Those scholars and preachers also suggested a return to Islam's foundations and the Salafs' practices and methods of governance as a solution to the increasing failures (Hellmich 2008, 114–15; Palmer and Palmer 2008, 12–13). Salafism emerged as a result. Ever since, the followers of this

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worldview that are known as Salafis or Salafists that seek to emulate the life and times of the Prophet Mohammed in their time reject all forms of *ijtihad* or the use of reason to create innovations in sharia in response to new conditions, which is a key pillar of the mainstream Islamic tradition (Jones 2008; Metcalf 1982).

Following the continued crusades, the Abbasid caliphate and its followers changed their policy from domestic reformism to the far-enemy-centrism and developed different counter-crusades by waging jihad abroad (Cook 2005, 49–72). For example, to respond to the Crusades' raids on Egypt, particularly their major attacks on Alexandria in 1365, the Muslims of Egypt devastated Cyprus in 1426 in retaliation (Cook 2005, 55). Ever since the term "Crusade" became a source of justification for waging war abroad for both Muslim and Christian leaders. Islamist leaders and organizations have used the "Crusade" term and its history as an example to justify attacks on Christians and Christian territories. Al-Qaeda and IS are the very recent examples that repeatedly justified terrorism and violent attacks in the West by dehumanizing the targets as Crusades. Likewise, political leaders of Christian countries have also used the term Crusade to justify military operations abroad. The U.S. president George W. Bush is a recent example. In his remarks on the "war on terrorism" against al-Qaeda, Bush referred to the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan as a Crusade (Remarks by the President 2001). In response, bin Laden warned Americans that if they do not stop the invasion of Muslim territories from Palestine to Kashmir, then they will lose the Crusade that Bush began "like other previous Crusades" (bin Laden 2005, 125; bin Laden's Letter 2002).

Besides the Crusade challenge, the jihadi Salafi movement and ideology were further reinforced by a second challenge that came from the east by Mongol invaders. The Mongols defeated the Abbasid caliphate, assassinated its last Caliph, and destroyed its capital, Baghdad, in 1258. The Mongol invasions also had a tremendous impact on shifting the concentration of Muslims from the domestic jihad to an international or far-enemy-centrist jihad against Islam's foreign enemies. The far-enemy-centrist jihad against Mongol invaders was first formulated by a Muslim jurist and preacher, Ibn Taymiyah (1263–1328), who began his career as a critic of the Mamluk's domain of Egypt and Syria but soon became a preacher of jihad against foreign invaders. When Mongols occupied and destroyed Damascus (1300–1301), Taymiyah personally rallied a resistance calling upon Muslims to wage jihad against the foreign invader and

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its allies (Black 2011, 158–63; Corbin 2002, 11; Hellmich 2008, 114–15; Palmer and Palmer 2008, 12–13). Drawing on quotes from the Quran and Hadith, Taymiyah justified a far-enemy-centrist jihad as an Islamic duty for every Muslim who was obliged to care about the faith (Bonney 2004, 113). He believed that, in the face of repeated invasions, mobilization of Muslims in a united front against the foreign enemy was a religious duty and priority (Black 2011). Taymiyah's approach to jihad and his method of using original Islamic texts in defining the Muslim societies' problems and the enemy that caused those problems gradually became the foundation of the ideology that we know today as jihadi Salafism (Black 2011, 116–26).

Jihadi Salafism and its far-enemy-centrist approach to international politics became more attractive in the modern era when other international events emerged. The most popular among them was the fall of the Mughal Empire in the Indian subcontinent to Britain in the 1800s and the gradual political, cultural, and military defeats of the Ottoman Empire to Europeans from the 1850s to the 1920s (Bulac 2012; Dekmejian 1995). These events and their consequences drew Muslims' attention to jihadi Salafism and its far-enemy-centrist approach to international politics that eventually led to the reformulation and further radicalization of the ideology by Islamist scholars in the modern era. In this context, Muhammad Rashid Rida (1865–1935) was the first prominent scholar who radicalized Sayyid Jamal al-din al-Afghani's (1838–1897) pan-Islamism and influenced the works of other Islamist followers like Sayyid Abul-Ala Mawdudi (1903–1979) and Sayyid Qutb (1906–1966) (Turner 2010; Henzel 2005, 72).

Mawdudi and Qutb took the jihadi Salafi doctrine one step forward from theoretical debates on restoring the caliphate to practical approaches to fighting the far enemy that prevented the Islamic rule. The two scholars emphasized that Muslims' beliefs and behavior must be based only on the original Islamic texts and compatible with the practices of Muslims in the dawn of Islam. Mawdudi and Qutb also declared that a true jihad requires targeting and eliminating non-Muslim enemies and replacing un-Islamic political systems with an Islamic state system (Bonney 2004, 199–211, 212–23). Although Mawdudi and Qutb's approaches to modernizing jihadi Salafism had similarities, the latter played a more radical and practical role in mobilizing jihadi movements against the far enemy in an international system divided by Muslims and non-Muslims.

Qutb based his theory on the assumption that the international system

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is divided by the Dar al-Islam or the Islamic lands and the Dar al-Harb or the non-Islamic lands. He characterized the Dar al-Harb with the *Jahiliyyah* or *barbarism* (Bonney 2004, 217). Islam and *Jahiliyyah*, according to Qutb, cannot coexist and therefore Muslims must wage jihad against *Jahiliyyah* for the sake of establishing "the sovereignty and authority of God on earth" (Bonney 2004, 217; Gerges 2011, 4–5; Qutb 1981, 133–34; Razwy 1997, 132). As such, Qutb extracted the key Islamic concepts such as the Dar al-Islam and the Dar al-Harb out of their spiritual context into core elements of a modern political ideology and transformed the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood's (Hasan al-Banna) "simplistic and vague methodological approach to establishing an Islamic state into a revolutionary call to arms" (Benjamin 2003, 60; Esposito 2002, 56; Turner 2010, 549). In his famous manuscript, *Milestones*, Qutb articulated his jihadi ideology as a realist, universalist, expansionist, progressivist, and yet fundamentalist method of eliminating "all Satanic forces and their way of life" to establish an international order based on an Islamic rule (Qutb 1981, 115–25). In this articulation, Qutb defines jihad as a violent and militant struggle against the *Jahiliyyah* and emphasizes "no ceasefire by Islam against Jahiliyyah" . . . "unless they surrender before the authority of Islam . . ." (Qutb 1981, 139–40). Qutb's internationalist, far-enemy-centrist, and militarist approach to international politics provides the theoretical and political bases of the contemporary JSGs (Al-Adnani 2014a; Al-Zawahiri 2006; bin Laden 1996; bin Laden et al. 1998). Influenced by Qutb's seminal work and its interpreters, most JSGs emphasize a return to the fundamentals of Islam to cope with contemporary problems that Muslims face and a call to arms to fight an imagined international enemy and establish a Sharia-based order on earth (Gerges 2011, 4–5; Razwy 1997, 132).

These jihadi organizations' emphasis on a return to the fundamentals of Islam is not a call for a return to a past civilization or an ancient state system. Rather it represents an effort to cope with modern problems by a renewed commitment to an early version of the faith (Lapidus 1997, 444). This method provides religious justification for establishing a Sharia-based *modern state* rather than modeling a prophetic order in the modern age. Thus JSGs selectively use the early ideals of Islam to justify the establishment of a modern political order under the Islamic rule, rather than a "heavenly rule on earth." Therefore, the imagined political order of JSGs is more similar to the Platonic Callipolis than the Augustinian Kingdom of Heaven on earth.

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Organizational Development of JSGs

JSGs are a particular strand of the broader Salafi movement that is divided into three main branches including the purist Salafi groups, the politico Salafi groups, and the jihadi Salafi groups (Wiktorowicz 2006). Salafism, in general, encompasses four core elements that the three strands of the Salafi movement approach differently. Those elements include the definition of a political problem that Muslims face and an enemy that causes the problem, the articulation of a method to fight the enemy and resolve the problem, and the definition of an ultimate goal. The jihadi Salafi movements' unique interpretation of these elements and their application to contemporary international politics distinguishes it from other strands of the Salafi movement. The purists and the politicos interpret the four elements within religious and sociopolitical contexts and seek to defend the faith and the jurisprudence of current affairs, respectively, while jihadi Salafis and JSGs interpret them within an international political context (Meijer 2009, 17–25; Wiktorowicz 2006). Essentially, JSGs search for religious reasons to justify particular strategies to influence international relations and Muslim affairs. Therefore they are less about faith than international politics.

Although the contemporary JSGs is a post–Cold War phenomenon that emerged first as al-Qaeda and evolved into dozens of like-minded terrorist groups they are the organizational outcome of the jihadi Salafi historical experiences and practices. As discussed above, Salafism as an ideology emerged from Taymiyyah's teachings in the early 14th century; however, Salafi organizations did not come to exist before the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in the 1920s. This is not surprising, because until the defeat of the Ottomans Islam was perceived as the founding ideology and the framework of the legitimacy of the Islamic state (Bulac 2012, 69). In the face of such a governing authority, it was difficult for a Salafi movement to lay legitimate roots in a Muslim society. Therefore the groundwork for the legitimation of a Salafi organization was prepared after the Ottoman defeat to European powers in the 1920s that initially gave rise to the Muslim Brotherhood (Bulac 2012).

The Muslim Brotherhood first emerged as a vanguard organization to create a pan-Islamic rule throughout the Islamic territories. However, during the Cold War when nationalism emerged as a dominant ideology in the Islamic world, the Brotherhood broke down into national parties aiming

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for local power transition within the sovereign boundaries. As a result, the Brotherhood's earlier pan-Islamic approach to international politics transformed into a near-enemy-centrist strategy focusing on power transition in national contexts. The jihadi branches of these parties also followed the same path aiming to replace secular regimes with Islamic states by violence. As a result, from the 1940s to the Afghan war in the 1980s, jihadi Salafism remained entirely near-enemy-centrist (Choueiri 2010; Gerges 2011). The seeds of the contemporary far-enemy-centrist JSGs were planted during the Afghan war when thousands of jihadis from throughout the Islamic world volunteered to fight in a united front against a common enemy to liberate an Islamic country from communism. The volunteers that came from the Arab countries soon were known as the Afghan Arabs. The war brought together from 10,000 to 50,000 volunteer jihadis from all Islamic countries (Gerges 2011, 34). In modern Islamic history, this was the first time when jihadis of different origins came together in a single front and fought together against a common enemy (Palmer and Palmer 2008, 130).

The anticommunist jihadi volunteerism produced a sense of unification against communism and strengthened the pan-Islamic belief among the volunteer jihadis. However, this experience did not produce a far-enemy-centrist organization with a globalist jihadi ideology and a pan-Islamic agenda. In this period, the international jihadis mostly operated as a supporting force to the domestic mujahidin against communism. Even in the early years following the defeat of the Soviet Union, most of these jihadis followed the same strategy of supporting domestic jihadi movements from Chechnya to Palestine to Bosnia and elsewhere. It was only after the first Gulf War when a segment of this generation began developing the idea of al-Qaeda and its far-enemy-centrist ideology (Choueiri 2010, 223–36; Gerges 2011). The sudden transformation from the conventional near-enemy-centrist jihad to al-Qaeda's far-enemy-centrism and global jihadism was the outcome of the experiences of a generation of jihadis who were inspired initially by the Qutbian doctrine, radicalized during the Afghan war, had fought in multiple places throughout the Islamic world, and were reactive to the U.S. foreign and military policies in the Middle East in the early 1990s (Gerges 2011, 67).

When the origins of the jihadi Salafi ideology could be traced in different stages of Islamic history, its crystallization in a jihadi organization first appeared with the formation of al-Qaeda in the late 1990s. All contemporary JSGs are inspired by the al-Qaeda organization, its violent method,

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and its internationalist agenda. Al-Qaeda redefined all elements of the jihadi Salafi ideology including the international problem, the enemy that causes it, the method to fight the enemy, and the goal. In the new version of the jihadi Salafist ideology, the American invasion of the Islamic lands was defined as the problem, the United States and its allies were described as the enemy that cause the problem, a global jihad was considered as the method of fighting the enemy and solving the problem, and the invention/restoration of a pan-Islamic Sharia-based caliphate was defined as the ultimate goal. Al-Qaeda and its offshoots followed this version of jihadi Salafism and broadly propagated it through their declarations, official statements, and interviews (Al-Adnani 2014a; Al-Adnani 2014b; bin Laden 1996). JSGs, in this context, refer to jihadi organizations that are essentially inspired by al-Qaeda's interpretation of jihadi Salafism.

This categorization makes a sharp transition from the three major typologies that classify Salafist organizations on moderate versus radical, violent versus nonviolent, and institutionalist versus jihadist bases (Esposito 2006; Heggharmmer 2010; Momayezi 1997; Tibi 2012, 24, 50). These typologies follow a common logic based on the prioritization of means versus end and vice versa, whereas, JSGs define the means and the end in conjunction considering both as interconnected priorities in a relation to other essential ideological elements, including the definition of an international problem and an enemy that causes it in a particular context. In this sense, the sharp distinctions in the three typologies are problematic in many ways. For example, the moderate versus radical and the violent versus nonviolent typologies are essentially based on moderate versus violent means. This logic ignores the ideological similarities among JSGs concerning the goal. In these typologies, groups such as al-Qaeda, which are radical and violent in means but follow a pan-Islamic goal, are put in the same box with groups such as the Palestinian or Chechnyan jihadist groups that draw on similar means but are not pan-Islamic in goal. Likewise, the institutionalist versus jihadist typology distinguishes Islamist organizations based on means but categorizes them as like-minded groups in terms of the end. This typology suggests that all Islamist organizations follow the same goal of inventing a sharia-based state but their approach to reaching this goal is different (Tibi 2012, 10–11, 51). This typology puts Islamist organizations such as the AKP in Turkey and the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt that follow a power transition agenda in national contexts with al-Qaeda and IS that follow

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a pan-Islamic agenda in the same box, which is problematic (Tibi 2012, 51, 101; By-Law of the AKP 2012, Chs. 1, 2).

Taking the limitations of previous typologies into consideration, I distinguish JSGs from the main body of the Salafi movement on four criteria. First, the organizational criterion that categorizes JSGs as transnational organizations that usually acquire membership from multiple nations and operate beyond sovereign boundaries. This factor distinguishes JSGs from nationalist Islamist organizations such as the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, the Turkish AKP, and the Palestinian Hamas that acquire membership only from a single nation and function in national contexts. Second, the means criterion categorizes JSGs as organizations that solely rely on violence and distinguish them from moderate Islamist groups that use democratic and peaceful means of power transition when they are possible. Third, the goal criterion distinguishes JSGs as organizations that follow a pan-Islamic agenda from the Islamist organizations that have national/domestic goals. Fourth, the method criterion defines JSGs as far-enemy-centrist and offensive jihadi organizations and distinguishes them from other groups that are near-enemy-centrist and defensive in nature and function. In this conception, JSGs equate jihad with jihadism, an offensive ideology that "uses violence as its hallmark and a method of struggle for achieving the eventual goal of Muslim domination over the entire globe," while other Islamist organizations describe jihad as a defensive method against foreign occupation and as a tool for preserving the Islamic community (Choueiri 2010, 224–25; Gerges 2011, 10; Khan 2006, 7; Tibi 2012, 6). This means that JSGs construct a modern definition of jihad that is entirely influenced by and related to international politics, while non-JSGs constantly draw on the classical definition of jihad that is related to domestic politics and social obligations.

The classical definition is rooted in the Quran's chapter on Jihad and Hijra (fight and flight), which presents the Quran's prescriptions for fighting against persecution (Khan 2006). Jihad, in this context, is more a reactive and defensive strategy than an offensive method of operation that contemporary JSGs draw on (Khan 2006). The JSGs' offensive and globalist jihadism is modern and rooted in Qutb's doctrine. Qutb labeled the traditionalist defensive Islamist scholars as "defeatist and apologetic mentalities for confining jihad to a defensive war" (Gerges 2011, 4). Qutb's emphasis on far-enemy-centric and offensive jihad was broadly propagated and advocated by al-Qaeda and its offshoots that are labeled as JSGs.

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International Environment of the Rise of JSGs

JSGs emerged and expanded in a particular international context defined by the American unipolar hegemony in the Middle East and its militarization of the region that was perceived by Islamists as a new Crusade (Murden 2002; Zunes 2003, 2014). Thus the emerging unipolar system in the aftermath of the Cold War and the sole great power's foreign and military policies paved the way for a new wave of anti-American jihadism.

During the Cold War, a balance of power between the United States and the Soviet Union in the Islamic world, especially in the Middle East, had emerged. The two superpowers' influence was balanced by their comparative interventions in Islamic countries that divided the Islamic world into two camps of their "proxy allies." In this period, the United States supported conservative regimes and Islamist organizations mainly through Saudi Arabia to counter the pro-Soviet revolutionary regimes in the Islamic world (Gerges 2011, 48; Mamdani 2004, 120; Zunes 2003, 174–79). In response, the Soviet Union immensely supported communist parties and facilitated military coups in many Islamic countries (Murden 2002, 76; Roy 1994, 107–31). As a result, a balance of power between the two superpowers was reached in the sense that no one could entirely dominate the Islamic world.

With the end of the Cold War, this balance was disrupted. The United States secured its position as the sole great power enjoying a "global defense perimeter" with "unparalleled military power" (Monteiro 2014, 1). This provided the United States with a "superlative power-projection ability" in the world, making the contemporary international system unipolar (Monteiro 2014, 3). As a result, the United States emerged as an unchallenged power achieving a total dominance in the Middle East not seen since that of the British in the first half of the 20th century (Murden 2002, 47; Zunes 2014, 73). In this environment, the United States intervened in many countries in the Middle East without much resistance and deployed its troops in the region creating a permanent Gulf establishment of more than 20,000 troops to facilitate the achievement of two sets of vital interests that dominated the American post–Cold War policy in the region: "first the maintenance of a secure Israel, and second the security of reasonably priced oil supplies to the industrialized world" (Murden 2002, 47; Khalilzad and Ochmanek 1997, 53–54). In the absence of a balancing

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superpower, no regional power was able to challenge the sole great power's expansionism in the Middle East.

While the unipolar system provided favorable regional conditions for the United States and Israel in the Middle East, the new world order produced an unpleasant environment in the Islamic world. In the Middle East, Arabs lost the political and military backing of the Soviet Union, and Israel now enjoyed an unknown level of military superiority (Murden 2002, 195). In Central Asia, the Caucuses, and Chechnya, the reorganization of the Soviet borders led to a series of wars that put Muslims under Russian attacks (196). In the Balkans, following the disintegration of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the Serbs' expansionism was not effectively met by the United States and Europe, which led to the killing of tens of thousands of Muslims in the Bosnia War (196). In many other places, from West Africa to Kashmir and elsewhere, Muslims were at war with powerful armies (197). None of these wars ended up with a real Muslim success nor did the offended Muslims find sympathy in the international community (197).

In the 1990s and with the end of the anti-Soviet war in Afghanistan, the Afghan Arabs had left the Afghan battlegrounds, returning home and searching for a new place for jihad. The new international environment in the aftermath of the Cold War and its catastrophic consequences in other Islamic countries prepared the highly experienced Afghan Arabs and a younger generation of jihadis to organize in a united front against the anti-Islamic international environment and respond collectively (Gerges 2011, 67; Murden 2002, 196). They believed that changing the status quo requires "spectacular martyrdom operations" on behalf of the ummah in the Dar al-Harb (Gerges 2011, 59; Murden 2002, 77). The JSGs of our time emerged and expanded in this international environment where anti-American and anti-Western sentiments in jihadi Salafi communities were exacerbating and the demand for waging a global jihad against the far enemy was significantly escalating. This international environment and its impact on the rise of major JSGs are discussed in detail in the next chapters.

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CHAPTER 3

Root Causes of al-Qaeda

Osama bin Laden declared war on the United States in August 1996. However, the al-Qaeda organization was officially launched two years later in Afghanistan in February 1998. Many scholars believe that the origins of al-Qaeda trace back to Maktab al-Khidamat or the Services Bureau and al-Qaeda al-Askaria or the military base—both were established in the 1980s to facilitate jihad against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan (Ensalaco 2008, 190–96; Jalata 2016, 78). Al-Qaeda al-Askaria (AQA) was created by bin Laden following his separation from Maktab al-Khidamat (MaK), which was founded four years earlier by him and his Jordanian-Palestinian mentor Abdullah Azzam. The initial purpose of MaK was to coordinate the incoming Islamic aid for funding the anti-Soviet war and to mobilize Arab jihadis to the frontlines against the Soviet army (Palmer and Palmer 2008, 13).

Thus the process of the formation of MaK and AQA has direct links to the anti-Soviet war. With the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, jihadis from many Islamic countries moved to Pakistan to join the Afghan mujahidin against the occupation. The war brought about 50,000 volunteer jihadis of different origins together in one place (Gerges 2011, 34; Palmer and Palmer 2008, 13). It was the first time in modern history when so many jihadis with such diverse backgrounds came together to fight against a single enemy. Many came from Arab countries, giving rise to the term Afghan Arabs (Palmer and Palmer 2008, 16). The Afghan Arabs worked under the MaK's command until bin Laden's separation from the Bureau. Soon after his separation, bin Laden created an independent *guesthouse* in Peshawar named the AQA, which followed the MaK's mission but added new duties. The AQA, like MaK, supported jihad in Afghanistan

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by coordinating funds and mobilizing volunteer jihadis to the frontlines. It also launched a project for recording the names of the Afghan Arabs and informing the families of those killed during the war, besides other duties (Jalata 2016, 78).

Following the withdrawal of the Soviet forces from Afghanistan in 1989, most Afghan Arabs returned to their home countries, and as a result the AQA was reduced to just a name. Bin Laden, as one of the Afghan Arab *returnees*, was initially welcomed as a "hero" in his country of origin by the Saudi royal family (Palmer and Palmer 2008, 132). Although bin Laden continued his jihadi activities in Saudi Arabia, he never demonstrated a strong anti-American desire until the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and the outbreak of the Gulf War (Corbin 2002, 30; Gerges 2011, 48–49; Palmer and Palmer 2008, 132). At the beginning of the war, bin Laden requested the Saudi royal family to help him organize a mujahidin group against the regime of Saddam Hussein, instead of relying on Americans (Gerges 2011, 48; Palmer and Palmer 2008, 132). The Saudi government disregarded bin Laden's proposal, which deteriorated his relationship with the House of Saud. After the Saudi authorities seized his passport in an attempt to keep him under control, bin Laden left the country in 1991 and traveled to Pakistan and likely to Afghanistan in March 1992 to reorganize thousands of Afghan Arabs who were still fighting beside the Afghan Mujahidin against Najibullah's leftist government in Afghanistan. Bin Laden's initial plan was to bring those Afghan Arabs together in a new haven provided by the Sudanese Islamist government and to reorganize them for a new phase of jihad against the United States of America.

In Sudan, the National Islamic Front had seized power through a military coup in 1989. The real power behind the new government was an Islamist scholar, Dr. Hassan al-Turabi, who had the dream of establishing an Islamic government across the Muslim world. Al-Turabi saw bin Laden as an influential and wealthy Islamist whom he could use in his pan-Islamic campaign and therefore offered him refuge in his country (Corbin 2002; Gerges 2011). Sudan was a convenient station and an important springboard for bin Laden's journey toward establishing his global jihadi organization. Bin Laden entered Sudan with dozens or roughly hundreds of Afghan Arabs and during his four-year stay in the country, he hired more jihadis. Upon his arrival in Sudan, bin Laden spent millions of dollars in road construction and other development projects that served him as an umbrella for recruiting more Afghan Arabs, hard-core Islamist ideo-

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logues, and exiled Islamist militants as project managers and coordinators (Corbin 2002, 33–34; Gerges 2011, 51). In addition to bringing individual jihadis together under this umbrella, bin Laden was also successful in unifying various jihadi groups including the Libyan Fighting Group, the Moro Liberation Front in Malaysia, Abu Sayyaf in the Philippines, and the Group Islamique Arme of Algeria by his philosophy of global jihad during his stay in Sudan (Gerges 2011, 54).

Despite his ability in recruiting and training jihadis in Sudan, bin Laden lacked the religious credibility required for leading an Islamist movement. He was neither a respected Islamic scholar nor had he functioned as a spiritual leader or preacher in the past. Therefore bin Laden needed a credible religious source to justify his purpose of creating an Islamist organization that would fight a jihad for the restoration of an Islamic caliphate. He thus created a religious committee in 1993 that was composed of members with more religious training and credibility. The committee's main objective was to codify and justify bin Laden's philosophy of jihad through fatwas or religious rulings (Corbin 2002, 37). Following the creation of the religious committee, bin Laden started establishing a series of military training camps in Sudan and invited other jihadi groups to send more soldiers for training in his camps.

By bringing a higher number of jihadis together, bin Laden started to evolve his idea of global jihad into a jihadi organization. At this stage, a name for the ideal organization emerged as a serious issue. According to Jamal al-Fadl, a Sudanese al-Qaeda defector who gave evidence in a New York court against members of al-Qaeda, some in bin Laden's inner circle wanted the organization to be named the Islamic Army, but in the end, according to Fadl, they "went with al-Qaeda" (Corbin 2002, 38). Al-Qaeda primarily referred to both training camps and operations by individuals that were personally connected to bin Laden. While bin Laden's inner circle agreed on al-Qaeda as the name of an imagined terrorist organization, the organizational structure of al-Qaeda with a uniform globalist ideology and a strategy-making leadership did not emerge in Sudan.

During bin Laden's stay in Sudan, militant Islamists belonging to his network participated in several operations including the Black Hawk Down incident in Somalia on September 25, 1993, the New York bombing on February 26, 1993, the Riyadh Bombing on November 13, 1995, and the bombing of a U.S. military base in the city of Dhahran in Saudi Arabia in June 1996. All of these attacks were attributed to bin Laden

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E-book, Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2022, https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.12275543.
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and his jihadi network but not al-Qaeda because the organization did not simply exist. Moreover, most of the attacks according to bin Laden's guard Nasir Ahmad Nasir Abdullah al-Bahri were more oriented with domestic politics in Saudi Arabia than bin Laden's global jihadi plans (Gerges 2011, 55). Although bin Laden had established informal alliances with many jihadi cells and factions that operated beyond sovereign boundaries, none of those operations were linked to his global jihadi agenda that was revealed with the creation of al-Qaeda (Gerges 2011, 53). Therefore, while the years in Sudan enriched bin Laden's ideological education, rhetorical skills, and his ideas and plans to create a global jihadi organization, he was not able to establish al-Qaeda in this country (Gerges 2011, 51, 57).

The series of terrorist bombings attributed to bin Laden put Sudan and his host, al-Turabi, under enormous pressure from governments of the United States and Saudi Arabia to get rid of him. As a result, bin Laden left Sudan to operationalize his idea of al-Qaeda in a new haven, Afghanistan. When bin Laden arrived in Afghanistan in May 1996, most of the country was under the control of a like-minded jihadi organization, the Taliban, which had modeled the country on a medieval theocracy. The leader of the Taliban, Mullah Mohammed Omar, had proclaimed himself *Amir ul-Momineen*, the Commander of the Faithful, who believed in having the right to lead all Muslims globally. Afghanistan, in this period, was not only a safe haven for bin Laden and his network but was also led by Islamists that shared the common idea of an untied Islamic emirate under a single Muslim ruler. After arriving in Afghanistan, bin Laden started building close relationships with the Taliban through financial, military, and religious channels and allegedly pledged allegiance (*baya*) to Omar as the Amir ul-Momineen in 1998 (Brown 2010). Parallel to creating a strong relationship with the Taliban, bin Laden also started building on the jihadi ideas and skills he had developed in Sudan and embarked on a systematic campaign to create al-Qaeda (Gerges 2011, 57).

In the very early stages of this campaign, a decisive step for creating al-Qaeda was taken by bin Laden's first fatwa in 1996. The fatwa entitled "Declaration of War against the Americans Occupying the Land of the Two Holy Places" first appeared in the London-based paper *al-Quds al-Arabi* on August 23, 1996. The fatwa announced the beginning of a global jihad against the United States and its allies by calling upon all Muslims to join jihad for liberating the land of the Two Holy Mosques from American troops. The fatwa first described how the contemporary Islamic world looks

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like and then explained the need for a global jihad to change it in favor of Muslims. It also articulated the requirements and priorities of jihad against the United States and its allies and called upon Muslims to unify behind the mujahidin "in every possible way" (bin Laden 1996). While this fatwa marked a turning point in bin Laden's journey for launching a global jihadi organization, it was not the official announcement of the establishment of al-Qaeda as a concrete jihadi organization that would lead the jihadi campaign. The fatwa did not name al-Qaeda or any other particular organization that would lead the global jihad, which gives the impression that bin Laden's project was not complete yet. In fact, the accomplishment of the al-Qaeda project took two more years during which bin Laden invested considerable time and energy to recruit more combatants and train them with the jihadi Salafi ideology to be prepared for his global agenda.

In these two years and with the invitation of bin Laden and the contribution of the Taliban, thousands of jihadis from all over the Islamic world infiltrated Afghanistan where dozens of terrorist camps were set up to train recruits in ideology and military operations. Every terrorist camp provided trainees with specific specialties. For example, trainees in Al-Farouq camp near Kandahar in south Afghanistan received small-arms and explosives training, map-reading, and orientation, while the Derunta camp near Jalalabad in the east was devoted to teaching bomb-making. Many camps were devoted to training specific nationalities exclusively. For example, the Khalden near Khost, al-Badr 1 and al-Badr 2, al-Katbah 1, the Moroccan camps in Derunta, and the Tunisian camps in Jalalabad were exclusively used to train European and North American jihadis (Gunaratna 2002, 98). Every trainee followed a single path before joining the relevant camp: upon their arrival in Afghanistan, everyone had to spend a couple of months in al-Farouq before moving forward (98).

In the two years, besides attracting thousands of jihadis and putting them together in the terrorist camps, bin Laden also brought together at least five jihadi organizations under a single umbrella. Those groups included Ayman al-Zawahiri's Islamic Jihad, the imprisoned Sheikh Rahman's Organization, the Egyptian Islamic Group that also represented many North African Islamist movements, the Pakistani Harakat ul-Ansar, and a Bangladeshi militant group (Corbin 2002, 66). Al-Qaeda was built by putting the training camps and these Islamist organizations under an umbrella organizational structure that consisted of seven administrative branches coordinating bin Laden's new organization's functions in the

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areas of strategic planning, religion, politics, military, and finance (Overview of the Enemy 2004).

Although al-Qaeda, as an umbrella organization of jihadi individuals and groups, is different from the AQA, many scholars trace back the organizational and ideological origins of al-Qaeda to AQA (e.g., Jalata 2016, 198; Mendelsohn 2016; Wright 2006, 153). Organizationally, AQA did not have a formal structure with a core strategy-making layer at its head (Palmer and Palmer 2008, 148; Zimmerman 2013, 1). It was a simple coordinating base that was formed by informal relationships around bin Laden. The Afghan Arabs were not formal members of AQA but volunteers who were free to leave the war upon their personal decision. By contrast, the new organization that bin Laden built in Afghanistan was centralized and hierarchical that demanded formal membership at least in the leading committees. Although al-Qaeda operations became decentralized after the 9/11 attacks, the core of al-Qaeda continued to direct the organization in a hierarchical manner (Zimmerman 2013, 1). Al-Qaeda, in this sense, remained as both a hierarchical structure that followed a core group's order and an operational system that functioned through an informal human network that mainly conducted field operations (Zimmerman 2013, 7–9). Ideologically, AQA, unlike the new al-Qaeda, was not a caliphate-based and globalist jihadi organization. Instead it followed a defensive Salafi worldview aimed to liberate a Muslim land from communism. The conventional defensive worldview was revised and transformed into a far-enemy-centrist and caliphate-based ideology by bin Laden's religious committee between 1996 and 1998. Bin Laden spent countless time in these two years working with the former Afghan Arabs and the recruits to socialize them with the revised version of the jihadi Salafi ideology.

After the al-Qaeda organization was built and its violent ideology was justified to all its members, bin Laden formally announced the establishment of al-Qaeda as a global jihadi front against the Americans, the Christians, and the Jews in February 1998. This was done through bin Laden's second fatwa, entitled "the World Islamic Front Statement for Jihad Against Jews and Crusaders," which was released on February 23, 1998 (bin Laden 1998; Gerges 2011, 56). The fatwa signaled the transformation of jihad from local to global and from the classical domestic and defensive jihad to a modern, global, and offensive jihadism. The fatwa not only announced the creation of a new Islamist militant front led by a transnational organization but also provided new definitions for Muslims' prob-

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lems, the enemies that cause the problems, the method of struggle, and the objective of jihad. Following the release of this fatwa, bin Laden further elaborated on the purpose of al-Qaeda to media as bringing together all jihadis in a united front against the "infidels as represented in the Judeo-Crusader alliance" for establishing a new Islamic order (Corbin 2002, 67).

In its early days in 1998, "al-Qaeda resembled a small and transient private army consisting of specialized and well-trained units" that slowly transformed into a "militarily operational hierarchical organization" for training, supplying, and financing jihadis of different origins and for coordinating attacks on the United States and its allies (Palmer and Palmer 2008, 148). By 9/11, al-Qaeda was able to build a cadre of 3,000 operators in Afghanistan that were well-trained and prepared to operate anywhere in the world (Gerges 2011, 59). The creation of this organization was the outcome of specific causes at the individual, the group, and the international levels that are examined in the following sections.

Individual Level

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Afghan Arabs and other Islamist communities—who believed that their dream of a pan-Islamic state would come true in the new international order—were frustrated by continued failure in establishing such a rule (Berkowitz 1962; Dolard and Doob 1939; Homer-Dixon 1991, 104–5). They initially blamed the United States for imposing a status quo in the Middle East that blocked the path to establishing a Sharia-based political order in the region. Therefore they defined the remaining superpower as the enemy and were personally motivated to fight it collectively. This was the primary personal motivation for creating a global jihadi organization that produced a particular understanding of international politics in jihadi communities (Horgan 2007, 107–9; Post 2006a, 17–18).

Scholars who study the relationship between social psychology and terrorism emphasize the strength of individual-level variables in the emergence of terrorist organizations (Post 2007, 4). Social psychology, which is conceived as a context that affects an individual's behavior in producing a multiplicity of motivations in different settings, provides a constructive framework for understanding the causes of terrorist organizations on the individual level of analysis (Post 2006a, 18). In this context, individual

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jihadists' desires for establishing al-Qaeda was affected by several factors such as a sense of personal security, desire for revenge, and longing for significance (Dugas and Kruglanski 2014, 424–27; Kruglanski and Orehek 2011; Post 2006a, 18). Social psychologists characterize these factors as elements of a "universal human motivation" known as "the quest for significance" (Dugas and Kruglanski 2014, 424). With these perceptions in mind, motivated individuals rely on collectivism as the most convenient approach to the quest for significance (Kruglanski and Orehek 2011, 155–56).

Collectivism provides individuals with a group identity, characterizes an *in-group* versus an *out-group* categorization, and describes the group's goal as the goal of every individual member (Dugas and Kruglanski 2014, 428–29; Kruglanski and Orehek 2011, 153). Individual members, in turn, incorporate the elements of the affiliate group into their own identity because "identification as a group member in itself endows a person with a sense of significance and empowerment" (Dugas and Kruglanski 2014, 428; Swann et al. 2010). In this context, group formation as a consequence of the process of the quest for significance is formulated more concretely by *self-categorization* and *uncertainty-identity* theories. These theories emphasize that an individual's desire for gaining significance forces them "to identify with groups, construe themselves and others in group terms, and manifest group behaviors" (Hogg and Reid 2006, 9). The process of categorizing oneself as a member of a group reduces an individual's self-uncertainty by identifying them as part of something greater than themselves and is mostly reflected in the group's manifestos or ideologies (Dugas and Kruglanski 2014, 428; Hogg and Reid 2006).

Thus the process of the quest for significance leads individuals to form or attach themselves to a distinct group that prescribes distinctive behavioral norms (Kruglanski and Orehek 2011, 153). Group formation, in this sense, becomes a key element of the process of an individual's struggle for satisfying a strong desire that they believe is blocked by an external constraint under the status quo. The individual's quest for significance includes multiple elements that vary in different circumstances (Dugas and Kruglanski 2014, 425–26). The most critical circumstance, among others, is whether the person has experienced a sense of significant loss before being motivated to form or join an organization. If the individual experiences a significant loss, security, vengeance, and honor will underly his motivation toward group formation (Dugas and Kruglanski 2014,

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424–27). Concerning the establishment of al-Qaeda, a "socially-based significance loss" was experienced by individual jihadis before they decided to form a global jihadi front (425). The individual jihadi's motivation, in this context, was influenced by a "significance-restoring" desire, and as a result the establishment of al-Qaeda was impacted by all factors produced by the *significance-restoring desire* including a search for personal security, a sense of revenge, and honor (425–26).

The first factor that caused the establishment of al-Qaeda at the individual level includes the Afghan Arabs' search for personal security. Following the withdrawal of the Soviet Union from Afghanistan in the late 1980s, the Afghan Arabs returned home where most of them were unwelcomed and considered dangerous by their governments (Palmer and Palmer 2008, 132). They and their families and friends came under surveillance by local governments, with some of them being prosecuted and even tortured. In this situation, from the Middle East to North Africa to the Balkans and elsewhere thousands of Afghan Arabs were in search of a haven and an opportunity to reorganize and seek revenge. An example, in this regard, is bin Laden himself. Upon his return to Saudi Arabia in the late 1980s, he came under surveillance by the Saudi government after the regime realized that he was using his Saudi and Yemeni veterans to help create a jihadi front under Tariq al-Fadhli in Yemen, who was aiming to establish an Islamist movement and fight the southern socialists simultaneously in his country of origin (Ali 2009; Corbin 2002, 31). More restrictions were imposed on bin Laden when the Saudi government discovered that he was trying to form a jihadi front against both Saddam and the United States before and during the Gulf War. As a result, his passport was confiscated and his network came under government surveillance, which forced bin Laden to leave his home country in search of a safe haven.

Bin Laden was aware of the general situation of the restless Afghan Arabs all around the Islamic world and had a plan to reorganize them for the next phase of jihad, this time against the United States and the Saudi government. He first moved to Pakistan and allegedly to Afghanistan to refresh his network and prepare them to reorganize in a new safe haven provided in Sudan. By the mid-1990s, bin Laden brought together a big part of the Afghan Arabs as his employees in Sudan. Bin Laden's employees, who in the absence of a unifying leadership and proper conditions were unable to reorganize, included specialists in jihad in its all forms. In Sudan, bin Laden started to fill the leadership gap and the Sudanese

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Islamist government provided the required conditions for those jihadis to assemble and exchange the idea of creating al-Qaeda. While the seeds of al-Qaeda were planted in Sudan, bin Laden and his network of jihadis failed to establish the al-Qaeda organization in this country because of international pressures that forced them to leave Sudan.

Bin Laden and his network infiltrated Afghanistan in 1996, where he formally launched al-Qaeda two years later. Afghanistan in this period was under an extremist Islamist rule, the Taliban, that provided the Arab jihadis with a safe haven and other facilities to interact and organize. Under the Taliban, bin Laden was able to provide the aggrieved and frustrated jihadis with a collective identity and an ideology that conveyed a clear definition of an international problem, a common enemy that caused the problem, a violent method to fight the enemy in a heroic and glorious war, and a goal (Deikman 2006, 82–83; Post 2006a, 21). The establishment of al-Qaeda did not only mean the rise of a vanguard organization but also a broad umbrella for honor-seeking fugitive jihadis of different origins to reorganize and fight back. Under this umbrella, becoming a member of al-Qaeda and supporting its cause became an attractive decision for experienced Afghan Arabs as well as for a younger generation of jihadis who were educated in madrassas and radicalized in the post-Cold War international environment (Post 2006b, 25). As a result, individual jihadis from the Middle East to North Africa to the Balkans and Central Asia that had started their journey in search of a safe haven in the early 1990s ended up creating al-Qaeda in Afghanistan in 1998.

The second factor that caused the establishment of al-Qaeda at the individual level was a sense of revenge among Afghan Arabs against the United States and its allies. Jihadis perceived the Americans as an external enemy that had imposed a threatening status quo in the Islamic world that was unpleasant for Islamists. Scholars believe that terrorist organizations are formed against an enemy that acts as a dominant party in an unpleasant circumstance. The founding members of terrorist organizations personally hate the dominant party and aim to attack it collectively. The hate against the dominant party is the result of the oppressive circumstance under which these individuals grow and live (Post 2007, 4).

Regarding al-Qaeda, the founding members of the organization defined the United States as the dominant party that after the fall of the Soviet Union had imposed a status quo that deterred jihadis from establishing a pan-Islamic rule (Gerges 2011, 59). With the collapse of the Soviet Union

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that had enormous deteriorating impacts on the pro-Soviet secular governments in the Islamic world, jihadis expected a quick victory in those countries. However, despite this expectation, the jihadis were repeatedly defeated by the local governments in Egypt, Algeria, and elsewhere when domestic revelry had escalated into a "tug-of-war" between governments and Islamists (Gerges 2011, 101). The unhappy jihadis believed that their unexpected defeats were the result of an American-sponsored status quo in the Islamic world that favored governments against Islamists. Therefore bin Laden and his lieutenants viewed America as the evil enemy, because it blocked the success of jihadis, and they publicly revealed their desire and readiness to collectively fight it (Palmer and Palmer 2008, 147). The rise of al-Qaeda, in this context, was directly influenced by the jihadists' desire to engage in a retaliatory war for changing the international status quo. Those individuals formed al-Qaeda as a vanguard army that was supposed to lead a global war between the world of Islam and its enemies led by the United States (Gerges 2011, 55, 77).

Finally, the third cause of al-Qaeda at the individual level of analysis was the jihadis' desire for gaining significance by partaking in the global war against the remaining superpower. As I mentioned earlier in this chapter, the political environment of Islamic societies was unpleasant for jihadis in the early 1990s. Most Arab regimes in the Middle East had lost the support of the Soviet Union, and as a result Israel had become an unchallenged power in the region; in Central Asia and the Caucasus, the emergence of new geopolitics put Muslims under the Russian attacks; in the Balkans, Muslims became victims of the Serbian expansionism; in many other places, thousands of Muslims were killed and attacked by neighboring powers. The United States and its allies failed to intervene in any of these events when necessary (Murden 2002, 195, 197). On top of this, the United States stationed its troops in the land of the Two Holy Mosques, which Islamists perceived as a moral invasion of Muslims. These conditions intensified the sense of revenge among jihadi Salafis, particularly the experienced Afghan Arabs. The jihadis believed that their power and glory were being taken by an external power and therefore they were obliged to wage a *jihad of the sword* on behalf of their coreligionists and against their imagined and real enemies worldwide (Gerges 2011, 67). Heroism and desire for gaining significance became great sources of motivation for group formation as a result. The jihadis' *heroism* was a "generational and

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societal dynamic which was seeded during the Afghan War" in the 1980s when the Afghan Arabs, including bin Laden, had joined jihad as glory-seeking fighters (Corbin 2002, 16). The path to glory during the Afghan war was adhering to a defensive jihad for liberating a Muslim country from Soviet occupation. This type of heroism was replaced with a global offensive jihad against the United States in a post–Cold War context that eventually led to the formation of al-Qaeda.

Group Level

Jihadi Salafism, as a group ideology and a shared system of belief and behavior, also played a causal role in the emergence of al-Qaeda on the individual level of analysis. The modern jihadi Salafism provided an interpretive system and narrative that transformed the meaning of the traditional defensive jihad into the modern global jihadism. It also facilitated the creation of a distinctive political philosophy that defined a particular sense of "we-ness" as a collective identity against a "they-ness" as a global enemy among jihadis (Dugas and Kruglanski 2014, 427; Homer-Dixon 1991, 105).

While some scholars doubt the role of ideology in the emergence of terrorist organizations like al-Qaeda (Pape 2005; Sageman 2008), a review of the founding declarations and documents of al-Qaeda and its offshoots indicates the critical role of ideology and religiosity in the creation of the organization (Al-Zawahiri 2006; bin Laden 1996; bin Laden et al. 1998). For instance, the two founding fatwas of al-Qaeda are explicit manifestations of the reinterpreted version of the jihadi Salafi ideology. All four key elements of this ideology, as articulated in the two previous chapters, are categorized in the two fatwas as reasons for establishing a global Islamic front against the United States and its allies. For example, bin Laden's second fatwa, the *World Islamic Front Statement* (1998), described the "crusader armies' domination of the Muslim lands" as the major international problem that Muslims suffer from. The same fatwa called for a collective jihad to resolve this problem. The "crusader armies' domination of the Muslim lands" refers to the U.S. foreign and military policies in the post-Cold War context and, particularly, the deployment of U.S. troops in Saudi Arabia. The fatwa proceeds as follows:

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> The Arabian Peninsula has never . . . been stormed by any forces like the crusader armies spreading in it like locusts, eating its riches and wiping out its plantations. All this is happening at a time in which nations are attacking Muslims like people fighting over a plate of food. (bin Laden et al. 1998)

The fatwa also describes the United States and its allies as the enemy and an offensive and violent jihad as the method of fighting it:

> All these crimes and sins committed by the Americans are a clear declaration of war on Allah, his Prophet, and Muslims. . . . The ruling to kill the Americans and their allies—civilians and military—is an individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible to do it. (bin Laden et al. 1998)

Finally, relying on the jihadi Salafi doctrine, al-Qaeda followed the goal of establishing a pan-Islamic order on earth. Although some scholars, highlighting al-Qaeda's relationship with nationalist jihadi groups, challenge the claim that the organization aimed to create a caliphate, al-Qaeda's efforts and statements indicate its pan-Islamic objectives. It is true that al-Qaeda initially supported campaigns against false Muslim rulers in many places including Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Uzbekistan, but its main objective of networking with those organizations was more about expanding al-Qaeda's sphere of influence and multiplying its operational options than contributing to power transition in local contexts (Gunaratna 2002, 55).

A major example is al-Qaeda's relationship with the Taliban in Afghanistan. Al-Qaeda's main objective of supporting the Taliban against its domestic rival during the Afghan civil war was more about using the Taliban-controlled areas as a safe haven to expand training camps and to prepare fighters for a global campaign than contributing to power transition in Afghanistan in favor of the Taliban. Statements from bin Laden, Zawahiri, Zarqawi, Sayf al Adl, and other al-Qaeda leaders display the uncompromising commitment of al-Qaeda leadership to the agenda of creating a pan-Islamic state (Blanchard 2007, 15). Thus al-Qaeda conveyed all major elements of jihadi Salafism and used them to justify its violent global campaign.

In addition to being a cause of al-Qaeda, jihadi Salafism provided reli-

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gious justification for al-Qaeda's violent philosophy and method of operation. To effectively use the jihadi doctrine as a source of religious justification, bin Laden established a religious committee that was comprised of trained Salafists who were assigned to codify and justify their actions using fatwas grounded in al-Qaeda's philosophy (Corbin 2002, 37). The committee had a crucial role in writing al-Qaeda's two founding fatwas that were justified by references to Islam's original texts and previous Salafi leaders and preachers. The number of references to early Salafi scholars and preachers in the two fatwas indicates al-Qaeda's intensive reliance on the Salafi literature, particularly the early Salafi scholars. Ibn Taymiyyah (1263–1328), for instance, is directly quoted five times in the "Declaration of War against the Americans Occupying the Land of the Two Holy Places" (bin Laden 1996).

The two fatwas were also issued in a logical sequence that justified the different steps al-Qaeda took to establish its image as a vanguard army during the so-called global jihad. The first fatwa, for instance, announced and justified the beginning of a global jihad against the United States and its allies from Hindukush Mountains, located in the heart of the historical Khorasan, which emerged as an Islamic region during the Islamic period. The Hindukush is located in the north of contemporary Afghanistan separating the northern provinces from the capital, Kabul. The fatwa proceeds as follows:

> By the Grace of Allah, a safe base is now available in the high Hindukush mountains in Khurasan; where-by the Grace of Allah-the largest infidel military force of the world [the Soviet Union] was destroyed. . . . Today we work from the same mountains to lift the iniquity that had been imposed on the Ummah by the Zionist-Crusader alliance. . . . Ibn Taymiyyah, after mentioning the Mongols (Tatar) and their behavior in changing the law of Allah, stated that: "the ultimate aim of pleasing Allah, praising His word, instituting His religion and obeying His Messenger is to fight the enemy, in every aspect and a complete manner." (bin Laden 1996)

While the first fatwa declared the beginning of a credible jihad against a common enemy, the second fatwa announced and justified the emergence of a World Islamic Front led by al-Qaeda:

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> To kill the Americans and their allies—civilians and military . . . is in accordance with the words of Almighty Allah: "and fight the pagans all together as they fight you all together, and fight them until there is no more tumult or oppression, and there prevail justice and faith in Allah." We [the world Islamic front] call on every Muslim who believes in Allah and wishes to be rewarded to comply with Allah's order. (bin Laden et al. 1998)

Overall, jihadi Salafism functioned as an underlying force behind the creation of al-Qaeda and behind the motivation of individual jihadis and sympathetic organizations to join it. Jihadi Salafism, in this context, functioned as a cause of al-Qaeda and provided a system of belief and behavior that justified the organization's philosophy, methods, and objectives.

International Level

Although the seeds of a global jihadi movement were planted in the battlefields of Afghanistan during the anti-Soviet Afghan war, the Afghan war is not a direct cause of al-Qaeda. An elaboration on the relationship between the Afghan war of the 1980s and the rise of al-Qaeda in the second half of the 1990s will further clarify this puzzle.

The Afghan war is phenomenal in the history of global jihadism. The journey of so many Muslims from all around the Islamic world to fight together against a common enemy was unprecedented in modern history. There were tens of thousands of Egyptians, Saudis, Yemenis, Palestinians, Algerians, Sudanese, Iraqi Kurds, Kuwaitis, Turks, Jordanians, Syrians, Libyans, Tunisians, Moroccans, Lebanese, Pakistanis, Indians, Indonesians, Malaysians, and others who traveled to Afghanistan and fought together against the Soviet army (Gerges 2011, 82). There were also dozens of jihadi organizations such as the Egyptian Islamic Jihad, the Egyptian Islamic Group, the Algerian Islamist groups, the Pakistani Jamaat-i-Islami, the Kashmiri Harakat ul-Ansar, and others that joined the jihad against communism. The presence of such a large and representative number of jihadis in the battleground transformed the Afghan war into an internationalized ideological struggle between Islam and communism (Gerges 2011, 82). The Afghan war, in this context, had an "overall radicalizing impact on foreign combatants and served as a transformative experience

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on both hardened jihadis like Azzam, Abu Ubaida al-Bansihiri, Abu Hafs, Seif al-Adl, Zawahiri and their cohorts, as well as on younger ones like bin-Laden" (Gerges 2011, 84). The war created a generation of jihadis that practiced militant pan-Islamism during their stay in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The Afghan war also became a model of victory for jihadi leaders in years and decades to come. For example, after the withdrawal of the Soviet Army from Afghanistan, bin Laden described the withdrawal as the victory of a "poorly armed but dedicated men against a superpower" (Gerges 2011, 84–85). In another instance in a video released in 2000, bin Laden used the Afghan war as a model for victory against a superpower when he was preparing to launch his global campaign against another superpower:

> Using very meager resources and military means, the Afghan mujahidin demolished one of the most important human myths in history and the biggest military apparatus. We no longer fear the so-called Great Power. We believe that America is much weaker than Russia. . . . America's nightmare in Vietnam and Lebanon will pale by comparison with the forthcoming victory in al-Hijaz [referring to the western provinces of Saudi Arabia where Mecca and Medina are located]. (2011, 85)

These examples indicate the long-lasting influence of the Afghan war on global jihadism and its system of justification. It also prepared the manpower—an inspired, radicalized, and empowered generation of jihadis—to a transnational jihad. Nevertheless, the Afghan war did not directly produce al-Qaeda as a global jihadi organization as articulated in this and previous chapters. Evidence shows that none of the Afghan Arab returnees, including bin Laden, had publicly indicated their aspiration for an anti-American jihad or the creation of an anti-American terrorist organization before the Gulf War.

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the United States achieved "a total dominance of the Middle Eastern affairs not seen since that of the British in the first half of the twentieth century" (Murden 2002, 47; Zunes 2014, 73). The U.S. domination of the region was more apparent during the Gulf War when it used its massive intervening power and created a "permanent Gulf establishment" based in Saudi Arabia (Khalilzad and Ochmanek 1997, 53–54). From this new base, the sole great power could

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move to construct a new regional order in which the American power was institutionalized in an "Arab-Israeli peace process, an upgraded alliance system, and a much greater U.S. military presence" (Murden 2002, 48). While no particular state could challenge the United States presence and its militarization of the region at this time, the Afghan Arabs and the new generation of jihadis started reacting and responding to the American expansionism with anger (Zunes 2014, 77).

In this context, two international factors can be defined as the root causes of al-Qaeda at the international level of analysis. First, the U.S. domination of the Middle East in the aftermath of the Cold War and, second, the psychological and geopolitical consequences of the domination in the region. The Afghan Arabs and other jihadis considered the status quo under the U.S. supremacy in the Middle East as an external constraint that had imposed an oppressive circumstance in the Islamic world and had blocked the Islamists' way to establishing a sharia-based system of governance. Some Afghan Arabs, particularly Osama bin Laden and his inner circle, viewed the U.S. intervention in the Middle East as part of the American scheme to invade the Islamic world (Gerges 2011, 49; Gerges 2005, 146). The stationing of American troops in Saudi Arabia, in particular, was a catalyst for putting jihadi Salafis against the United States and its policies in the region. These jihadis believed that by stationing its troops in Saudi Arabia the United States had crossed the "sensitivity lines," and Saudi rulers had violated their religious oath for allowing it (Gerges 2005, 148). Bin Laden and other Salafis interpreted the stationing of a non-Muslim troop in the land of the Two Holy Mosques as an offense against the fundamentals of their faith, referring to the Prophet, who stated: "Let there be no two religions in Arabia" (Corbin 2002, 27).

Many Saudi Islamists interpreted the Prophet's statement as non-Muslims should not live anywhere on the Arabian Peninsula (Corbin 2002, 27). A leading Saudi Islamist, Sa'ad al-Faqih, for instance, believed that Americans had not considered Muslims' sensitivity about the land of the Two Holy Mosques by bringing their troops in. According to al-Faqih, "during the 1990 Gulf crisis, the U.S. crossed the psychological barriers by bringing in their forces. They failed to remember the sensitivity" (Corbin 2002, 28). The deployment of American troops in Saudi Arabia was directly addressed in al-Qaeda's first fatwa as follows:

> For more than seven years the US has been occupying the lands of Islam in the holiest of places, plundering its riches detaching to its

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> rulers, humiliating its people, terrorizing its neighbors and turning its bases in the peninsula into a spearhead through which to fight the neighboring Muslim peoples. (2002, 67)

The United States intervention in the Gulf region was followed by other events that made jihadi circles more reactive to the sole great power's policies. For instance, the United States intervention in Somalia in 1992 created more extreme anti-American sentiments in jihadi communities. The reaction of bin Laden's religious committee to the case of Somalia was as follows: "they already took the Gulf area and now they go to Somalia. If they succeed, it could be South Sudan next and they could take all the Islamic countries" (Corbin 2002, 42). Thus the new world order put the United States and the jihadi Salafis in a confrontation, leading the latter to reinterpret the elements of its ideology and develop a new agenda in response to the new conditions. Eventually, international events encouraged the transformation of the traditional defensive jihad into bin Laden's anti-American offensive jihadism (Gerges 2011, 34).

The transformation of the international system from bipolar to unipolar at the end of the Cold War had unpleasant consequences in the Islamic world that exacerbated jihadis desire for establishing al-Qaeda. The consequences of the post-Cold War international system in the broader Islamic world as a grand cause of the rise of al-Qaeda are already explained. However, detailed articulation of South Asia in this international context can provide a clearer explanation of al-Qaeda's establishment. The regional causes of al-Qaeda can be studied in three contexts: the political context of Afghanistan, the political context of South Asia, and the international relations context of the region.

In the political context of Afghanistan, the end of the Cold War resulted in the defeat of the pro-Soviet government in Kabul and the outbreak of a civil war that paved the way for the rise of the Taliban, which seized ninety percent of the country by 2001. Following the defeat of the pro-Soviet regime in April 1992, a civil war among the victorious mujahedeen groups that fought for governmental resources, state establishments, and strategic areas in the country broke out (Maley 2009, 173–74). Amid the war in 1994, the Taliban emerged in the southern province of Kandahar as a new rebel group that was formed out of the former mujahidin fighters and younger madrasa students and was massively funded and equipped by Pakistan. The Taliban captured Kabul in September 1996 and named its government the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA). The IEA allowed

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bin Laden to enter Afghanistan in return for funds and military support and because he and his comrades adored the Taliban's jihadism. Thus, due to both material reliance and ideational ties to bin Laden, the Taliban provided the Arab jihadist with a safe haven in Afghanistan, where he created training camps and developed them into al-Qaeda.

In the political context of the region, the end of the Cold War turned Afghanistan into a focal point of regional rivalries, particularly between Pakistan and India. Afghanistan has a historical border dispute with Pakistan and therefore all Afghan governments, since the creation of Pakistan in 1947, have been sympathetic to India. In other words, the Afghan governments, in all its varieties, were always pro-Indian and anti-Pakistan. In response to this historical behavior of the governments of Afghanistan, Pakistan created and used several extremist Islamist groups to balance India's influence in Afghanistan and counter a possible Afghan-Indian alliance in the region. For example, Pakistan played a crucial role in the emergence and expansion of the Afghan mujahidin and the Taliban using them against governments in Kabul (Byman 2005, 195; Goodson 2001, 111; Human Rights Watch 2001; Johnson 2007, 97; Jones 2003, 240; Rashid 1997, 23–24; U.S. Department of State 2007). Moreover, to contain the expansion of India's influence in the region, the Pakistani establishment also created Jaish-e-Muhammad (the Army of Muhammad) and Lashkar-i-Taiba, using them as its proxy allies in Kashmir. Thus jihadi organizations were used both as paramilitary branches of the Pakistani army and as its foreign policy instrument in the region. Almost all jihadi organizations that are created and supported by Pakistan share a common ideology with al-Qaeda. These groups, in turn, contributed to the emergence and development of al-Qaeda in Afghanistan by providing the terrorist organization and its operatives with safe havens, training and recruiting facilities, knowledge of the region, and networking mediums.

Finally, in the international relations context of the region, the post–Cold War international politics had a remarkable impact on American foreign policy in the region, resulting in the disengagement of the United States and several major European states from Afghanistan and Pakistan (Could and Fitzgerald 2011, 86; Iqbal 2014). When the Taliban took power and established the IEA in 1996, the United States and Europe had no diplomatic relations with Afghanistan. In the absence of a formal relationship with the free world, the IEA had no interest and obligation in accounting to the international community on activities going on in

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territories under its control. Therefore, while al-Qaeda was growing in Afghanistan, bin Laden faced no serious obstacle from the outside world. In the absence of a meaningful relationship between the IEA and the international community, the Taliban's sponsor, Pakistan, also ignored the U.S. request to "use its full influence on the Taliban surrender of Bin Ladin" (U.S. Department of State 2007, Docs. 31, 33). Instead the Pakistani establishment, particularly its Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), viewed the formation of al-Qaeda as the emergence of another jihadi organization that could benefit Pakistan in the region. The link between ISI and al-Qaeda was officially disclosed by Pakistan's prime minister, Imran Khan, at a meeting at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York, who stated that the Pakistani army and ISI trained al-Qaeda and had direct links with it until 9/11 (Haass 2019).

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CHAPTER 4

Condition of the Rise of al-Qaeda

State Fragility in Afghanistan

The al-Qaeda organization emerged on top of a network of terrorist camps that were built by bin Laden in Afghanistan between 1996 and 1998. The organization was the outcome of causes at all three levels of analysis as articulated in the previous chapter. State fragility in Afghanistan provided the conditions that facilitated the process of the evolution of al-Qaeda. In particular, the lack of state legitimacy, weak authority, and poor capacity were three crucial conditions of state fragility in Afghanistan that magnified the basic cause-effect relationship between the determinant causes and the emergence of al-Qaeda.

Afghanistan ranked one of the seven most severely fragile states of the world in the 1990s (Rotberg 2002b, 90). When Osama bin Laden and his militants arrived in the country, the Afghan state under the Taliban was extremely suffering from a lack of legitimacy, weak authority, and poor capacity. The IEA was engaged in a civil war with its internal rival, the Northern Alliance (NA), an alliance of former mujahidin and rebel groups based in northern Afghanistan that oversaw a parallel government to the IEA called the Islamic State of Afghanistan (ISA). Despite its successful warmaking campaign against the ISA, the IEA failed in statemaking in the sense that it could not establish proper systems of legitimacy, authority, and capacity from 1996 to 2001, which facilitated the infiltration of international jihadis into Afghanistan and benefited bin Laden's camp-building activities in the country. This chapter investigates the three elements of state fragility in Afghanistan in the 1990s and their interaction with the

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root causes of al-Qaeda in providing the necessary conditions for the emergence of this terrorist organization. To provide a broader image of state fragility in Afghanistan, this chapter begins a historical overview of the trends and trajectories of state formation and state fragility in this country, which would help assess historical aspects of state fragility and their impact on the rise of al-Qaeda more comprehensively.

State Formation

Efforts to create a modern state in Afghanistan date back to the early 19th century when a state structure emerged during the reign of Amir Dost Muhammad Khan (Kakar 2006, 9; Noelle 1997). Dost Muhammad's government was able to unify large tracts of the Durrani Empire under a single government (Barfield 2010, 110–12; Saikal 2004, 32). While the stability of Dost Muhammad's kingdom was disrupted by his death in 1863, his state-building project was followed by his successor, Amir Shir Ali Khan. A key feature of Shir Ali's state-building strategy was to end the government's reliance on tribal troops by modernizing the state's army and bureaucracy (Barfield 2010, 137; Kakar 2006, 15–24). However, Shir Ali's innovations were limited to the capital Kabul and his reforms were unwelcomed by tribal leaders beyond the capital (Saikal 2004, 33).

Following Shir Ali's death at the end of the Second Anglo-Afghan War (1878–1880), the British Empire recognized that a direct occupation of Afghanistan would not result in the formation of a stable state because of internal resistance and the Russian influence. The British supported Amir Abdurrahman Khan, the grandson of Dost Muhammad, to end the civil war and build a territorialized and centralized state that would respect British interests in the Indian subcontinent (Barfield 2010, 146). The central objective of Abdurrahman's state-building project was to provide conditions for ruling the country directly and autocratically, without relying on tribal troops and local intermediaries (Kakar 1979). In addition to demarcating the domain of his authority and establishing a central army and bureaucracy, Abdurrahman waged a massive military campaign throughout the country. The purpose of this campaign was to establish a so-called internal imperialism by reducing the political and military authority of local power centers in all regions of the country (Barfield 2010, 147; Kakar 1979; Tapper 1983). By the end of Abdurrahman's reign, Afghanistan was

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territorialized and its politics and economy were centralized in Kabul. As a result, any ruler of the capital would automatically become the undisputed ruler of the country. Abdulrahman's state was conceptually and structurally different from previous rules. Except for its foreign politics, which was mandated by the British Empire, its strict territorialization, centralization, and monopolization of power under a ruler in Kabul made the state structurally similar to a Westphalian sovereign state. This model of political organization was unprecedented in the country.

Overall, three social, political, and military factors are considered as the main drivers behind the establishment of modern Afghanistan (Goodson 2001, 27–29). Socially, a broad ethnic consciousness among Pashtun tribes emerged following the rise of Ahmad Shah Durrani in the 1740s that exacerbated the desire for establishing a central authority (Goodson 2001, 27). Politically, the pressures of external invasions from the Russian and British empires during the Great Game led to wars, political manipulation, and the construction of new boundaries in the region. The external pressure, along with an internal desire for political stability, also contributed to the formation of Afghanistan (Goodson 2001, 27). Militarily, Abdurrahman's close relations to the British Indian government provided him with access to gunpowder and firearms and introduced him to modern military skills, which in turn helped him modernize his army. These three social, political, and military developments together facilitated the establishment of Abdurrahman's internal imperialism (Goodson 2001, 27).

The demarcation of Afghanistan's sovereign boundaries was decided by international politics but the formation of a central authority in Kabul was profoundly influenced by domestic factors such as a political will to end the civil war, a desire to re-establish order following the collapse of the Durrani Empire, and an interest in establishing a modern centralized army that was initiated by Shir Ali Khan. Thus the interplay between domestic and external factors significantly affected the formation of a territorialized state. Following the territorialization of authority, the strict centralization of power in Kabul was fulfilled through coercion and warmaking campaigns by Abdurrahman. At the end of this campaign, all local power centers were destroyed so that no region outside of Kabul could influence national politics (Barfield 2010 165–66; Rasanayagam 2005). As a result, the modern state of Afghanistan emerged as a centralist political organization that aimed to stabilize the country by subjugating traditional social organizations that caused defuse power centers throughout the country.

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The main social organization in traditional Afghanistan was the *qawm*. This social organization was based on the principles of ethnicity, kinship, religion, place, and any other sources of identity. All meaningful social relations in rural Afghanistan occurred within the qawm, which was traditionally governed by councils of elders called *shuras* and *jirgas*. As major decision-making institutions in the country, shuras and jirgas played a crucial role in maintaining social order in local communities and in maintaining the balance of power between the central state and societal forces through mediatory mechanisms (Dupree 1973; Goodson 2001; Qudus 1958). The role and function of these institutions depended on ethnic, religious, geographic, and economic characteristics of every place and therefore differed from one place to another (Shahrani 2013, 24–25; Schetter 2013, 12).

To mediate with the state or any higher-order rule, jirgas selected *arbabs* (maliks in Pashtun areas) from their ranks to serve as intermediaries (Goodson 2001, 19). The arbabs were confirmed by the government. There were also cases where the government appointed arbabs without consulting local communities (Barfield 2010, 222). Other significant local actors in traditional Afghanistan were the *khans*, who were large landowners. Together with arbabs, khans mediated between their communities and the state. The power of these local players depended on their abilities to galvanize jirga or shura support (Shahrani 2013, 24–25). Although Abdurrahman preferred direct intervention in local affairs to mediation as state-building, reliance on local players became a significant approach to governance for his successors.

In the early stages of state-building, Abdurrahman followed three parallel strategies: coercion, marginalization, and the creation of official power centers. His relations with powerful groups that had strong tribal affiliations were completely hostile. Therefore, to consolidate support bases, Abdurrahman nurtured a pro-state political elite in Kabul, mostly composed of members of the Mohammadzai Pashtun tribe, urbanized Tajiks, and other Kabul-based ethnic minorities who were largely disconnected from the countryside (Barfield 2010, 165–68). This method introduced a political structure in Afghanistan that increased the distance between the central state and inhabitants of the countryside rather than narrowing the gap between the bureaucratic state and traditional social organizations. As a result, while successful in subordinating local power centers by coercion, Abdurrahman failed to regulate the relation-

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ship between his centralized bureaucratic state and a highly segmented and centrifugal traditional society.

Despite Abdurrahman's effort to create a uniform state governed from Kabul, the troubled relationship between the center and the periphery remained a significant source of political disorder and state fragility in post-Abdurrahman Afghanistan. Therefore making peace between Abdurrahman's centralist state and the centrifugal society became an overriding concern of state-building for decades to come. His successors tried to overcome the state-society divide through two main strategies: state conservatism and social transformation. While the former invested in intermediary mechanisms of control, the latter attempted to integrate the centrifugal society into the state system through direct intervention in social affairs and by extending formal institutions into informal social structures. Characteristics and aspects of these strategies are discussed next.

State Conservatism

For much of the 20th century, the Musahiban dynasty (1929–1973) attempted to repair the fragile state-society relations through a soft domination strategy to avoid social upheaval. Thus the Musahiban rule, particularly under King Zahir (1933–1973), marked a sharp transition from previous interventionist strategies to conservative governance that relied on patron-client networks and intermediary mechanisms in the countryside. Musahiban's conservatism echoed the lessons from internal and external reactions to interventionist and radical approaches to governance and their devastating effects on state-building in the country.

Internally, state conservatism was a response to King Amanullah's—the grandson of Abdurrahman who came to power following his father's assassination—failed state-building attempts (1919–1929). The memory of Amanullah's radical modernization followed by civil war and state collapse was still fresh in mind when Musahiban took power. Amanullah's ambitious modernist reforms had triggered an armed revolt, resulting in his defeat and a power transition in Kabul. For the following nine months, the fighters, led by Habibullah Kalakani, a commander from the north of Kabul, ruled the capital. The Musahiban brothers came to power by defeating and killing Kalakani.

Internationally, Amanullah's ambitious foreign policy (including his

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engagement in pan-Islamic causes) was an irritant for both the Soviet Union and the British government. Amanullah actively supported both the anti-British khilafat movement of Indian Muslims and the Basmachi resistance movement against the Soviet Union in Central Asia (Barfield 2010, 182; Shahrani 1986, 46). This idealist foreign policy motivated foreign powers to invest in alternative power centers in Afghanistan, including the Musahiban dynasty. The Musahiban government avoided antagonizing any superpower and sought to benefit from competition among foreign powers without approaching them directly (Barfield 2010, 198, 206). For example, the Musahiban government signed friendship treaties with both Great Britain and the Soviet Union, adopting a policy of "benevolent neutrality" (Shahrani 1986, 54). Drawing lessons from Amanullah's failed internal and international policies, Musahiban's conservatism adopted the principle of avoiding confrontation with both the rural population and foreign powers that had brought down Amanullah's regime (Barfield 2010, 198). According to Musahiban's worldview, state-building would be a limited and gradual development that would start from Kabul and move outwards in a manner that would facilitate development without imposition (198).

The Musahiban dramatically reduced direct interference in local affairs throughout the country. However, the degree and type of interference were not uniformly implemented. For example, the state intervened more actively in the non-Pashtun areas of the north than in Pashtun areas of the southern frontier regions (Shahrani 1986, 52–53; Shahrani 2013, 30). These differentiated interventions were informed by the Musahiban's assumption that stronger government support would come from like-minded Pashtun tribes than from the non-Pashtun agrarian populations. The types of interference also differed from place to place, ranging from land reclamation to relocation to law enforcement. In each of these cases, the government used its coercive force very rarely and reluctantly, and only to quell tribal upheavals and organized rebellion (Newell 1986, 113). Accordingly, a two-track governance system—a formal government based in Kabul that followed formal legislation and procedures and an informal semiautonomous system of governance in the countryside that followed customary law—emerged in Afghanistan in this period (Barfield 2010, 222–23).

The state's main governing policy in the countryside was to consolidate and increase its patron-client networks by developing relations

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between Kabul and local khans and arbabs who regularly functioned as intermediaries between the state and local communities. These patron-client networks facilitated negotiations between state agencies and social organizations when it was necessary. During this period, the state's major law enforcement institution was the gendarmerie police of the interior ministry, which was poorly equipped and had insufficient capacity to control local communities (Barfield 2010, 221–22). Law enforcement in the villages was assigned to unarmed and "ill-clothed police conscripts" which in local terms were called the *sipahi* (222). Since local communities provided their members with important networks of support outside official governmental channels, it was not possible for a sipahi to directly demand the surrender of a criminal suspect or announce a governmental decision in the villages without local elite support. In this situation, the support of local intermediaries was required for sipahis to enter a village and arrest a suspect (222).

The customary law system in villages was administered by jirgas and shuras. The government accepted some local jirga decisions as part of the deal between the state and local communities. The situation in which the state-society relationship was limited to personal ties and patron-client networks had two unfavorable outcomes: impeding the conceptual and practical introduction of the state to local communities and further disjoining units of the local authority, which were essentially unable to develop meaningful and broader connections.

Despite the royal family's conservatism toward the rural society, the dynamics of political development in larger cities changed in the early 1960s. A new political elite, educated in modern state-sponsored schools, pressured the monarchy for more political openness and civil rights. The pressure prompted constitutional adjustment and the transition of the state system from an absolute to a constitutional monarchy in 1964. Many political parties, covering the ideological spectrum from extreme right to extreme left, including the pro-Soviet PDPA, the Maoist-oriented Progressive Youth Organization, and the Islamist-guided Muslim Youth Organization, emerged during this period.

Party members had been trained in state-sponsored modern schools to help staff state agencies such as the army, the civilian bureaucracy, and public service departments (Barfield 2010, 210–11). But contrary to the state's intentions, members of the young elite embraced anti-state posi-

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tions and radical ideologies. New opposition to the state emerged in Kabul, posing an unprecedented challenge to Musahiban's rule. The government responded by shifting its focus from political development in the countryside to tackling the new challenges in the capital. However, the state lacked the authority and capacity to simultaneously keep rural areas quiet while dealing with urban opposition. State weakness, in this context, pushed Afghanistan toward radical political collisions, coups, and civil wars, which in turn aggravated the already fragile relations between the state and society.

Social Transformation

Unlike Musahiban's state conservatism, the PDPA government (1978–1992) adopted a strategy of social transformation and direct intervention in social affairs. The purpose of this strategy was to consolidate power through the extension of state institutions and programs and the ruling party's structure throughout the country (Szajkowski 1981, 172–74). The PDPA was divided into two branches, the *Khalq*, which ruled from April 1978 to December 1979, and the *Parcham*, which was in power from January 1980 to April 1992. The party came to power through a military coup that overthrew the republic of President Mohammad Dawood, the last ruler of the Musahiban dynasty, on April 27, 1978. Having an upper hand in the party's military branch and therefore during the coup, the Khalq branch of the party acquired initial control of the government.

The Khalqi government implemented a social engineering agenda that ran counter to the deeply rooted conservative society's value systems (Underhill 2014, 40). The ruling party designed a policy of expanding the state's authority in the countryside by installing their party organizations in provinces, districts, and villages, as well as the extension of government institutions and programs in local communities (Giustozzi 2000, 36–40). According to this policy, "party committees" at the provincial, city, district, and village levels would replace local units of authority, and "party secretaries" who were mostly state-trained schoolteachers and army officers, with little or no connections to local communities, would replace local khans and arbabs (Rubin 2002, 118; Szajkowski 1981, 172–74). To provide a legal basis for its social transformation agenda, the ruling party released a

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series of decrees covering fundamental social issues, including land ownership, marriage prestations, loans, mortgages, tenancy, hospitality, and the like (Rubin 2002, 116).

The Khalqi reforms turned those in the countryside against the already fragile state. By the summer of 1978, a revolt, mainly led by the rural elite and Pakistan-based Islamists who had escaped President Dawood's prosecution in the mid-1970s, began in Nuristan province, in the east, and quickly developed into a countrywide insurgency. Following the spread of the rebellion, effective government control in most of the countryside was lost. By the beginning of 1980, the state controlled only 5,500 of the country's estimated 35,500 villages (Giustozzi 2000, 17). This meant that the government had lost effective control of more than 85 percent of Afghanistan's rural areas. The spread of the rebellion coincided with a factional dispute within the ruling party. The severe political crisis that had exhausted the PDPA regime motivated the Soviet Union to invade Afghanistan in December 1978, claiming to rescue a friendly government from total collapse (Underhill 2014, 40).

Following the Soviet invasion, the Parcham faction of the party came to power aided by Soviet support. Despite this regime change, the government retained direct intervention and social transformation strategies as its main approaches to state-building. Although there were some differences in the intensity of the two factions' policies and engagements, direct intervention consistently remained the party's uniform state-building policy. Continuing social transformation as its central governing agenda, the Parcham faction introduced several new methods to the policy. The party's social transformation agenda, in general, followed three main strategies: direct interference, soft tactics, and coercion.

The direct interference strategy was implemented through policies such as redistribution and *cooperativization* of land, the extension of state institutions and programs to the countryside, and the expansion of party organizations and membership throughout the country. This strategy's scale was such that it affected some 450,000 peasants and the landless poor in the countryside. However, data show that throughout the 1980s, pro-state peasants never exceeded 200,000 or 12 percent of the total peasantry population (Giustozzi 2000, 18). Moreover, of the 1,145 state-sponsored peasantry cooperatives in the early 1980s, only 10–20 percent functioned (Giustozzi 2000, 18).

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Parallel to cooperativization, the PDPA invested massively in extending party organizations in districts, subdistricts, and villages throughout the 1980s. For example, from 1982 to 1984, the PDPA district committees increased from 104 to 205. Likewise, district party organizations such as local committees and secretariats grew in "very sensitive" border areas from 443 in 1982 to 1,331 in 1987 (Giustozzi 2000, 36–37). Despite this organizational growth in the countryside, the party remained poorly managed and dysfunctional in most rural areas. The party attempted to reduce the problem by expanding its membership and influence among peasants. Although peasant members in the party grew from 3,300 in 1980 to 35,300 in 1987, it represented a tiny fraction of the rural population (Giustozzi 2000, 47). Accordingly, the government's direct interference strategy failed in rural areas and, despite the PDPA's expansionist efforts, the party remained ineffective in most of the countryside.

The second dimension of the PDPA's social transformation strategy included a soft form of governance, also known as pacification. Pacification was adopted to attract religious and tribal leaders to state policies and develop alliances between the ruling party and key segments of the traditional elite. In the 1980s, the state waged a massive political campaign to influence the clergy through a variety of financial and social investments. From 1980 to 1986, for instance, the government claimed to have spent more than 3.3 billion Afghanis to support Islam by building and managing mosques, assisting the clergy, and financing religious education (Rubin 2002, 136). Along with this policy, Islam was constitutionally adopted as the official state religion in 1987. By the end of 1989, some 20,000 mullahs were paid government salaries and coupons for food and essential commodities. By this time, the state had renovated or built 1,749 new mosques (Giustozzi 2000, 58; Rubin 2002, 165–66).

Moreover, the government offered preferential treatment to some groups in the hope of extending its alliance. For instance, while the land ceiling was a non-negotiable policy for the population at large, the PDPA introduced exemptions for military officers, religious notables, and khans and arbabs who supported the government (Rubin 2002, 142). The government also attempted to manipulate traditional jirgas and connect them to local government institutions. The purpose of this policy was to give jirgas authority in local governmental affairs in exchange for cooperating with the revolutionary government (Giustozzi 2000, 137–40). However,

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this program had little success because the fabricated jirgas lacked genuine local power and failed to act in response to serious problems posed by the militant opposition (Giustozzi 2000, 140).

Finally, and in addition to the direct intervention and pacification policies, the state used a range of means of violence to support its social transformation strategy. Throughout the 1980s, the state relied heavily on its army, police, and intelligence to counter internal rivals (Rubin 2002, 123). In the countryside, the army waged a series of operations from land and air, also backed by police and intelligence, especially in the areas close to large cities. While these operations helped the government liberate some areas, the state lacked the force to protect every village from mujahidin and militiamen infiltration (Giustozzi 2000, 70–71).

To strengthen its security apparatus, the regime established a local militia structure in almost all provinces. But contrary to its expectation, the local militia had a long-term adverse impact on the operational and tactical quality of Afghanistan's armed forces. Most of these militia groups joined the mujahidin, ultimately contributing to the defeat of the PDPA government in 1992. Following their victory, the mujahidin and rebel parties destroyed the state's century-old institutions, looted its resources, and drove the country into an anarchical state of "war of all against all." As a result, a civil war broke out that threw Afghanistan back to a pre-Abdurrahman era defined by the lack of effective central authority, a multiplicity of power centers, and social disorder (Kakar 1979, 47–48; Noelle-Karimi 2013, 42–43).

Changes Brought about by War

Afghanistan's traditional sociopolitical structure reflected a rural economic system with wealth derived mainly from land and agriculture (Goodson 2001, 98). The destruction of rural infrastructure during the anti-Soviet war in the 1980s devastated the traditional system of power relations. More than half of Afghanistan's villages and agricultural infrastructure were destroyed during the war, leading to irreversible alterations in traditional power relations and local hierarchies (Goodson 2001, 92; Rais 2008, 122; Rubin 1989). While the villages were destroyed during the anti-Soviet war in the 1980s, the civil war of the 1990s destroyed most cities and state infrastructures. By the end of the 1990s, the country's state

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institutions and its rural economic system were entirely destroyed. The war caused four major changes in Afghanistan's sociopolitical landscape.

First, the anti-Soviet war destroyed the traditional elite system and the socioeconomic infrastructure that had supported it before the 1980s (Goodson 2001, 97). This led to the emergence of a new rural elite including the mujahidin and rebel commanders that were founded on a prominent role for youth, Islamist ideology, and ethnic politics. Unlike traditional Afghanistan, which was ruled by elders and local norms, the war transformed the countryside into a space defined by the rule of young militants, Islamist ideology, and identity politics. These newly emerging actors derived their legitimacy from nontraditional sources such as ideology, ethnic politics, and the war economy, and were supported by armed groups rather than local assemblies. These actors became the leading political force and major parties in the civil war following the defeat of the PDPA government.

Second, as a result of the collapse of state establishments and the destruction of the traditional system of local decision-making, large-scale violence became a more common means of settling disputes (Giustozzi 2000, 47). With the emergence of some 6,000 local commanders during the 1980s who arbitrarily governed the countryside, the local feud was replaced by a full-fledged war. Thus large-scale violence became the principle of politics in rural areas. The climate of insecurity contributed to the consolidation of the class of "specialists in violence" (47). The local elite and wealthy families were forced to seek the protection of militia leaders initially through cash and supplies to the jihadi and rebel commanders and later through longer-term alliances, such as strategic intermarriages (47).

Third, war shattered the traditional economic system of rural Afghanistan that was based on the wealth derived mainly from land and agriculture. The traditional economy was eventually replaced by a political economy of war where black markets, smuggling, predation, extortion, local taxing, and drug production and trafficking became major sources of income (Giustozzi 2000, 98; Rubin 2000).

Finally, the ulema-Taliban networks of nongovernmental madrassas that played an important role in the history of the region emerged as major political players. Madrassas in Afghanistan traditionally followed the pedagogy of the great madrassas of Central Asia that essentially took an educational, rather than a political, approach to Islamic knowledge production. Those madrassas declined because of the Soviet Union's expan-

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sion into Central Asia in the early 1900s, when the Deobandi madrassas in the Indian subcontinent spawned in the region (Ewans 2002, 193–94).

The core Deobandi madrassa was established in 1896 in northern India, initially, as an anticolonial Islamic institution (Ewans 2002, 94). The Deobandi madrassas and their ulema-Taliban networks extended into Afghanistan in the early 20th century but were marginalized by the expansion of state-funded public education during King Zahir's rule. In this period, foreign aid enabled the government to introduce a formal education system to rural populations, preventing the expansion of Deobandi madrassas in villages and frontier districts.

However, the destruction of rural public schools and massive migration during the war contributed to the reemergence of the madrassa system as an alternative educational system for rural, displaced, and migrated populations. The students of these madrassas, in the 1980s and 1990s, mostly came from Afghan refugee camps in Pakistan and the displaced and poor families from rural communities in Afghanistan. The graduation of the first generation of these students marked the emergence of a new military-political movement, the Taliban. The rise of the Taliban commenced a new phase of civil war, intensifying political violence and civil strife in the country. The group was adept and quickly captured territory from mujahidin and rebel groups. The Taliban ruled over most parts of the country as the IEA, a highly fragile administration that facilitated the establishment of al-Qaeda. Aspects of state fragility and its contribution to the rise of al-Qaeda are discussed next.

State Fragility

The overview of state formation in Afghanistan indicates that the country was never capable of developing an effective state system and consistency in governance. However, until the defeat of the PDPA regime, state institutions were in place and the state functioned as the most dominant, if not the only, source of authority in the country. With the defeat of the PDPA government in 1992 the state entirely disintegrated, its institutions destroyed, and a chaotic situation emerged. Although the victorious mujahidin groups initially reached a temporary agreement to form an interim administration and provide for the election, the ethnic and sectarian divide and agendas among them made any form of political cooperation impossible.

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As a result, a severe civil war outbroke in May 1992 turning Kabul into an active battlefield of the mujahidin and rebel groups. The battle for control of Kabul was a microcosm of the country's overall situation (Maley 2009, 173–74). Paramilitary groups divided the country into five ethnic zones and ruled it militarily. In some places, local commanders struggled for influence over limited tracts of territory, while in other parts they fought, switched sides, and fought again in a "bewildering array of alliances, betrayals and bloodshed" mainly on controlling territory, governmental establishments, and economic resources (Maley 2009, 173–74). The situation of the country, in this period, can be well-defined by the Hobbesian state of nature. Central authority was disintegrated and no authority was capable of "carrying out its end of the social contract." As a result, the Afghan state lost its sense of statehood and thus its legitimacy in the eyes of its citizens.

The anarchic political and chaotic social environment in the early 1990s had produced a political and security vacuum in Afghanistan, which the Taliban emerged to fill. The emergence of the Taliban from the southern province of Kandahar in 1994, which marked the beginning of a new phase in the conflict, was both a response to the internal chaos and a consequence of Pakistan's regional politics.

The Taliban first emerged as a group of 30 madrassa students or Talibs/Taliban in reaction to a local warlord who had abducted and repeatedly raped two teenage girls in Kandahar. The thirty Talibs "attacked the warlord's camp, freed the girls and hanged the commander from the barrel of a tank" (Rashid 2001, 25). Following the heroic move, the Taliban crossed the border into Pakistan where the number of the group increased to 200 in a few months. This group of the Taliban, which was now commanded by Mullah Mohammad Omar, returned to Afghanistan and took control of the Spinbuldak district of Kandahar province in October 1994 (Nojumi 2002, 118). In the next three months, the group captured 12 of Afghanistan's then 31 provinces. A year later, between March 20 and April 4, 1996, the group organized a large gathering of some 1,200 Islamic clerics from all around Afghanistan in Kandahar where the Taliban's leader, Mullah Mohammad Omer, was entitled as the Amir al-Moumenin, the Commander of the Faithful (Barfield 2010, 261; Nojumi 2002, 154).

In the Taliban's ideology, Amir-al-Moumenin referred to a political leader whose authority over a people living in his territory was legitimized by Islam. Obeying Amir-al-Moumenin was considered *fardh* (God's demand and must be practiced). Because the principal root of obeying

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the Amir-al-Moumenin was the law of God, anyone who refused *bayat* (oath of allegiance) to him "would be called a rebel according to Sharia, and it would be *fardh* to execute him/her" (Barfield 2010, 261; Nojumi 2002, 154). It is widely cited that at the end of the 1996 Ulima gathering in Kandahar, Mullah Omer renamed the country the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (Davi 2015). However, a review of the *Shariat*, the Taliban's official newspaper, shows that the name Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) was used first in an official order attributed to Mullah Omer on October 29, 1997, a year after the Taliban captured Kabul:

> Following his Excellency, *Amir al-Moumenin's* guidance of October 13, 1997, from this time on the Islamic State of Afghanistan will be named as the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. All organizations and governmental institutions and the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan's citizens should do all their efforts to disseminate this letter. (*Shariat*, October 29, 1997, 1)

According to the Taliban's official documents, including the *Shariat*, before the publication of the above-mentioned order, the Taliban officially called Afghanistan "the Islamic State of Afghanistan" (see *Shariat*, December 2, 1996, 1, 2; *Shariat*, January 2, 1997, 1; *Shariat*, February 2, 1997, 1; *Shariat*, September 24, 1997, 1, 2). The new name (IEA) was subsequently justified by leaders in the *Shariat*:

> The famous Alim/cleric and the principal of Rahat Abad Madrasa, Mawlana Rahat Gul, welcomed his Excellency Amir al-Mouminin's replacement of the Islamic State of Afghanistan with the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. He characterized the *Islamic Emirate* as the extension of the Islamic Caliphate. He stated that the term *state* could be used both for Islamic and non-Islamic rule. But the term *Emirate* is specifically attributed to Islamic authority. According to him, the current government of Afghanistan is not a state, but an Emirate. . . . (November 5, 1997, 1, 4)

The emergence of the Taliban, like all other warring groups in Afghanistan, had both internal and external causes. Internally, the group was the product of the inter-mujahidin civil war that started in 1992. The war

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produced a political and security vacuum that the Taliban filled. Externally, the Taliban's formation was the product of the regional rivalries, particularly Pakistan's regional ambitions. Despite Pakistan's official denial of creating the Taliban, reliable sources and publicly accessible official documents explain in detail how Pakistan created, funded, and mobilized the Taliban (Byman 2005, 195; Human Rights Watch 2001; Goodson 2001, 111; Johnson 2007, 97; Jones 2003, 240; Rashid 1997, 23–24). Moreover, a series of field reports and documents on the Taliban that were gathered by the U.S. Department of State and later declassified show that the Pakistani establishment—particularly Pakistan's Inter-Service Intelligence (ISI) and military—were directly involved in the emergence and expansion of the Taliban (U.S. Department of State 2007, Docs. 14, 15, 17, 34). These documents show Pakistan's intelligence and military involvement in training, equipping, and mobilizing the Taliban on the battlefields. Pakistani establishment's support for the Taliban in capturing Kabul in September 1996 illustrates Islamabad's "firm commitment to a Taliban victory in Afghanistan" (Docs. 14, 15, 17, 34).

Another strong influence behind the Taliban's rise and evolution was the Jamiat-i-Ulema-i-Islami, led by Maulana FazlurRahma. FazlurRahma ran many Deobandi madrassas and nurtured thousands of Afghan Taliban in favor of Pakistan's regional policy. The Taliban initially presented itself as an Islamic solution to the problem of state failure but failed to develop an effective state system (Rubin 2002, xiii). The Taliban's IEA remained as severely fragile until it was destroyed through the U.S.-led Operation Enduring Freedom in late 2001.

State Fragility and the Rise of al-Qaeda

The Taliban captured Kabul and established the IEA in September 1996 when the Afghan state's institutions were already destroyed and looted by the mujahidin and rebel groups during the civil war of the early 1990s (Rotberg 2002a; Rotberg 2002b, 90). The Taliban neither had the ability nor a clear agenda to restore the collapsed state. Therefore the IEA remained highly fragile and failed to develop effective legitimacy, authority, and capacity to properly rule the country.

The IEA was initially created as a two-track government system includ-

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ing a leadership council named the Supreme Council in Kandahar and a Council of Ministers in Kabul with Mullah Omer himself acting as the head of state (Rubin 2002, xv). The Supreme Council, led by Omer, supervised the Council of Ministers. The Supreme Council also had two subsidiary branches, an Ulema Shura or a Council of Clerics and a Military Council that consulted the country's religious and military affairs respectively and worked directly under Omer's command.

Besides the Supreme Council's political and moral supremacy, all administrative and executive affairs were officially assigned to the Council of Ministers led by an individual called Rayees al-Wazara, or the chairman of the Council of Minister (*Shariat*, February 2, 2000, 1). The rights and duties of the Council of Ministers were designated by an official act entitled the Council of Ministers' Act published in the state's Official Gazette on May 2, 2001. The act described the Council of Ministers as "the highest executive and administrative bureau of the government" and considered it responsible for enforcing Sharia; leading the IEA's internal and foreign policies; leading the country's defensive and military affairs; and organizing the country's social, economic, cultural, and administrative affairs (The Council of Ministers' Act 2001, articles, 1–3, 6).

If the Council of Ministers was given all authorities designated in the act, the Supreme Council would have become a ceremonial body of the state. However, the realities on the ground were the opposite. The Supreme Council continued intervening in all major and minor affairs of the country from warmaking to statemaking to decision-making and to micromanaging governmental affairs on all internal and foreign affairs (*Shariat*, August 16, 1998, 1, 4; *Shariat*, August 23, 1998, 1; *Shariat*, September 19, 2000, 1, 4. *Shariat*, March 11, 2001, 1, 4; *Shariat*, July 11, 2001, 1). Hence while the act designated the country's executive and administrative duties to the Council of Ministers, in practice the Supreme Council remained the most powerful political and executive body of the state.

To make a state, the Supreme Council followed a warmaking strategy that was based on the idea of capturing, dominating, and leading the country by force. However, while successful in warmaking, the IEA failed in statemaking in the sense that it failed to eliminate its internal rival, end the war, and develop a state system legitimate in the eyes of its citizens and the international community. As a result, it remained highly fragile according to all measures of statehood. According to the Center for Systemic

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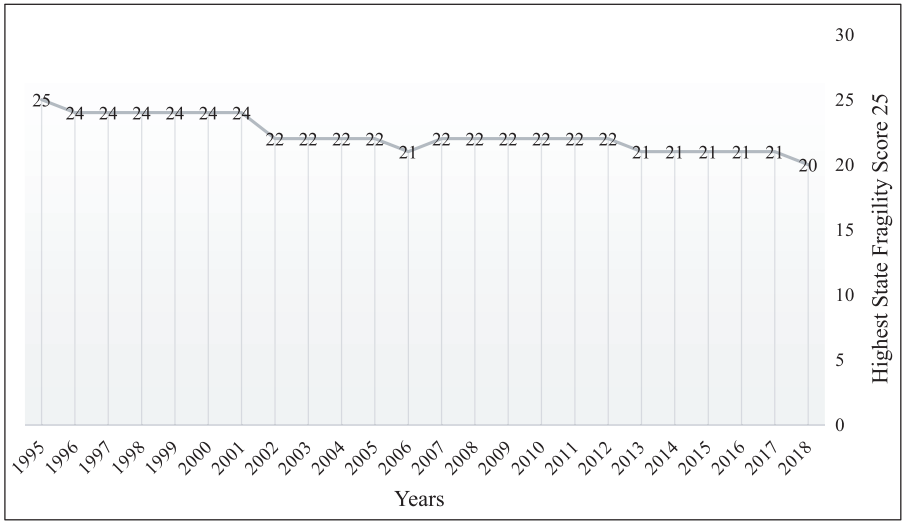

Fig. 6. State Fragility in Afghanistan (1995–2018). (Data from CSP 1995–2018.)

Peace's (CSP) state fragility index, which ranges from 0 "no fragility" to 25 "extreme fragility," Afghanistan's annual fragility score during the rule of the IEA was constantly 24–25, indicating extreme state fragility.[1] The data shows that the IEA suffered from the lack of all aspects of statehood presented by different indicators of legitimacy and effectiveness (CSP 1995-2018; Marshall and Cole 2014, 51). Figure 6 provides an image of state fragility in Afghanistan from 1995 to 2018 that also illustrates the levels of state fragility during the rule of the IEA (1996–2001). Under the state fragility conditions in Afghanistan, bin Laden created his terrorist camps in which he hosted and trained international jihadis and eventually mobilized them into the al-Qaeda organization. The following three sections explain how the three aspects of state fragility in Afghanistan during the rule of the IEA, including the lack of legitimacy, weak authority, and poor capacity, contributed to the establishment of al-Qaeda.

1. In this index, 0–8 points represents none to low fragility, 9–16 points indicates moderate fragility, and 17–25 points represents high-extreme fragility.

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Lack of Legitimacy

The IEA lacked both internal and international legitimacy. Internally, taking Weber's three sources of legitimacy (including traditional, charismatic, and rational-legal sources) into account, the IEA relied entirely on Islam or the traditional source of legitimation (Underhill 2014, 62; Weber 1946, 34; Weber 1958).[2] The IEA's reliance on Islamic sources of legitimacy is presented in its official documents and declarations published in the *Shariat*. The following quotes from the *Shariat* are just illustrative examples:

> The Islamic Movement of the Taliban is revolutionary and religious. . . . Of the Islamic Movement of the Taliban which sprouted from the Islamic madrasas . . . one can only expect the creation of a Sharia-based Islamic regime. (January 1, 1995, 1–2)

> From the beginning, our Islamic movement has promised to the Mujahid nation of Afghanistan the establishment of an Islamic regime which would enforce Sharia and . . . (September 28, 1996, 1)

> There is no doubt that the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan's all decisions is made per the original Islamic texts. (August 15, 2000, 1–2)

> The Taliban's uprising is confirmed by many Islamic scholars, the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan enforces Sharia completely. (March 18, 2001, 1–2)

Moreover, the IEA leadership repeatedly emphasized that the state would enforce Sharia in Afghanistan by any means possible. For example, the spokesman of the IEA Mawlawi Wakil Ahmad Motawakkil emphasized in an April 1998 statement that "there will be no tolerance in enforcing the Islamic principles" (*Shariat*, April 19, 1998, 1). In this context, the IEA used Islam as a restrictive political source of legitimation to forbid any political activity against the Taliban's principles and priorities.

The IEA also banned alternative political mechanisms such as modern

2. Weber's three sources of legitimation include traditional, charismatic, and rational-legal sources.

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parties and customary systems (*Shariat*, August 12, 2000, 1, 2). In an official statement published in the *Shariat*, Mullah Omer ordered that "with the Taliban being in power, there is no need for any kind of *Loya Jirga* (the elders' grand council that historically functioned as a major source of political legitimation) or any other third party" (*Shariat*, July 22, 1998, 1). In other instances, the Taliban leadership stated that there is no need to draw on any kind of ethnic, tribal, and sectarian values as the legitimizing source of governance in the country (*Shariat*, August 16, 1998, 1). In two separate statements delivered by Mullah Omer in 1998 and the IEA's Minister of Information and Culture, Qudratullah Jamal in 2000, the emphasis was that the Afghan politics must no go beyond the IEA's Islamic constraints:

> The Taliban movement is an Islamic movement, and the officials and members of this movement never think of ethnic and sectarian basis. In accordance to the Islamic Sharia, the IEA respects all ethnic groups. (*Shariat*, August 16, 1998, 1, 4)

> It is a recognized reality that the IEA's policies and platform are in accordance with Islam which does not recognize such thing as majority and minority. (*Shariat*, December 9, 2000, 4)

Despite the Taliban's reliance on Islam as the sole source of legitimation in a country with almost 100 percent Muslim population, the IEA's strict approach to governance and law enforcement that was alien to the society led them to fail to create a legitimate state in the eyes of the people. The IEA approached Sharia through the Deobandi interpretive methodology, a subcontinental branch of political Islam that adheres to the Hanafi school of Sunni Islamic jurisprudence. The Deobandi school was originally founded in the Dar ul-Ulum Deoband in northern India in 1867 in the wake of the 1857 Sepoy Rebellion, which is also known as the First War of Indian Independence (Ramsey 2017). It initially strived for the revival of Islam's Sufi tradition and resistance to colonialism in the Indian subcontinent but its branches were gradually radicalized, particularly in Pakistan during Mohammed Zia-ul-Haq's rule (Ramsey 2017).

Pakistan's Deobandi madrassas were officially supported and expanded by Zia-ul-Haq who used them as tools of Islamic radicalization to strengthen his power and play an effective role against communism during the Afghan war (Jones 2008, 72; Templin 2015, 15–21). These madrassas

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also came under the influence of Wahhabism due to funding from Saudi Arabia and interaction with Wahhabi and Salafi volunteers during the Afghan anti-Soviet war (Abdul-Enein 2010; Templin 2015). As a result, Pakistan's Deobandi madrassas that were controlled by Pakistan's Islamist parties, particularly the Jamaat Islami Pakistan (JIP) and the Jamaat-e-Ulema-e-Islami Pakistan (JUIP), supported by Zia-ul-Haq's foreign policy, and influenced by the Saudi Wahhabism became the cradle of extremist parties in the region (Nojumi 2002, 119). Today Deobandists, like Salafists, "reject *ijtihad* or the use of reason to create innovations in sharia in response to new conditions" (Jones 2008, 72; Metcalf 1982; Rubin 2002, xv).

The founders and members of the Taliban movement were students at Pakistan's Deobandi madrassas during the 1980s and 1990s where they were taught not only with a strict interpretation of Sharia but also the radicalized Salafi methods of law enforcement. This philosophy was strictly implemented by the Taliban in Afghanistan, particularly after the establishment of the IEA, which enforced all its law decrees strictly and by coercion.

To make sure that its decrees are enforced properly, the IEA established religious police called Amr-e-Bil Marouf Wa Nahi Anil Munker, or the Department for the Preservation of Virtues and the Elimination of Vice (Nojumi 2002, 154). This organization employed thousands of informers, mostly recent graduates of madrassas, who were assigned to monitor people's behavior and patrol the streets, making sure that the people went to the mosque at the time of daily prayers, women were covered, and men had not shaved their beard (Nojumi 2002, 154; Rashid 1997, 52). All other characteristics of Deobandism that were alien in Afghanistan were also found in exaggerated forms among the Taliban (Metcalf 1982; Rubin 2002, xv).

Although Afghanistan is an Islamic country and Islam has functioned as a source of legitimacy and jurisprudence for centuries, the Taliban's strict approach to law enforcement was unwelcomed in the country. Except for individuals who joined the Taliban or believed in their way of governance, the rest of the country's population, including most of the civil servants of the IEA and even the rural religious communities, were not interested in following the Taliban's Islamism. Therefore the IEA was inclined to rule by coercion rather than consent. Deobandism, in this context, produced

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more ideological mechanisms for suppression than sources of internal legitimacy, which is apparent in the *Khilaphat* and the *Shariat*, the Taliban's two official publications (see *Khilaphat*, July–August 2000, 54–56; *Khilaphat*, May–June 2001, 13, 33–34. *Shariat*, February 2, 2000, 1, 2; *Shariat*, April 9, 2000, 4; *Shariat*, August 1, 2000, 1, 4; *Shariat*, December 2, 2000, 1, 4).

In addition to its failure in introducing a publicly acceptable source of legitimation, the IEA also failed to gain international legitimacy, in the sense that it was not officially recognized by the international community as the sole source of authority in Afghanistan. Three factors were crucial in the international community's decision to not officially recognize the IEA: the violation of women and human rights, the Taliban's association with Arab jihadis, and the IEA's approach to resolving Afghanistan's problem militarily alone. The IEA refused all those accusations. Nevertheless, only Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates extended the official recognition of the IEA, while the latter two downgraded it soon after (Barfield 2010, 264).

When the IEA ruled most parts of the country from 1996 to 2001, no other country or international organization developed regular diplomatic relations with it. In many international organizations, including the UN, the Northern Alliance's ISA represented the country. For example, the ISA's deputy foreign minister, Abdullah, represented Afghanistan in the UN General Assembly in 1997 and President Burhanuddin Rabbani of the ISA represented the country at the annual conference of the non-Allied countries in South Africa in September 1998 (see *Payam-e-Mujahid*, September 3, 1998; *Payam-e-Mujahid*, September 25, 1997; *Payam-e-Mujahid*, October 2, 1997; *Payam-e-Mujahid*, May 23, 1998, 1). The ISA also maintained its diplomatic relations with many regional and European countries, and in countries such as the United States, where Afghanistan's diplomatic mission was suspended, consulate duties, despite the IEA's protest, were delivered by the ISA (see *Payam-e-Mujahid*, August 27, 1997, 6; *Shariat*, April 22, 1998, 1–2; *Shariat*, August 16, 1998, 1).

Therefore, from its rise in 1996 to its fall in 2001, the IEA massively invested in diplomatic activities to obtain the international community's official recognition. For example, after the Taliban captured the capital of the ISA, Mazar-i-Sharif, in August 1998, the *Shariat* raised the issue by asking a series of ironic questions:

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> Will still the UN ignore [the recognition of the IEA as a legitimate authority in Afghanistan]? Will it still propagate against the IEA? Will it create capital for Rabbani [the President of ISA] overseas? (August 16, 1998, 1)

These questions were followed by several *Shariat* editorials that blamed the United Nations for its continued recognition of the ISA:

> It has been years since Rabbani's regime is toppled. However, this regime still possesses Afghanistan's seat in the U.N. . . . If Rabbani maintains Afghanistan's seat [in the UN], his regime will continue claiming legitimacy and therefore receiving weapons and military support from abroad. . . . Despite its promise to support a peace process in Afghanistan, the U.N. officially recognizes [Rabbani's ISA] and allocates Afghanistan's seat to an illegitimate regime. (*Shariat*, September 2, 1999, 1–2)

The Taliban officials also highlighted and criticized the international community's recognition of the IEA in diplomatic meetings repeatedly (*Shariat*, February 2, 2000, 1–2; *Shariat*, April 30, 2000, 1–2; *Shariat*, June 25, 2000, 1). For example, following a visit to the United States in September 2000, the IEA's deputy foreign minister, Mawlawi Abdurrahman Zahid, described the purpose of his visit as conveying a "realistic picture of progress" in Afghanistan and convincing the United States to officially recognize the IEA:

> The international community should not disregard the official recognition of the IEA. The IEA has provided all conditions necessary for official recognition. The international community should not ignore this fact. (*Shariat*, September 19, 2000, 1, 4)

Nonetheless, IEA's efforts for international recognition were overshadowed by bin Laden's presence in Afghanistan and the Taliban's coercive approach to governance. As a result, the IEA entirely failed to obtain international legitimacy up to its demise in 2001. In addition to its failure in acquiring the official recognition of the United States, UN, and European Union, the IEA also remained isolated in the region. Iran cut its relationship with the IEA due to the Taliban's anti-Shiite campaign. Central Asian states

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were frightened of the spread of the Taliban's Islamism into the region. Russia was concerned about the Taliban's pan-Islamic intentions, particularly after the IEA granted separatist Chechens full diplomatic recognition in 2000 (*Shariat*, January 23, 2000, 1; *Shariat*, May 24, 2000, 1). The Saudis recalled their diplomatic staff from Kabul in 1998 following the IEA's refusal of the Kingdom's request to expel bin Laden as a Saudi citizen. India was against the Taliban because of the group's pro-Pakistani strategy. The Buddhist states, including Japan, which was providing Afghanistan with hundreds of millions of dollars in humanitarian aid, condemned the IEA after the regime blew up the Bamiyan Buddhas in March 2001 (Barfield 2010, 265–66).

The IEA's lack of internal and international legitimacy significantly contributed to the establishment of al-Qaeda in Afghanistan. In the domestic context, bin Laden and his inner circle benefited from the Taliban's reliance on the Deobandi version of Islamism as the main source of legitimation, which in turn underpinned a common ideological basis between the Taliban and Arab jihadis (Jones 2008, 28; Gerges 2011, 62–63). The common ideological basis provided a source of justification for bin Laden to establish a like-minded organization in Taliban-controlled areas. This condition helped bin Laden to expand his jihadi activities and terrorist camps in southern and eastern parts of Afghanistan unchecked. Taking the common sources of legitimation between the IEA and bin Laden, the former was not intended, even if it could, to intervene in the *brotherly* activities of the Arab jihadist. Bin Laden's camps in Afghanistan were religiously justified and the jihadis' activities in those camps were not perceived illegitimate by the Taliban. The religious legitimacy of bin Laden's activities to the Taliban was apparent on many occasions, particularly in Mullah Omer's respect and sympathy to the Arab jihadist (Jones 2008, 28). For example, at the end of a 1997 meeting between bin Laden and Mullah Omar on Arab jihadis' activities in Afghanistan, Omar told bin Laden: "You are a Mujahid. This is your country and you are welcome to do whatever you like" (Gerges 2011, 62–63). With the characterization of bin Laden as a mujahid guest by the Taliban's supreme leader, the IEA was officially obliged to provide him hospitality, facilitate his activities, and defend him against external hostiles. The establishment of al-Qaeda also benefited from the IEA's lack of international legitimacy. In the absence of a meaningful relationship with the international community, the IEA refused to account to Western countries that were not intended to recog-

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nize it as a legitimate authority, in the first place. In this condition, bin Laden's early activities in Taliban-controlled areas remained out of reach to the outside world.

In conclusion, while the IEA did not democratically represent the people of Afghanistan and was not officially recognized by the international community, it did not want to be accountable to both the Afghan citizens and the outside world. The IEA's lack of internal representation and international accountability provided a favorable environment for the establishment and expansion of terrorist camps and jihadi activities inside Afghanistan. In this environment, bin Laden's activities remained out of reach to both internal and international inquirers. Any question about these activities by Afghan citizens could lead to their interrogation and even physical elimination. International inquiries were simply ignored or misguided by the IEA, which was not recognized by the international community and therefore did not consider itself accountable to the outside world. Bin Laden's activities in Afghanistan remarkably benefited from this international condition.

Weak Authority

The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, unlike traditional authoritarian regimes that lack legitimacy but enjoy strong authority, did not have effective authority. It neither had the capability of claiming a monopoly over the use of violence in the country nor was it able to provide a secure environment to its citizens. To lay claim to the monopoly of physical violence within a particular territory, a sovereign state should possess sufficient physical force and use it legitimately (Weber 1946). The physical force refers to a modern army that makes state-building through the elimination/neutralization of the state's internal and external enemies possible (Tilly 1985). In other words, statemaking requires a sufficient warmaking apparatus that includes a regular army and other mechanisms of security and surveillance in the modern era.

The IEA did not acquire sufficient professional force and an army structure required for the elimination of its internal rival and could not secure the territory and citizens. To fill the security gap, the IEA relied on military support from Arab jihadis in return for a haven provided in its controlled territory. The IEA's weak military apparatus and, therefore, its reliance on

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foreign military support in the war against the Northern Alliance provided another favorable condition for the rise of al-Qaeda in Afghanistan.

The IEA's military force was more organized as a traditional tribal militia force, *Lashkar*, than a regular army capable of responding to both internal and external threats (Rashid 2001, 100). The Taliban force was more capable of storming to capture territory rather than ending the war by controlling and securing the territory. Both the Taliban's and the Northern Alliance's data explain the nonconventional nature of the Taliban's force and its inability of ending the war and stabilizing territories under control (*Payam-e-Mujahid*, October 21, 2000; *Payam-e-Mujahid*, November 4, 2000; *Payam-e-Mujahid*, February 8, 2001; *Payam-e-Mujahid*, June 7, 2001, 2; *Payam-e-Mujahid*, September 6, 2001; *Shariat*, April 1, 1998, 1; *Shariat*, August 16, 1998, 1; *Shariat*, August 26, 1998, 1; *Shariat*, August 4, 1999, 1). As such, the IEA's military and security apparatuses were not capable to produce durable instruments of warmaking and control necessary for eliminating/neutralizing its internal enemy, on the one hand, and providing security and protection, on the other. This situation, as well as the IEA's intention to improve it by organizing the Taliban forces in a national Islamic army, are repeatedly reported in the IEA's official publications. The following *Shariat* editorial is an example:

> Following the defeat of the Communist regime and its replacement with an Islamic government, the mujahidin parties failed to create an effective and unform administration and [national] program. Afghanistan's powerful army was looted by the mujahidin groups . . . its logistical infrastructure was looted and its modern and sophisticated machinery was destroyed. . . . Taking the IEA's military victories into consideration and about the requirements of our time, the IEA has started the rebuilding of the "national Islamic army." . . . The army is the soul of a nation. . . . [To build an army capable of defending the country], we have to first create a sound [military] base formed of righteous and faithful officers and manpower. (February 15, 1998, 1–2)

The IEA also publicized its intention for building the aforementioned "national Islamic army" by opening a new page entitled "Urdu" ("Army" in Pashto) in the *Shariat* on March 4, 1998. The IEA's Ministry of National Defense also launched a new magazine named *Urdu*. The two papers

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covered the IEA's military advances in the battlegrounds and its efforts in rebuilding the army's infrastructure and improving its technical and logistical capabilities (*Shariat*, March 5, 1998, 4 and subsequent issues). But neither the "Urdu" page in *Shariat* nor the *Urdu* magazine did clearly explain how the national Islamic army would look like and function. The goal of the national Islamic army was described once briefly in the *Urdu* magazine as "the stabilization of Afghanistan through the enforcement of Sharia" (*Urdu* 1997, 2; *Urdu* 2001).

Although the IEA was never able to establish a regular army until its demise in 2001, it broadly propagated its achievements on the battleground as its military ability in capturing territory and securing the country (see *Shariat*, April 1, 1998, 1; *Shariat*, August 9, 1998; *Shariat*, August 26, 1998, 1; *Shariat*, August 4, 1999, 1; *Shariat*, February 7, 2001, 1). Backed by Arab and Pakistani fighters, the Taliban force was able to quickly capture territory and advance in the battleground but it could not maintain the control of captured areas permanently (Rashid 1998; Rashid 2001, 194). The continuation of war and the Taliban's unsteady control of land in northern and central parts of the country is broadly reported in the *Shariat* (*Shariat*, April 1, 1998, 1; *Shariat*, August 9, 1998; *Shariat*, August 26, 1998, 1; *Shariat*, August 4, 1999, 1). The instability of frontlines and the two sides' ability to quickly prepare for counterattacks following every defeat is also reported in the *Payam-e-Mujahid*, the NA's official newspaper (*Payam Mujahid*, July 9, 1998, 1; *Payam-e-Mujahid*, October 8, 1998, 1; *Payam-e-Mujahid*, October 21, 2000; *Payam-e-Mujahid*, November 4, 2000; *Payam-e-Mujahid*, February 8, 2001; *Payam-e-Mujahid*, June 7, 2001, 2; *Payam-e-Mujahid*, September 6, 2001).

In addition to the lack of force adequate for ending the war and securing the country, the Taliban force's complex paramilitary structure and leadership also affected its authority in the country. Despite the designation of the IEA's military leadership to the Ministry of National Defense through the Council of Ministers Act, the Taliban's Military Council based in Kandahar broadly controlled the organization and activities of the armed forces in practice. Apart from general strategies, key appointments, and allocation of funds for offensives that were directly decided by the Amir al-Moumenin, the Military Council directed and supervised all other major military decisions and activities throughout the country (Rashid 2001, 99–100). For example, main operational decisions such as the provision of money, fuel, food, transport, weapons, and ammunition

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to combatant units in the battleground were directly made by the Military Council based in Kandahar, rather than the Ministry of National Defense in Kabul (Rashid 2001, 99–100). This mechanism created numerous overlaps in decision-making that, in turn, undermined the development of a uniform military system.

This structural overlap and its outcome were evident in the armed force's management and operations. For instance, under the Military Council's guidance and supervision, individual commanders were responsible for recruiting men, paying them, and looking after their needs on the battleground. These commanders directed their combatant units into the battlegrounds and counted on them as loyal tribesmen rather than soldiers in modern military hierarchies (Rashid 2001, 99–100). Moreover, there was no regular military structure with a hierarchy of officers and commanders, while unit commanders were being shifted around (Rashid 2001, 99). Resources were assigned to these commanders directly from the Military Council instead of the Ministry of National Defense (Rashid 2001, 100). As a result, the IEA's armed forces resembled more a local insurgency or a traditional tribal militia force than a modern army.

Due to its armed force's military weakness and structural complexities, the IEA heavily relied on Arab and Pakistani fighters to manage its military affairs and provide support on the battlefield. From 1994 to 1999, more than 80,000 Pakistanis fought alongside the Taliban (Rashid 2001, 194). Several hundreds of these fighters were captured by the NA while accompanying the Taliban in the northern battlegrounds (*Payam-e-Mujahin*, July 3, 1997, 6). In addition to Pakistanis, thousands of Arab, African, East Asian, and Central Asian jihadis under bin Laden's command fought for the Taliban (Mamdani 2004, 162). The integration of the 055 Brigade of al-Qaeda, a unit of 2,000 trained fighters based in Khairkhana in the north of Kabul, into the Taliban force is a concrete example of the Taliban's reliance on bin Laden (Mohamedou 2007, 49). Services in this unit constituted part of the training of militants who came to Afghanistan and the unit also supplied the "most committed and effective part of the Taliban military" (Rubin 2002, xv).

Overall, the IEA's weak authority and thus its reliance on bin Laden accelerated both the infiltration of jihadi fighters into Afghanistan and their mobilization in bin Laden's terrorist camps. Lack of state control over its territory produced ungoverned borders and spaces favorable for bin Laden's plan of bringing jihadi fighters in and organizing them in his

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burgeoning camps. As a result, dozens of terrorist camps were created as the foundation of al-Qaeda in ungoverned areas of southern and eastern Afghanistan that were the center of training, interaction, and integration of jihadis of various origins. Even if the IEA had full authority over these areas, it was not intended to stop bin Laden simply because the Taliban relied on his military aid and manpower. Instead the IEA decided to protect bin Laden despite massive international pressure for his presence in Afghanistan (*Shariat*, July 18, 1998, 1, 4; *Shariat*, August 23, 1998, 1; *Shariat*, October 31, 1999, 1; *Shariat*, December 22, 1999, 4; *Shariat*, June 27, 2001, 2). When the United States attacked one of bin Laden's camps in August 1998 in a response to terrorist attacks on U.S. embassies in Nairobi and Dar al-Salam, Mullah Omer angrily reacted:

> we moved him [bin Laden] to a safe place. The U.S. attacks are amiss . . . the Americans do not have any proof or evidence to accuse Osama . . . we are ready to face more attacks but will not submit Osama to America at any cost, even if we face tremendous difficulties and even if [the Americans] destroy Afghanistan entirely. (*Shariat*, August 23, 1998, 1)

This empirical evidence and finding show that the IEA's lack of authority and therefore its reliance on bin Laden's military support provided the Arab jihadist with domestic protection favorable for the accomplishment of the al-Qaeda project. Using this condition, bin Laden brought thousands of jihadi combatants and several jihadi groups in Afghanistan to create al-Qaeda as a multinational jihadi organization with a global agenda.

Lack of Capacity

In addition to the lack of legitimacy and weak authority, the severe economic decline and the IEA's lack of institutional and administrative ability to extract official revenue provided another condition favorable for the establishment of al-Qaeda in Afghanistan. The IEA was established in a collapsed state with its infrastructures destroyed, its wealth looted, and no professionals left in the country because of the war. As a result, the Taliban state suffered severely from a lack of capacity. In general, three factors, including small economic size, the absence of effective state institutions,

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and the absence of a professional administration, undermined the IEA's capacity. When the IEA was established in 1996, it did not have a regular source of economy to manage a state, and its administration was entirely ineffective with its offices being filled with individuals with only a madrasa education (Semple 2014, 6).

As Tilly (1985) articulates, a sovereign state carries out four major duties: warmaking or the elimination of the state's external enemies, state-making or the elimination of the state's internal rivals, protection or the elimination/neutralization of the enemies of its clients, and extraction or acquisition of the means of carrying out the first three activities (Tilly 1985, 181). In this formulation, extraction refers to the state's ability to extract revenue and execute its primary duties. Hence capacity depends on such factors as the size of the economy, the state's ability in acquiring the means of governance, and its human resources (Carment, Prest, and Samy 2010, 86). The smaller the pool of resources and the fiscal instrument, the more difficult it is to extract resources that will sustain governmental activities (Tilly 1985, 182).

The IEA's capacity was deeply affected by the small size of the domestic economy and its lack of administrative ability to produce official revenue and provide basic services. Its regular source of revenue could only pay for some 40 percent of its costs, and therefore its economy largely depended on foreign aid and the illicit drug economy (Del Castillo 2008, 167; Skaine 2008, 57). The per capita income of the 25 million population, in this period, was under 200 dollars and the country was close to a total economic collapse (Del Castillo 2008, 167; Skaine 2008, 57). The IEA had no annual budget, but it appeared to spend 300 million dollars a year, nearly all of it on war (Chouvy 2010, 52). The IEA's major source of official revenue was the transit trade between Afghanistan and Pakistan, which had an estimated turnover of 4.5 billion dollars, with the Taliban receiving between 100 and 130 million dollars per year, which covered roughly between 33 to 43 percent of the costs (Chouvy 2010, 52; Nojumi 2002, 178).

Its lack of a sufficient source of revenue undermined the IEA's ability to govern the country and provide basic services. The state did not have enough money to pay its employees and keep service-providing institutions such as hospitals and schools running. The shortage of revenue and its impact on governance and development are broadly highlighted in state publications including the *Shariat*. The following is an example:

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> Progress in development activities in Afghanistan depends on large financial resources. There is no achievement in this regard because Afghanistan is experiencing huge economic problems. (*Shariat*, January 26, 2000, 1)

The IEA spent almost all of its revenue on military campaigns against the NA. Therefore the state's investment in the development and service-providing projects was very small. An official IEA report in 2000 indicates the government's small budget in this regard. According to this report, the IEA was only able to invest some 800,000 dollars to accomplish 766 reconstruction and economic development projects, including the reconstruction of agricultural storehouses, power stations, post offices, and government establishments in Kabul and beyond. The report claims a 100,000 dollars increase in IEA's investment in the development projects compared to the previous year (*Shariat*, February 23, 2000, 1, 4). Other reports indicate the IEA's engagement in small development and service providing projects, such as rebuilding public libraries and madrasas, responding to emergency needs, and reconstructing urban streets and provincial establishments (*Shariat*, February 18, 1998, 1; *Shariat*, February 22, 1998, 1; *Shariat*, March 4, 1998; *Shariat*, March 8, 1998, 1; *Shariat*, April 9, 2000, 1).

While the IEA's official reports show a severe economic shortage and very meager attention to development and services, it is even difficult to ensure if those reports were based on facts or exaggerated by the government. The IEA's economic situation was further intensified by international sanctions that were imposed because the IEA violated human rights and its association with bin Laden. Although the IEA rejected both accusations and warned against the humanitarian effects of the sanctions, the international pressures continued (*Shariat*, April 9, 2000, 4; *Shariat*, June 11, 2000, 1, 4; *Shariat*, December 2, 2000, 1, 4).

In the absence of state capacity to extract official revenue and provide services, most basic services were provided by international aid. For example, more than half of Kabul's 1.2 million residents benefitted in some way from NGOs that, in addition to other activities, distributed food, provided health care, and worked on the city's fragile water distribution network (Abbasi 1998; Rashid 2001, 64–65). Those NGOs were banned by the IEA in July 1998, when they refused the Taliban's order to relocate to a disused former polytechnic college (Rashid 2001, 64–65). Taliban's pur-

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pose of relocating the NGOs in a specified place was to keep their activities under effective control. When the people's concerns increased because of the termination of NGO services, the IEA's planning minister, Qari Din Mohammed, responded: "we Muslims believe that God the Almighty will feed everybody one way or another. If the foreign NGOs leave, then it is their decision. We have not expelled them" (Rashid 2001, 72).

To fill the financial and capacity gap, the IEA relied on three unofficial sources of revenue: drugs, the Pakistanis, and bin Laden (Chouvy 2010, 52). The IEA controlled 96 percent of Afghanistan's poppy fields, making opium its largest source of taxation (Chouvy 2010, 52). Taxes on opium exports became one of the mainstays of the Taliban's income and its war economy (Chouvy 2010, 52). By 2000, Afghanistan accounted for an estimated 75 percent of the world's supply, and in 2000 it grew an estimated 3,276 tons of opium from poppy cultivation on 82,171 hectares (Thourni 2007, 130). Due to international pressures, the IEA banned poppy cultivation in mid-2000 by issuing a Counternarcotic Act (The Counternarcotic Act 2000, articles 1–5). But before the release of the act, the IEA had extracted a large amount of money by imposing taxation on the poppy by leveling the *ushr*, a 10 percent Islamic tax on all agricultural production (Nasr 2001, 144; Nojumi 2002, 177). This brought in some 6 million dollars a year from the 60 million dollars Afghan growers and traders earned from opium exports out of a business worth 40 billion dollars in Europe alone (Nojumi 2002, 177).

The IEA's second unofficial source of revenue was the financial support it received from Pakistanis, particularly from the Pakistani Army and the ISI. Pakistan, in addition to its official trade relations with the IEA, contributed directly to the Taliban's costs, particularly the cost of war. ISI, for instance, had prepared a budget of some two billion rupees or five million dollars only to improve the logistics of the IEA (Rashid 2001, 72). In addition to ISI's direct financial injection to the IEA system, it provided a massive logistical supply to the Taliban forces on the battlefield. For instance, in an April and May 2001 report, the Human Rights Watch highlighted that as many as 30 trucks a day were crossing the border between Pakistan and Afghanistan that carried logistical and military supplies (Human Rights Watch 2001). A subsequent UN Secretary-General report confirmed such deliveries (UN Secretary General 1997, para. 18).

The third unofficial source of IEA's revenue was the financial support it received from Arab jihadis, particularly bin Laden. According to a 9/11

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Commission Staff Monograph, once bin Laden moved to Afghanistan he provided a considerable part of the IEA's costs, paying it an amount between 10 and 20 million dollars per year. The monograph also indicates the enhancement of the Taliban's reliance on bin Laden over time: "As time passed, it appeared that the Taliban relied on al-Qaeda for an ever-greater share of their needs, such as arms, goods, and vehicles" (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks 2004, chap. 2, 28). The IEA's severe dependence on bin Laden limited the government's ability to control the Arab jihadi's activities or interfere in his affairs. Instead the financial dependence on bin Laden put the IEA in a vulnerable position to not only ignore but also facilitate his terrorist campaign inside Afghanistan. Such a condition allowed bin Laden to bring more fighters in, move them freely in the country, and organize them in his terrorist camps without any serious concern from the domestic government. The development of al-Qaeda, in this context, was the outcome of a give-and-take business between the Taliban leadership and bin Laden. In return for the financial transactions from bin Laden, the Taliban provided the Arab jihadi with a safe haven necessary for the accomplishment of his al-Qaeda project.

The IEA's lack of administrative capacity also intensified its reliance on Arab administrators and therefore limited the state's ability to stop bin Laden. The IEA lacked trained human resources to run a state and perform effective governance. Almost all state authorities were armed Talibs or madrassa students with nearly no modern administrative education or expertise (Semple 2014, 6). Because most educated and professional Afghans had left the country during the war, there was a severe shortage of trained and skilled professionals in the IEA. Almost all cabinet ministers, deputies, and provincial governors were mullahs with madrasa education who simultaneously acted as military commanders. For example, the health minister, Mullah Mohammed Abbas, served as a Taliban commander in Mazar and Herat provinces in 1997 until he returned to his job as the Minister after six months of military service (Rashid 2001, 100–101). Likewise, the governor of the state bank, Mullah Ehsanullah Ehsan, commanded an elite force of some 1,000 Kandahari Taliban, and the governor of Herat, Mullah Abdul Razaq, led military offensives all over the country. At the same time, the IEA had replaced all senior Tajik, Uzbek, and Hazara bureaucrats with Pashtun Talibs and Mullahs, whether qualified or not (2001, 100–101). Putting uneducated and inexperienced individuals on top of the state administration created a situation in which

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ministries ceased functioning and local administrations turned into military bases. The IEA's lack of administrative capacity is well expressed in a 1997 note by the Pakistani journalist, Ahmed Rashid about the Ministry of Finance:

> The Ministry of Finance can barely put together a budget, and not just because funds are scarce. The Ministry has no qualified economists: the minister and his deputy are mullahs with a madrasa education. (Rashid 2001, 100–101)

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CHAPTER 5

Root Causes of IS

IS evolved from several anti-American and anti-Shiite insurgent groups that had initially emerged as a response to the U.S. invasion of Iraq in March 2003. The Iraq-based insurgency merged into al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) in 2004, which eventually developed into IS a decade later. The creation of AQI and its transformation into a transnational jihadi organization was rooted in the ideas and efforts of the Jordanian Jihadi Salafist, Abu-Musab al-Zarqawi (1966–2006), who launched an anti-American and anti-Shiite campaign, or jihad, against the "Safavid-Crusader alliance,"[1] in his own terms, in Iraq following the U.S. invasion. Zarqawi's campaign followed three major objectives in the Middle East that included launching a Sunni jihadi front against the American and Shiite domination of Iraq, attacking the region's sovereign states to destroy the state-based regional status quo, and establish a pan-Islamic caliphate. Zarqawi aimed to achieve these objectives by waging an apocalyptic war against both the near and the far enemies. The near enemy, in this context, referred to regional power centers including sovereign states and Shiites; the far enemy referred to the United States and its allies. Thus the insurgency concurrently engaged in multiple fronts from the Middle East to Western cities, shifting operational focus from one front to the other periodically.

Drawing on Zarqawi's idea, the IS strategy of creating the caliphate was framed in three geographical *rings* including the interior ring, the near

1. Safavid or Safawi refers to the Iranian Safawi dynasty (1501–1722). Zarqawi used the term to discredit Iraq's Shiite citizens by linking them to an *alien* force and its religion. The "Crusader-Safavid" alliance, in this context, referred to the alliance between the "U.S.-led allied forces" and the post-Saddam Shiite-led Iraqi government.

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abroad ring, and the far abroad ring (Gambhir 2015a, 9–10). The interior ring of Iraq and Syria was the center of IS's campaign. The principal method of IS in this ring was an *aggressive defense* that aimed to degrade and eventually destroy state militaries, local paramilitaries, and other power centers that could challenge the Islamic State's control over Iraq and Syria. For this purpose, IS used all means of classical warfare, insurgency, and terrorist attacks (Gambhir 2015a, 10).

The near abroad ring included all Islamic territories that IS intended to integrate into its self-proclaimed caliphate. The principal method in this ring was *offensive*, aiming to expand the caliphate through the creation of affiliate organizations in the Islamic world (Gambhir 2015a, 11). Under this strategy, IS encouraged local jihadi groups to pledge allegiance to the Islamic State, unite under a single banner, and designate a leader to whom IS could direct resources (11). Through this method, IS announced the creation of governorates, or the *wilayats*, in Algeria, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and Egypt's Sinai Peninsula in November 2014. It also declared the wilayat of Khurasan that included South and Central Asia in January 2015, added the Caucasus on July 23, 2015, and named West Africa as the wilayat of Islamic Maghreb (Gambhir 2015a, 11; Gambhir 2015b). The wilayats were geographically dispersed across the Islamic world and were created to develop conflict zones and sanctuaries in different regions (Gambhir 2015a, 11). Insurgent and terrorist methods of operation were used in this ring.

Finally, in the far abroad ring of Europe and the Americas IS aimed to increase pressure on Western powers to reduce their influence and pressure in the Islamic world. IS's principal method in this ring was also offensive, which was implemented through the creation of terrorist cells and encouraging terrorist attacks on both civilian and military targets (Gambhir 2015a, 12). To achieve its goal in this ring, IS broadly campaigned to motivate Western governments and societies to target and alienate Muslim communities for IS's terrorist attacks. Its purpose in this campaign was to push Muslim populations away from Western societies and mobilize them in favor of the caliphate (12). IS's sleeper cells in the far abroad ring recruited domestic fighters to either travel to its strongholds in the Middle East and join the jihad in the near ring or plan terrorist attacks in Western cities (12).

IS's campaign in the three rings was "distinct, simultaneous, and mutually supportive," which increased the organization's resiliency and opera-

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tional options. This method provided IS with the opportunity to balance its losses in one ring by increasing attacks in the other or increase international attention by simultaneous attacks on all fronts. For example, IS accelerated activities in the near abroad and far abroad rings immediately after losing Tikrit in the internal ring in April 2015 (Gambhir 2015a, 12). It also increased attacks in Europe and the Americas between 2016 and 2017 to shift international attention from its operations in the Middle East to terrorist attacks in the West and increase recruitment in the far abroad ring.

IS's organizational complexity and strategic flexibility and multilateralism were the results of the organization's complex evolution from several regional and global jihadi and insurgent groups that were initially created as distinct anti-American and anti-Shiite entities following the U.S. invasion of Iraq. The emergence of this territorially expandable and strategically flexible JSG opened a new phase in the history of jihadi Salafism. This chapter examines the root causes of this organization at three levels of analysis, explaining how the scattered jihadi and insurgent groups developed into IS and, meanwhile, influenced its multilayered strategy. In the following sections, first, a background of the post-Saddam insurgency in Iraq and its development into IS is explained and, next, the underlying forces behind the evolution of IS are categorized and discussed on the individual, group, and international levels of analysis.

The Insurgency

Following the U.S. invasion, anti-occupation sentiments expanded in Baghdad and other parts of Iraq that gave rise to two militant movements. First, a Shiite rebellion led by cleric Muqtada al-Sadr emerged in parts of Baghdad and the southern city of Najaf. Second, a Sunni insurgency emerged in the Sunni Triangle, an area bound by Baghdad in the east, Ramadi to the west, and Tikrit to the north (Hashim 2006, 129). Unlike the Shiite rebellion that primarily aimed to influence the Shiite-dominated government in Baghdad than removing it, the Sunni insurgency aimed to remove the Shiite-led government.

The Sunni insurgency was composed of local and international jihadis and Iraqi Baathists whose main objective was to fight the American occupation and completely remove the American-sponsored Shiite-led govern-

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ment in Baghdad (Stansfield 2007, 176). The Baathist component of the Sunni insurgency included the remnants of the Saddam regime's security and military services, ex-Baathists, and neo-Baathists that emerged as a reaction to the removal of Saddam's regime (Dodge 2005a, 10; Stansfield 2007, 178–79). The Baathists had extensive access to the stockpiles of weaponry across the country and the vast financial resources of the Baath Party. Most of them were highly trained soldiers and officers and had a vast knowledge of the country's geopolitical and sociocultural structures and sensitivities. By contrast, the jihadi component of the insurgency included homegrown violent Islamists that were highly motivated to fight against the occupying force but less trained and the international jihadis that were both motivated and experienced fighters (Stansfield 2007, 181).

The jihadis' campaign soon appeared to be more effective than Baathists. Therefore the Baathist component of the insurgency dissolved into the jihadi segment, paving the way for the transformation of the early insurgency into a uniform jihadi movement. The emergence of jihadi organizations like AQI was a turning point in this process. When the AQI dominated the anti-American war, the secular Baathists started integrating under the jihadi umbrella to fight in a united front for a shared cause. Although Baathists gradually became a significant element of the insurgency, particularly in providing professional military, logistical, and administrative supports to jihadis, the campaign exclusively remained under the domination of the latter. Therefore the study of the details of the integration of the jihadi and the Baathist components of the insurgency under a common jihadi doctrine is significant in comprehending the root causes of IS.

Jihadi Organizations in Iraq

The longest existing domestic jihadi organization in Iraq was Ansar al-Islam, which interacted with Zarqawi's Jamaat al-Tawhid wal-Jihad (JTJ) months before the U.S. invasion. JTJ was built by Zarqawi in Afghanistan in 2000, initially as a near-enemy centrist organization to launch attacks against the Hashemite monarchy in his home country, Jordan. Zarqawi arrived in Ansar al-Islam's camps from Afghanistan to prepare a jihadi front for an expected U.S. invasion. The camps, located in mountainous areas of the Kurdistan region of Iraq, were bombed in the early days of "Operation Iraqi Freedom" in early 2003, which forced the Jordanian jihadist to

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move his base to Iraq's Sunni Triangle where he was able to exacerbate his terrorist campaign, absorb many domestic jihadist and Baathist fighters, and develop the JTJ to AQI.

Thus the evolution of JTJ to AQI and eventually to IS was inspired and influenced by Zarqawi's doctrine of international jihadism (Ignatius 2015). Zarqawi began his career as a global jihadist by volunteering to the jihad in Afghanistan in 1989. During his first stay in Afghanistan, Zarqawi was very successful in interacting and created relationships with many doctrinaires of Islamism from across the Islamic world. Although he did not meet bin Laden at this time, he was trained with jihadi ideas and skills in the Sada camp near the Afghan border inside Pakistan owned by bin Laden (Weaver 2006). In this period, Zarqawi was also introduced to Sheikh Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, a Jordanian-Palestinian jihadi cleric who became Zarqawi's mentor and long-lasting comrade (Weaver 2006).

Zarqawi and Maqdisi left Afghanistan in 1993, returning to Jordan where they formed a jihadi group called Bayat al-Imam (BaI) to fight the Hashemite monarchy (Kirdar 2011, 2). When BaI's terrorist activities caught the attention of Jordanian authorities, Zarqawi and Maqdisi were arrested by the Jordanian intelligence. In 1994, Zarqawi was sentenced to 15 years in Sawaqa Prison where he was subsequently accompanied by Maqdisi (Kirdar 2011, 2; Weaver 2006). During their time in prison, Zarqawi and Maqdisi were able to use tribal affiliations for expanding BaI both inside and outside the prison (Kirdar 2011, 3). Through these activities, Zarqawi influenced and controlled a large number of imprisoned ex-jihadis who called him *Amir*, the chief (Weaver 2006). In 1999, Zarqawi was released from the prison in a general amnesty by Jordan's King Abdullah (Kirdar 2011, 3; Weaver 2006). In 2000, after his plot to "bomb the Radisson SAS Hotel in Amman and several tourist sites in Jordan" was discovered in its last stage, Zarqawi fled to Pakistan. When the Pakistani officials revoked his visa, he crossed the border into Afghanistan for the second time, where he made his first direct contact with bin Laden (Whitlock 2006).

During his second stay in Afghanistan, Zarqawi received support from al-Qaeda, but he did not submit to bin Laden's authority due to his stricter theology and different ideological objectives (Bunzel 2015, 13). In this period, Zarqawi, unlike bin Laden, was a proponent of war against the near enemy, particularly the Shiites and the secular Sunni regimes in the Middle East, while bin Laden concentrated on his anti-American far-

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enemy centrism. In addition to different jihadi views, the two individuals also disagreed on every aspect of each other's personal and political beliefs and behaviors. Zarqawi, for instance, strongly criticized bin Laden's support for the Taliban against the former Afghan mujahidin groups that Zarqawi supported during his first stay in Afghanistan. By contrast, bin Laden "disapproved Zarqawi's 'swagger,' his tattooed hand, and his intense hatred of Shiites" (Weaver 2006). But despite bin Laden's skepticism of Zarqawi, Seif al-Adel, al-Qaeda's security chief and a proponent of near-enemy-centric jihad, supported Zarqawi by providing him with $200,000 in cash and other facilities to establish his JTJ camp in Afghanistan (Kirdar 2011, 3; Lister 2014, 6; Weaver 2006).

In early 2000, with a dozen or so followers who had arrived from Peshawar and Amman, Zarqawi set up his camp in a desert in the Herat province near the west Afghanistan border with Iran (Weaver 2006). The camp initially included Jordanian jihadis but soon attracted recruits from other nationals, particularly Palestinian and Syrian Islamists living in Europe (Roggio 2005; Whitlock 2004; Whitlock 2006). The number of his fighters increased from dozens to hundreds by mid-2001. By the October 2001 U.S. invasion of Afghanistan, the JTJ fighters and their families numbered some 2,000 to 3,000 (Weaver 2006).

As his network grew, Zarqawi abandoned his exclusive focus on overthrowing the Jordanian monarchy, in part because some of his operatives refused to go back to Jordan. As a result, he gradually changed focus from Jordan to plot attacks against Israel or Jewish targets in Europe (Gambill 2004). Thus, during his stay in Herat, Zarqawi's near-enemy-centric theory of jihad slowly transformed into the far-enemy-centric jihadism, making him a full-fledged jihadi Salafist commander who aimed to advance JTJ into a mobile army in a way that could be exported to anywhere and plot attacks everywhere in the world (Weaver 2006).

Following the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan, Zarqawi's JTJ initially united with al-Qaeda and the Taliban to fight the Coalition force, but only two months later it left the battlefield slipping into Iran (Bergen 2011, 162; Napoleoni 2005, 104–5). Evidence shows that Zarqawi and his followers were provided with housing and other assistance by elements linked to Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's Hizb-e-Islami of Afghanistan, who knew Zarqawi since his first stay in the country between 1989 and 1993 (Lister 2014, 6).

After leaving Afghanistan, Zarqawi first attempted to base his camp in

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the Baluchistan province of Iran where he was hosted by Hizb-e-Islami elements. However, following the arrest of some European-based JTJ operatives in early 2002, which caused the West to pressure Iran to arrest Zarqawi, he turned JTJ into a mobile network moving between Iran, Syria, Lebanon, and the Kurdish-controlled areas of northern Iraq for the next 14 months (Kirdar 2011, 3). This mobile method helped JTJ expand organizationally, grow its cadre, and prepare for resistance against an expected U.S. invasion in Iraq (Weaver 2006).

According to Arab intelligence sources, Zarqawi planned his military resistance to the expected U.S. invasion as early as February 2003 (Whitlock 2004). After the JTJ base in Ansar al-Islam camps in the Kurdish province of Sulaymaniyah was bombed in March 2003, Zarqawi moved to the Sunni Triangle, where he expanded his network, recruited new fighters from domestic jihadis and Baathists, and established new bases and terrorist cells (Kirdar 2011, 3; Lister 2014, 7; Weaver 2006). According to British intelligence, by March 2003, Zarqawi's network "had set up sleeper cells in Baghdad" to resist the expected invasion (Whitlock 2004). By the time U.S. forces invaded Iraq in April 2003, Zarqawi had mobilized his network of safe houses, weapons caches, and intelligence networks in Iraq in coordination with the al-Qaeda core that was rebased in Pakistan (Reidel 2010, 98).

Following the invasion, Zarqawi put into action a five-pronged strategy that included isolating coalition forces, deterring Iraqi cooperation with the transition process, assassinating domestic collaborators with the occupation regime, sabotaging rebuilding projects, and trapping U.S. troops in a Sunni-Shiite civil war (Gambill 2004; Kirdar 2011). Zarqawi's quick expansion of weapons, networks, and attacks made him the default Amir of jihadis and insurgents in Iraq, winning him the endorsement of bin Laden (Gambill 2004).

As his prominence within the Iraqi insurgency reached its peak, an agreement was struck between him and bin Laden in October 2004 through which Zarqawi declared his allegiance to bin Laden and changed his group's name to Tanzim Qaidat al-Jihad fi Bilad al-Rafidayn, known as al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI). Thus Zarqawi proclaimed himself to be the "Amir of al-Qaeda's Operations in the Land of Mesopotamia" (Kirdar 2011, 4; Weaver 2006). Although Zarqawi was killed through a U.S. airstrike in Iraq in 2006, his idea of creating a unified global jihadi front that would represent the caliphate was borrowed by his successors and fellow jihad-

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ists. Therefore the establishment of IS reflected the pan-Islamic jihadist idea and agenda planted in Afghanistan by al-Qaeda, extended to Iraq by Zarqawi, and operationalized by his motivated followers under a special international condition. The root causes of IS can be discovered and examined in this process.

Root Causes of IS

Zarqawi's increasing attacks in Iraq and beyond caused a broad reaction by American forces, Shiites, and even Sunni Arabs (Kirdar 2011, 4; Zarqawi Defends 2005). Zarqawi was everyone's target. To lower his profile, AQI leaders merged the organization with five Iraq-based jihadi groups under an umbrella organization named Majlis Shura al-Mujahidin (MSM or the Mujahidin Shura Council), in January 2006. MSM was led by a council of member groups' leaders from which Zarqawi was excluded.[2] As a result, Zarqawi maintained a low profile until his death on June 7, 2006. Upon Zarqawi's death, a senior AQI commander named Abu Hamza al-Muhajir, also known as Abu Ayyub al-Masri, replaced him as the leader of AQI under the MSM umbrella. Following Zarqawi's death, neither AQI nor MSM regained effectiveness in the jihadi campaign in Iraq. Therefore to revive the Iraq-based jihad and regain its intensity in the anti-American campaign, the MSM leadership rebranded the organization the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI). The establishment of ISI with a structured cabinet and Abu Omar al-Baghdadi as its Amir was announced by an MSM spokesperson on October 15, 2006 (Lister 2014, 8). The establishment of ISI represented a qualitative evolution whereby several insurgent groups transformed into a military-political organization responsible for governing territory and a population (Lister 2014, 9).

ISI was quick in capturing territory but it failed to regain a jihadi reputation in Sunni areas because of its Taliban-like rule in tribal regions. The ISI rule paved the way for the domination of pro-ISI tribes over other

2. Organizations that merged into MSM included AQI, Jaish al-Ta'ifa al-Mansurah, Katbiyan Ansar Al-Tawhid wal Sunnah, Saray al-Jihad Group, al-Ghuraba Brigades, and al-Ahwal Brigades. For the formation of MSM see Lister, "Profiling the Islamic State," 8; Felter and Fishman, "Al-Qaeda's Foreign Fighters in Iraq: A First Look at the Sinjar Records," *Combating Terrorism Center at West Point*, January 5, 2008, http://www.ctc.usma.edu/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/aqs-foreign-fighters-in-iraq.pdf

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tribes. This was interpreted by many tribal leaders as an interference in internal affairs of tribal regions and traditional tribal order, which resulted in a huge resistance in Sunni tribal areas (Lister 2014, 9). The anti-ISI resistance was formed by local tribal councils called *Sahwa* (awakening) that posed a serious challenge to ISI.

Sahwa initially emerged in Anbar province and soon expanded in most of Iraq's Sunni areas with a covert campaign of killing the ISI members (Bergen 2011, 272; Kirdar 2011, 5; Lister 2014, 9). In addition to the Sahwa campaign, American forces in Iraq increased pressures on ISI by deploying new troops to eliminate the jihadi organization in 2007. As a result of the Sahwa and American campaigns, a total of 2,400 ISI members were killed and 8,800 were arrested by the end of 2007 (Bergen 2011, 272; Kirdar 2011, 5). The campaign created the expectation that the insurgency would end soon. Therefore Sunni tribes increased reliance on the U.S. and the Shiite-led government in Baghdad hoping for integration in the post-invasion political sphere (Bergen 2011, 272). By spring 2009, more than 100,000 Sunni tribesmen switched sides in favor of the U.S.-led Multi-National Force (MNF), expecting monthly salaries from Americans (Bergen 2011, 272; Kirdar 2011, 5). This campaign not only undermined ISI's recruitment capacity but also affected its transnational ties. The flow of foreign fighters into Iraq, for instance, dwindled from 120 per month in 2007 to only 5 to 6 each month in 2009 (Kirdar 2011, 5). Moreover, a leadership vacuum, after a counterterror operation killed both Masri and Baghdadi on April 18, 2010, put ISI in a critical situation (Kirdar 2011, 5). These events together created the assumption that Iraq was on the right track to end the insurgency.

However, the U.S. military withdrawal from Iraq between June 2009 and August 2010 subverted the Sahwa and increased the insurgency's confidence and momentum to reorganize and fight back (Lister 2014, 10). With the U.S. military withdrawal underway, Sahwa militias broke up with Nouri al-Maliki's Shiite government because of his lack of support among Sunnis and also because of their unpaid wages. When the counterterrorism campaign was facing serious challenges, ISI started to fill its leadership vacuum by appointing Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi as the Amir of ISI and Abu-Sulayman al-Nasir as the war minister (Gelfand 2010, 19; Kirdar 2011, 5). The ISI leadership, simultaneously, planned to restructure the organization as an Islamic army that would operate beyond sovereign boundaries and, therefore, revived its recruitment campaign by offering

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larger salaries than the government in 2011 (Williams and Adnan 2010). The main purpose was to transform ISI into a jihadi army that would operate beyond sovereign boundaries. The eruption of a civil war in Syria accelerated the process of ISI's transformation into a transnational jihadi organization.

The emergence of a popular uprising in Syria in early 2011 and its development into a civil war caught the attention of ISI's leader, Baghdadi. He immediately sent his Ninawa operation's chief, Abu Muhammad al-Jowlani, to open an ISI front in Syria (Karam and Abdul-Zahra 2013). Jowlani arrived in Syria's northeastern Hasakah governorate in August 2011 and built connections with local jihadi cells across the country to establish what would become Jabhat al-Nusra (JN) (Abouzeid 2014). The JN was launched formally on January 23, 2012, by claiming a suicide bombing in Damascus on December 23, 2011, that killed at least 40 people (Lister 2014, 12). In the following six months, JN operated in Syria without having any direct links to ISI or al-Qaeda (Lister 2014, 12). By late 2012, JN became an effective jihadi organization numbering some 2,000 members (Lister 2014, 13). On April 9, 2013, Baghdadi claimed in an audio statement that JN "was an offshoot of ISI and therefore it would be subsumed into the expanded Islamic State in Iraq and al-Sham" (Lister 2014, 13).

Although Baghdadi's claim was refused by Jowlani the day after, the statement marked the official announcement of the transformation of ISI into the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). The statement also led to the split of JN in two parts: the part that agreed with Baghdadi joined ISIS and the rest remained with JN that subsequently turned to an al-Qaeda franchise in Syria (Abouzeid 2014; Spencer 2013). JN was renamed Jabhat Fatah al-Sham (JFS) or the Front for the Conquest of the Levant in July 2016, which announced a localized goal of overthrowing the Assad's regime and establishing an Islamic Emirate in Syria. The announcement also meant the separation of JFS from al-Qaeda and its far-enemy centrism. JFS rebranded Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (Organization for the Liberation of the Levant) when it merged with several other domestic groups a year later (TNT Terrorism Backgrounder 2018, 13).

Unlike JN that gradually interacted with domestic jihadi organizations, ISIS separated from all JSGs including al-Qaeda and followed a policy of isolation and domination, demanding complete control over all jihadi fronts (Lister 2014, 13). This policy confronted ISIS not only with sover-

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eign states but also put it against allied jihadi organizations. In this hostile circumstance, a coalition of anti-Assad movements that included the Free Syrian Army, Mujahidin Army, Syrian Revolutionaries Front, and the Islamic Front launched a massive operation against ISIS across northern Syria in January 2014 that resulted in their defeat and retreat to the east in March (Lister 2014, 13; Solomon 2014). Finally, when Baghdadi refused the mediation of an al-Qaeda-appointed team, Ayman al-Zawahiri publicly announced the separation of al-Qaeda from ISIS in February 2014 by stating "ISIS is not a branch of al-Qaeda, we have no organizational relationship with it, and al-Qaeda is not responsible for ISIS's actions" (Lister 2014, 13). As a result, ISIS was isolated by al-Qaeda and its affiliate organizations but continued to remain the most effective JSG in the region.

ISIS's complex and multilateral campaign from early 2011 to mid-2014 was critical in its dramatic growth into an organization capable of capturing and governing territory beyond nation-state boundaries. To propagate its accomplishments and attract a wider audience, ISIS officially announced the establishment of an Islamic State headquartered in Iraq and Syria through a series of media releases in 2014. The most significant among them was a 34-minute audio speech in Arabic by ISIS's spokesman Abu Muhammad al-Adnani (also known as Taha Subhi Falaha) entitled "This is the Promise of Allah." In this speech, al-Adnani announced ISIS's rebranding to IS that would represent Muslims beyond Iraq and Syria and operate globally on behalf of the Islamic world (Al-Adnani 2014b; Bradley 2014). This means that the speech officially announced the emergence of IS and Ibrahim Awwad Ibrahim Ali al-Badri al-Samarra'iyy (Abu-Bakr al-Baghdadi) as its Caliph:

> . . . he [Baghdadi] has accepted the *baya* (pledge of allegiance). Thus, he is the imam and caliph for Muslims everywhere. Accordingly, the "Iraq and Sham" in the name of the Islamic State is henceforth removed from all official deliberations and communications, and the official name is the Islamic State from the date of this declaration. The legality of all emirates, groups, states, and organizations becomes null by the expansion of the caliphate's authority and the arrival of its troops to their areas. (Al-Adnani 2014a)

Overall, the complicated evolution of IS from the Iraq-based insurgency and foreign jihadi groups was the outcome of causes on the individual,

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group, and international levels. The following sections categorize the three-level causes of IS and provide an analysis of how factors at each level facilitated the evolution of IS as a jihadi organization that operated beyond sovereign boundaries.

Individual Level

The root causes of IS, at this level of analysis, include three key factors. First, factors belonging to the personal security of individual jihadis and Baathists who were in search of a safe haven following the U.S. invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. Second, factors belonging to the jihadis' sense of revenge and a personal desire for creating a uniform militant organization to resist the U.S. invasion in Iraq. Third, a quest for significance and therefore a strong desire for directly confronting the sole great power in the heart of the Middle East.

The Arab jihadis' search for personal security started with the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, which forced thousands of fighters to leave the country, spreading all around the Islamic world. These individuals, blacklisted by the United States and its allies as highly wanted terrorists, were eagerly searching for a safe haven and an opportunity to reorganize and fight back. Zarqawi and his JTJ operatives were among thousands of those international jihadis that left Afghanistan and subsequently infiltrated other Islamic countries in search of a sanctuary.

Moreover, the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003 and its *de-Baathification* policy put thousands of former members of the Baath Party in the same situation. The de-Baathification referred to a process of purging Iraq's military and civil services from the former regime's elements, which led to severe discrimination that forced Sunnis to join the insurgency. Following the invasion of Iraq, the United States created an administration in Baghdad called the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) that would rule Iraq directly until the transition of power to a democratically elected Iraqi government. The CPA designed the de-Baathification policy that included disbanding the Iraqi military and civil services and giving power to the Shiites with the cost of alienating the well-trained Sunni state administrators and army officers. This policy, which was informed by the de-Nazification of post-Nazi Germany, forced hundreds of thousands of Sunnis from the civil and military services into unemployment (Galbraith 2006, 119).

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Soon after the establishment of the CPA in April 2003, the CPA administrator, Paul Bremer, released his Coalition Provisional Authority Order 1 (CPAO 1), which is also known as the de-Baathification of Iraqi Society (CPA 2003a; Zinn 2016, 2–3). The order demanded the elimination of senior Baath party members from "any position of civil service." Senior members were considered as those who were identified with the top four levels of the former Baath Party who worked as the group, the section, the branch, and the regional command leaders (Zinn 2016, 3). The order also banned target individuals from future service in the private sector (Zinn 2016, 3). As a result, CPAO 1 drove some 85,000 to 100,000 people from government jobs that in Bremer's eyes were *true believers* and adherents to Saddam's regime (Pfiffner 2010, 78–79; Ricks 2006, 160; Rubin 2015). Following CPAO 1, the CPA released its second order entitled the *Dissolution of Entities*. The purpose of this order was the dissolution of Iraq's defense, security, intelligence, and related organizations that threw an estimated 350,000 to 400,000 former officers, soldiers, army administers, and an estimated 2,000 Information Ministry employees out of work (Arraf 2003; CPA 2003b; Woodward 2006, 194–95; Zinn 2016, 3).

In addition to leading to massive unemployment in both civil and military sectors, the de-Baathification policy had a clear political consequence. It almost completely excluded Sunnis from Iraq's political landscape, paving the way for Shiites and Kurds to replace them (Porter 2015; Sly 2015). The post-Saddam political settlement, in this context, put the ex-Baathists and younger Sunnis, who were experiencing humiliation and discrimination, on the same track as jihadis in search of a safe haven (Cockburn 2014, 70). These individuals played a significant rule in the establishment of IS.

When IS was officially launched in 2014, its Caliph's two immediate deputies were former ranking officers in the military: Abu Ali al-Anbari, the chief of Syria operations, was a major general in the Iraqi Army, and Fadl Ahmad Abdullah al-Hiyali, the chief of Iraq operations, was a lieutenant colonel in Iraq's Military Intelligence and a former officer in the Iraqi Special Forces (Lister 2015, 35, 76–77; Sherlock 2014). Also two of the four members of IS's military council, Abu Aiman al-Iraqi and Abu Ahmad al-Alwani, were former officers in the Army (Exclusive 2014). Moreover, IS maintained at this time 1,000 "medium-and-top-level field commanders of the very Iraqi army which was disbanded by Americans" (Lister 2015, 35, 76–77; Sherlock 2014).

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Thus the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan led to the infiltration of jihadis to other countries that eventually infiltrated Iraq. The invasion of Iraq led to further securitization and discrimination of domestic jihadis, Baathists, and ordinary Sunnis. In this condition, the wanted local jihadis, the securitized Baathists, and the discriminated Sunnis were highly motivated to organize in ungoverned areas as a result of security gaps in the Sunni Triangle. These individuals either joined the international jihadi organizations like JTJ and AQI or formed militant organizations of their own (Flibbert 2013, 69). IS was the outcome of the interaction and integration of these groups under a jihadi Salafi umbrella. According to an International Crisis Group report, jihadis' search for personal security and struggle for survival became a strong force behind the emergence of a JSG in Iraq. In this circumstance, the emergence of IS became inevitable because "Sunnis saw their only chance of surviving in Iraq was to fight as Sunnis against a U.S.-sponsored Shiite-led government" (Cockburn 2014, 69). IS was established, as a result.

The second individual-level root cause of IS was a sense of revenge among both jihadis and Baathists. All Iraq-based jihadi and insurgent leaders and operatives were personally motivated to partake in a retaliatory war against the United States and the Shiite-led government in Baghdad. In the very immediate aftermath of the invasion, bin Laden called upon every Muslim to engage in the retaliatory campaign by attacking members of the coalition forces in Iraq. Zarqawi added Shiites to the list of his targets, calling upon his followers to join the jihad against both Americans and Shiites. The AQI and other Sunni insurgent groups' main strategy was to challenge the Coalition force and the Shiite-led government by routinely carrying out violent attacks on both (O'Brien 2011). Moreover, IS's founding declarations and its official documents indicate the significance of revenge in its evolution and justification of its violent philosophy. *The Dabiq*, the official magazine of IS in English, for example, describes the killing of Americans and non-Muslims including civilians as a retaliatory campaign (Revenge for the Muslimat 2015, 31–32).

Finally, a quest for significance among jihadis and Baathists was the third root cause of IS, at this level of analysis. Following the defeat of Saddam's regime, Sunnis had lost power, jobs, and political influence to a Shiite-led government mainly because of the foreign invasion and its support of the anti-Baathist campaign. The United States, as the foreign force that had imposed the suppressive status quo in Iraq and the broader Mid-

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dle East, was considered the sole great power in a unipolar international system by jihadis. In this context, the jihadi element of the insurgency perceived a confrontation with the United States as a heroic action in its apocalyptic campaign. In particular, the international jihadis played a key role in propagating the idea of fighting a heroic war among other elements of the insurgency including domestic jihadis and Baathists. The propagation of this idea was significant in the unification of all three elements of the insurgency under a broader ideological umbrella. Thus, in addition to personal security and revenge, seeking glory by fighting the sole great power in an international context and its Shiite ally played a determinant role in the evolution of the insurgency into IS. While revenge was the most significant individual-level stimulus among all elements of the insurgency for launching the anti-invasion campaign, the quest for significance facilitated the unification of different elements of the campaign under a jihadi Salafi umbrella at this level.

Group Level

Like the case of al-Qaeda, jihadi Salafism accounts for the root cause of IS at this level of analysis. This ideology, which was broadly propagated and justified by the international jihadis and foreign fighters in Iraq's anti-invasion campaign, not only facilitated the unification of other elements of the insurgency under a jihadi Salafi umbrella but also provided a religious basis for justifying IS's philosophy and its violent approach to creating a pan-Islamic state. Jihadi Salafism, in this sense, functioned not only as a cause but also as a mechanism that directed the scattered insurgency in a specific global jihadi direction.

All theorists and founders of IS including Zarqawi, Abu Umar al-Baghdadi, Abu Hamza al-Muhajir, Abu Muhammad al-Adnani, and Abu Bakr Baghdadi were famous Salafi thinkers and activists (Bunzel 2015, 9–10). IS's founding declarations and official statements are substantially based on Salafi justifications and quotations from early and modern Salafi scholars and activists. Initially, the IS ideology and its severe approach to both warmaking and statemaking have its origins in Zarqawi's worldview that incorporated all major elements of jihadi Salafism. In one of his very early statements on the eve of the U.S. invasion of Iraq Zarqawi stated:

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> We will fight in the cause of God until His sharia prevails. The first step is to expel the enemy and establish the state of Islam. We would then go forth to reconquer the Muslim lands and restore them to the Muslim nation. . . . I swear by God that even if the Americans had not invaded our lands together with the Jews, the Muslims would still be required not to refrain from jihad but go forth and seek the enemy until only God Almighty's sharia prevailed everywhere in the world. . . . Our political project is to expel this marauding enemy. This is the first step. Afterward, our goal is to establish God's sharia all over the globe. (Hashim 2014, 70)

This statement articulates all major elements of the jihadi Salafi doctrine, including the definitions of an international problem, an enemy that causes the problem, the method of struggle, and the goal of creating a pan-Islamic caliphate. The statement highlights the invasion of Muslim lands by Americans and Jews as the problem, defines Americans and Jews as the enemy, considers jihad as the method of fighting the enemy, and defines the establishment of a sharia-based order in the world as the goal.

The key elements of jihadi Salafism are also presented in the organization's official declarations, statements, sermons, and symbols. The two founding declarations of IS including *This is the Promise of Allah* and the *Khilafah Declaration* provide a clear image of the organization's jihadi Salafi nature. These declarations justify the establishment of IS as a global jihadi organization by drawing on Salafi quotations and interpretations of Islamic history and original Islamic texts. For example, *This is the Promise of Allah* describes the oppression of Muslims and the invasion of their lands by Americans and their far and near allies, particularly Shiites, as the existing international problem imposed in the Islamic world. The declaration also defines the infidel nations as the enemy, highlights jihad as the method to fight the enemy, and defines the expansion of a sharia-based Islamic State as its political goal. Therefore it calls upon Muslims, particularly the jihadi movements across the globe, to pledge allegiance to IS:

> . . . For by fulfilling this condition [Allah's promise] comes the ability to . . . remove oppression, spread justice, and bring about safety and tranquility. . . . We were patient for years in the face of being killed, imprisoned, having our bones broken and our limbs severed. We drank all sorts of bitterness, dreaming of this day. . . . O sol-

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> diers of the Islamic State, then congratulations to you. . . . Today the "illegitimates" in the east and west are frightened. Today the nations of infidels in the west are terrified. . . . Now the caliphate has returned, humbling the necks of the enemy. . . . They [the enemy] never recognized the Islamic State, to begin with. Although America, Britain, and France acknowledge its existence. And if they tell you, we do not accept your authority. Then say to them, we had the ability to establish the caliphate. . . . The State will remain, by Allah's permission. . . . O soldiers of the Islamic State, Allah ordered us with jihad and promised us victory . . . you will be facing fierce battles that cause the children's hair to become gray. . . . It is time for you to end this abhorrent partisanship, dispersion, and division, for this condition, is not from the religion of Allah at all. The legality of all emirates, groups, states, and organizations becomes null by the expansion of the caliphate authority and the arrival of its troops to their areas. So, rush O Muslims and gather around your caliphate, so that you may return as you once were for ages, kings of the earth and knights of war. By Allah, if you disbelieve in democracy, secularism, nationalism, as well as all the other garbage and ideas from the west, and rush to your religion and creed, then by Allah, you will own the earth, and the east and west will submit to you. (al-Adnani 2014b)

IS defined jihadi Salafism as its founding ideology more explicitly in the *Dabiq*. *Dabiq*'s first issue referencing several Salafi texts, earliest Muslim scholars, Salafi leaders, caliphs, the Prophet's companions, and some contemporary Islamists, describes the confrontation of non-Muslim powers against Muslims as the global problem, the non-Muslim forces as the enemy, jihad as the method, and the establishment of the Caliphate as its goal.

> The spark has been lit here in Iraq, and its heat will continue to intensify until it burns the crusader armies in Dabiq. . . . O Ummah of Islam, indeed, the world today has been divided into two camps and two trenches, with no third camp present: the camp of the Muslims and the mujahidin everywhere, and the camp of the Jews, the Crusaders, their allies, and with them the rest of the nations and religions of disbelief, all being led by America and Russia, and being

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E-book, Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2022, https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.12275543.
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> mobilized by the Jews. . . . The sun of jihad has risen. The signs of victory have appeared. (*Khilaphah Declaration* 2014, 2, 10, 9)

> The goal of establishing the Caliphate has always been one that occupied the hearts of the mujahideen since the revival of jihad in this century. . . . (*Khilaphah Declaration* 2014, 34)

In addition to its official statements and declarations, IS's sermons and symbols are other indicators of the organization's reliance on jihadi Salafism and its reference to Islamic practices in the dawn of Islam and original texts as sources of political legitimation. For example, ISI, in 2010, initiated an information campaign aimed at reemphasizing the legitimacy of its Islamic State project. One facet of this campaign was to stress the ISI leader's "alleged membership of the Quraysh tribe which according to the early Islamic tradition would produce the next caliph" (Lister 2014, 11). Prophet Mohamed himself was a member of the Quraysh tribe and the two greatest Islamic empires including the Umayyad and the Abbasid caliphates represented two different branches of the same tribe. When ISI leader was killed on April 18, 2010, his successor, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, also self-identified as a member of the Quraysh tribe (Fishman 2013, 11–12).

Baghdadi's inauguration sermon as the caliph of IS in 2014, which was an effort to connect him to the first Muslim caliph Abu Bakr in 632, was another example that reveals the organization's Salafi nature and its intention to justify its modern behavior by relying on the political tradition of the dawn of Islam (Rosiny 2015, 100). In this sermon, the founders of IS attempted to assert both ideological and practical intention and commitment in returning to the fundamentals of Islam, which is one of the main pillars of the Salafi doctrine. In another event, on July 1, 2014, Baghdadi stated: "O Muslims in all places, who is able to migrate to the Islamic State, let him migrate. Migration to the Abode of Islam is obligatory" (Al-Baghdadi 2014a). The call was identical to the example of the Prophet when he left Mecca in 622 and established the Abode of Islam as a muhajir or a migrant in Medina. Iraq-based jihadi leaders, following the announcement of the formation of ISI in October 2006, even claimed the territories under their control "equal in expanse to the first state in Medina" (Bunzel 2015).

As such, jihadi Salafism and its historical symbolism became attractive to jihadis during the chaos of post-invasion Iraq. Reliance on jihadi

Ibrahimi, S. Yaqub. *International Security In a World of Fragile States: Islamic States and Islamist Organizations.*
E-book, Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2022, https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.12275543.
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Salafism and its anti-American and anti-Shiite nature also helped jihadi organizations easily recruit from the local population and expand influence beyond sovereign boundaries in Iraq and Syria. Jihadi Salafism, in this sense, provided IS's predecessors with a transnational identity justifying their jihad as a legitimate means to create a pan-Islamic caliphate. In this context, IS's *Khilafah Declaration* described the caliphate as an Islamic State that "gathers the Caucasian, Indian, Chinese, Shami, Iraqi, Yemeni, Egyptian, Maghribi (North African), American, French, German, and Australian" Muslims under a sharia-based rule (*Khilaphah Declaration* 2014).

Moreover, IS's transnationalism and its pan-Islamic approach to state-building followed the ideas of Salafi scholars and preachers from Ibn-Taymiyyah to Sheikh Abu-Bakr Naji who a few years before the establishment of IS justified the need for the establishment and expansion of a transnational caliphate through global jihad. Naji believed that in a world dominated by crusaders, it would not be possible to create a proper Islamic State in a single country. He exemplified the Taliban government in Afghanistan as a failed experience of Islamizing a specific county and stated, "Although a proper Islamic regime, [the Taliban] did not survive infidel attacks and opposition by Afghan elements" (Taheri 2015). Therefore Naji believed that the Salafi movement must become global, fighting everywhere, all the time, and on all fronts (Taheri 2015). He expected the neojihadists to create an "archipelago of wildernesses" in non-Muslim countries, turning them into parallel societies alongside existing ones:

> No one should feel safe without submitting, and those who refuse to submit must pay a high price. The aim of our movement is to turn the world into a series of wilderness in which only those under our rule enjoy security. (Taheri 2015)

Naji's theory was built on the concept of terror as the main organizing principle of the "mini-states" he hoped to set up in preparation for the coming caliphate (Taheri 2015). By creating IS, Iraq-based jihadi organizations tried to operationalize Naji's ideas in terms of globalizing terror, setting up wilayats or governorates as mini-states beyond Iraq and Syria in the Muslim world, and creating terrorist cells in non-Muslim societies. Therefore IS's ideology is not simply reliance on classical texts and early Islamic experiences but also the incorporation of original texts and

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early Islamic experiences with modern interpretations. Drawing on this complex and rigid ideology, the Iraq-based jihadis formalized the Islamic state's status as the renascent caliphate in 2014 that claimed authority over all Muslims and Islamist organizations, calling upon them to pledge allegiance to Baghdadi as Muslims' indisputable caliph:

> We inform the Muslims that, with the announcement of the caliphate, it has become obligatory for all Muslims to give bay'a and support to Caliph Ibrahim. Void is the legitimacy of all emirates, groups, administrations, and organizations to which his [i.e., Baghdadi's] authority extends and his army comes. (Bunzel 2015, 31, 41)

Taken together, jihadi Salafism, its caliphal vision, its historical symbolism, its international message, and its capacity to undergo modern interpretations and adjustments not only provided an ideological basis for establishing IS but also justified its rigid philosophy and violent method.

International Level

The emergence of IS depended on four causes on the international level of analysis. First, the root cause of IS can be traced back to the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan, which led to the escape of thousands of al-Qaeda members and other Arab jihadis from Afghanistan seeking new sanctuaries throughout the Islamic world. Zarqawi's JTJ was one of those jihadi groups that escaped Afghanistan, crossing the border into Iran and then moving to Biyara in the Kurdish province of Sulaymaniyah in Iraq (Felter and Fishman 2007, 4). JTJ subsequently infiltrated the Sunni Triangle where it networked with domestic insurgents, local jihadis, and the foreign jihadi fighters that had come to Iraq to join the anti-American campaign. As a core JSG in Iraq, JTJ subsequently absorbed most of those domestic and foreign fighters into AQI, which gradually evolved into IS.

Second, the root causes of IS can be traced to the U.S. invasion of Iraq, which produced sectarianism and security vacuums. While occupation and sectarianism exacerbated the anti-American and anti-Shiite sentiments among jihadis and Baathists, the security vacuums facilitated the infiltration of international jihadis into Iraq and their integration with domestic forces. The integration of those forces paved the way for the

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development of a militant organization under a sense-making jihadi ideology that eventually led to the establishment of IS. Thus the U.S. invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq were two interconnected causal phenomena that initially factored into the formation of the scattered insurgency that subsequently evolved into IS.

Third, the emergence of IS is linked to the implementation of the Coalition's de-Baathification policy, which led to the exclusion of Sunnis from the political landscape of the country. While the U.S. invasion of Iraq had motivated jihadis of different origins to join the anti-American campaign, the de-Baathification forced the discriminated and unemployed Sunnis to join the insurgency. The de-Baathification, in this sense, expanded and diversified the recruit and support bases of the insurgency, on the one hand, and increased the requirement for a legitimatizing ideology and an umbrella organization to unify their campaign in a single direction, on the other. As a result, five major Sunni militant groups initially merged with AQI giving rise to MSM by January 2006, which gradually developed to IS by August 2014 (Felter and Fishman 2007; Lister 2014, 8).[3]

Finally, regional rivalries in Iraq, particularly between Iran and Saudi Arabia, contributed to the establishment of IS. Following the collapse of Saddam's regime, an uncompromising enemy to the Shiite ayatollahs, Iran emerged as the most influential power in Baghdad, which led to the so-called *cold war* between Iran and Saudi Arabia in Iraq. The cold war intensified the polarization of politics between Sunnis and Shiites in the country, which strengthened the insurgency in the Sunni part, allowing it to develop into a united front to act more effectively in the sectarian war (Fisher 2016a; Gerges 2016, 20). In these circumstances, while Iran directly supported the Shiite-led government and the Shiite militia groups, the Sunni militants obtained funds, arms, and precious social and material capital from Saudi Wahhabis and the neighboring Sunni states that were in line with Saudi Arabia's regional policies (Gerges 2016, 20).

Overall, the four international factors together facilitated the unification of foreign and domestic jihadis with Baathists and ordinary Sunnis under a religious doctrine that overlapped their ethnic and political differences. Under this pan-Islamic doctrine, not only local Sunnis but also thousands of foreign fighters from all around the Islamic world and

3. The founding members of MSM included Jaish al-Ta'ifa al-Mansurah, Katbiyan Ansar Al-Tawhid wal Sunnah, Saray al-Jihad Group, al-Ghuraba Brigades, and al-Ahwal Brigades.

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beyond joined Zarqawi's jihadist movement, giving it a transnational character (Felter and Fishman 2007, 2).

The infiltration of foreign fighters from the Islamic world, particularly the region, into Iraq began as early as May 2003, with the numbers increasing over time (Gerges 2016, 20). These fighters were soon joined by thousands of jihadis from around the world who traveled to Iraq and Syria to contribute to the IS project. According to the Saudi government's records, approximately 15,000 foreign fighters from at least 90 countries were fighting in Iraq and Syria in 2014 (Lister 2015, 59). Another study from early 2015 reports that some 20,000 foreigners from 50 countries for which "sufficient data and/or reliable government estimates were available" had traveled to Iraq and Syria (Neumann 2015). The contribution of those foreign fighters strengthened IS's pan-Islamic campaign and provided empirical justification to its transnational claims. IS's transnationalism and fundamentalism were repeatedly addressed by the organization's leaders. Baghdadi's message in the first issue of *Dabiq*, which was published in summer 2014, is an example:

> So, let the world know that we are living today in a new era. . . . The Muslims today have a loud, thundering statement, and possess heavy boots. They have a statement to make that will cause the world to hear and understand the meaning of terrorism, and boots that will trample the idol of nationalism, destroy the idol of democracy and uncover its deviant nature. (Al-Baghdadi 2014b, 10)

IS's transnationalism linked to jihadi Salafism. The organization's predecessors held a pan-Islamic and global agenda using it against domestic rivalries. AQI's agenda, which was followed by its successors, is an example. The agenda was articulated by the organization's chief spokesman, Abu Maysara al-Iraqi, as follows:

- Remove the aggressors from Iraq.
- Affirm *tawhid*, the oneness of God, among Muslims.
- Propagate the message that "there is no God but Allah," to all the countries in which Islam is absent.
- Wage jihad to liberate Muslim territories from infidels and apostates.
- Fight the *taghut*, the idolatrous regimes, ruling Muslim lands.

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- "Establish a wise Caliphate" in which the sharia rules supreme as it did during the time of Prophet Mohammad.
- Spread monotheism on earth, cleanse it of polytheism, to govern according to the laws of God. . . . (Hashim 2009, 34–35)

IS evolved from an insurgent and jihadi movement with such a far-enemy-centrist agenda and pan-Islamic objectives. Accordingly, IS was not only the outcome of causes on the international level of analysis but it was also the bearer of an international agenda that was deeply rooted in jihadi Salafism, pan-Islamism, and far-enemy centrism.

IS's complex evolution from a diffuse insurgency also indicates the interconnectivity of causes belonging to all three levels of analysis and their amalgamated impact on the rise of this terrorist organization. Therefore, while the root causes of IS are studied on three separate levels of analysis, their interconnectivity and amalgamated impact on the evolution of the Islamic State are important to consider. For instance, while IS's transnationalism was influenced by the individual jihadis' personal motivation to fight in a pan-Islamic front (at the individual level) and the jihadi Salafi ideology that suggests a pan-Islamic organization and goal (at the group level), the role of the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq on the decision of individual jihadis to join the Iraq-based insurgency and follow a jihadi Salafi agenda explains the significant role of causes at the international level. As such, IS, like al-Qaeda, emerged as an outcome of both causes on all three levels of analysis and their interaction in the process of the formation of this terrorist organization.

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CHAPTER 6

Condition of the Rise of IS

State Fragility in Iraq

Motivated by causes at the individual, group, and international levels of analysis, the Iraq-based insurgency and jihadi groups used the state fragility conditions of the post-Saddam Iraq to accomplish the project of the formation of the caliphate as the nucleus of a new international order in the Islamic world. Following Saddam's removal from power, state fragility produced an environment of fear, insecurity, and sectarianism that, in the absence of a broad-based government, accommodated the integration of jihadi and Baathist groups into a more sophisticated organization that was capable to operate beyond sovereign boundaries. This jihadi organization eventually transformed into IS.

Taking the three measures of state fragility into account, the establishment of IS benefitted from conditions provided by poor state legitimacy and weak state authority. Moreover, the lack of state capacity played a facilitating role in the establishment of IS, but it was not that significant as to be considered an independent condition. In other words, the lack of state capacity played a meager direct role in the evolution of IS, compared to the poor legitimacy and weak authority of the state.

The state legitimacy in post-Saddam Iraq was severely undermined by such factors as poor political participation, ineffective electoral outcomes, sectarian politics, and external interventions by the Coalition forces and regional powers. Likewise, the state authority was undermined by the lack of a legitimate and effective security apparatus and the Coalition's failure in filling the security gap and rebuilding the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) when it was necessary.

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According to CSP's state fragility index, which ranges from 0 (no fragility) to 25 (extremely fragility), Iraq's annual fragility score from 2003 to 2016—a period in which the Iraq-based insurgency emerged and evolved into IS—floated between 20 to 18, indicating high to extreme state fragility.[1] According to this data, the state suffered from the lack of legitimacy, authority, and capacity which is indicated by different indicators of legitimacy and effectiveness (CSP 1995–2018; Marshall and Cole 2014, 51). Although the Iraqi state was highly fragile under Saddam's regime, the state used its authoritarian and suppressive security apparatus to prevent the rise of a significant jihadist organization. Therefore, with the collapse of the state and its security forces, insurgent groups emerged in the security gap and gradually developed into IS. Drawing on the CSP data, figure 7 provides a general image of state fragility and statehood in Iraq from 1995 to 2018. The figure also illustrates the levels of state fragility in post-Saddam Iraq (2003–14) when IS gradually evolved under the severe state fragility condition.

Although state fragility in Iraq was not a post-invasion phenomenon per se, the level of state fragility in this period remained alert. From its creation in 1921 to its collapse in 2003, the state of Iraq had faced both internal and external challenges in a variety of degrees. However, it had constantly proved capable of maintaining its political authority and an effective monopoly over the use of violence until its collapse by the U.S. invasion in 2003. In the 1990s, for instance, when the level of state fragility escalated due to a series of internal and international pressures, the state did not lose its control over the country (Dodge 2005b, 709). In the face of those challenges, the state was able to maintain formal institutions of authority and informal networks of patronage that together bolstered Saddam's rule (Dodge 2005b, 709–10; Gordon 2004).

The state's historical resilience and ability in maintaining its institutions and protecting the country gave Americans the impression that state institutions would provide the political and administrative basis of the post-invasion political development. Therefore the Coalition's initial plan on the eve of the invasion was to only dismantle the Baathist party and regime but seize the strong institutions of the state and use them in reimposing order (Dodge 2005b, 709–10; Gordon 2004). This assumption

1. The CSP index ranges from 0–25 in which 0–8 point indicates no-low fragility, 9–16 indicates moderate fragility and 17–25 indicates high-extreme fragility.

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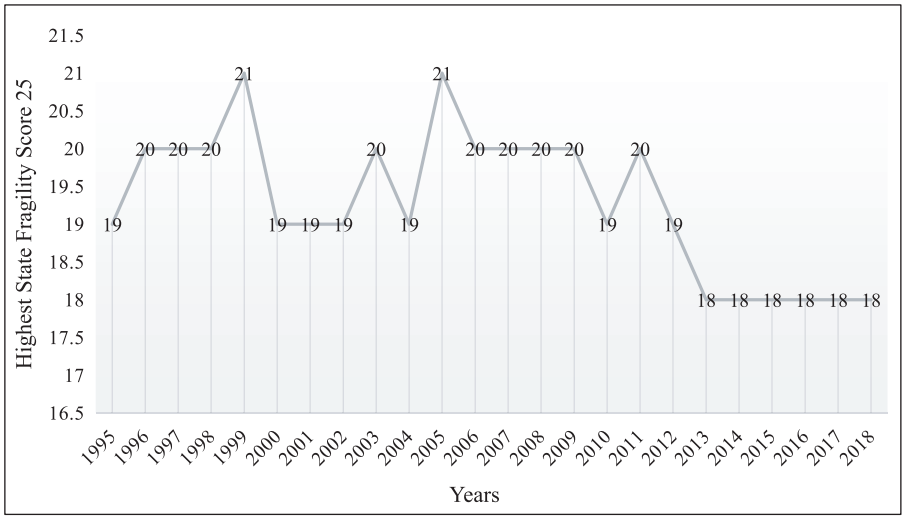

Fig. 7. State Fragility in Iraq (1995–2018). (Data from CSP 1995–2018.)

was based on a misperception about the interdependence of the regime and the state. Therefore, with the removal of the Baathist regime, state institutions despite the Americans' initial expectation entirely collapsed. The collapse of state institutions led to widespread civil disorder, insecurity, sectarian violence, looting, and the emergence of several rebel and insurgent groups throughout the country (Dawisha 2009, 242–45, 262; Stansfield 2007, 198). This situation forced the Coalition to change the initial plan of *reforming* a supposedly functioning state to a strategy of *building* a state from scratch (Dobbins et al. 2009; Herring and Rangwala 2006, 13–16).

As a result, American policymakers replaced the Office for Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA) with the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) only a month after the invasion. ORHA was created on the belief that the Iraqi state would survive the invasion, and therefore the Office would only assist the state institutions to recover and reform. With this calculation being proved wrong, the U.S.-led Coalition redesigned its plan from reforming a state to a state-building agenda. The CPA was created with the assumption that there was no state establishment in Iraq, and therefore it was assigned to build a new state (Dobbins et al. 2009; Herring and Rangwala 2006, 13–16; Westcott 2003).

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The extreme state fragility in post-Saddam Iraq was driven more by external factors than internal ones with sectarian mobilization and insurgency being the outcome of the invasion, not the other way around (Flibbert 2013, 68). As a result of the foreign invasion, state institutions that regularly dealt with domestic issues entirely collapsed, which caused more violence and insecurity. A comprehensive analysis of state fragility in Iraq requires an examination of both external and historical factors that together caused the Iraqi state to cease functioning in 2003. A historical overview of state formation and state fragility in Iraq helps investigate these factors interconnectedly and establish a robust context for analyzing the relationship between state fragility conditions and the rise of IS in the aftermath of Saddam's rule.

State Formation and the Origins of State Fragility

Iraq was built in an ethnically divided region. Since its creation, the sovereign state of Iraq has been an arena of ethnic, sectarian, and tribal competitions, on the one hand, and a ground for urban versus rural, tradition versus modernity, and national versus transnational rivalries, on the other (Anderson and Stansfield 2004, 5–7; Dawisha 2009, 5). Among these rivalries, the divide between Sunnis, Shiites, and Kurds has been the most critical element of Iraq's political sociology. This cleavage was exacerbated through the state-building project in which the privileged Sunni Arab minority systematically alienated the Shiites and the Kurds from power. The Sunni-dominated state attempted to cover the marginalization of other ethnic and religious groups behind the mask of nationalism and patriotism, which tore apart with the collapse of state institutions in 2003. State-building in Iraq was accomplished in three phases: the Monarchical phase (1921–1958), the Republican phase (1958–1968), and the Baathist phase (1968–2003). The overview of how the Iraqi state was built provides a solid basis for analyzing statehood and state fragility in post-Saddam Iraq.

The Monarchical Project (1921–1958)

The creation of Iraq was the outcome of a political settlement between European powers on the partition of the Ottoman Empire at the end of the

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First World War, with Russia occupying Anatolia, France taking the control of the Levant, and the United Kingdom taking Mesopotamia (Fromkin 1991, 449–54; Stansfield 2007, 35–36; Wimmer 2002, 172–73). The British government decided to create the state of Iraq on three disparate Ottoman provinces in Mesopotamia, including Mosul in the north, Basra in the south, and Baghdad in the center (Dawisha 2009, 10). The three provinces were dominated by Kurds, Shiites, and Sunnis, respectively.

The state of Iraq under a constitutional monarchy was officially introduced at the Cairo Conference in spring 1921, with King Faisal (1885–1933), a non-Iraqi Sunni, being crowned as the king (Dawisha 2009, 8). Faisal (Faysal al-Awwal ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn Ali al-Hashim), a crucial ally to T. H. Lawrence during his military campaigns in Arabia, was the third son of Hussein bin Ali, the Sharif and Emir of Mecca. Faisal's family had historically fought for the independence of the Arab lands from the Ottoman Turks. The family, allied with the British force during the First World War, became a significant challenge to the Ottomans (Dawisha 2009, 8–9, 80). The Faisal family's strategic alliance with the British guaranteed him the kingdom of the new country. Besides appointing Faisal as the king of Iraq, the British administrators designated Baghdad as the national capital of the new state, which highly benefited the privileged Sunni Arab minority (Anderson and Stansfield 2004, 139–53; Dawisha 2009, 31, 36, 69).

Nevertheless, the new Iraq was diverse. In addition to Sunnis, there were Shiites, Kurds, and several smaller ethnic groups such as Turkmens, Assyrians, Yazidis, and others living in the country. Shiites comprised 55 to 60 percent, Sunni Arabs formed approximately 20 percent, and the Kurds comprised some 15 to 20 percent of the population (Koran 2006). The rest of the population consisted of other ethnic groups, with Turkmens forming less than 5 percent and Assyrians some 4–5 percent of the general population (Donabed 2015, 1).

The crown of a non-Iraqi Sunni as the king and the designation of Baghdad as the national capital was not welcomed by the Shiites and Kurds (Dawisha 2009, 14). However, the British recognized the Sunnis and King Faisal as reliable allies and, because of the concentration of Sunni Arabs in Baghdad, the British government accredited the city as an ideal capital for the new state. According to Winston Churchill, then the British colonial secretary, King Faisal offered the British hope for the "best and cheapest solution" (Wallach 1995, 297). In the early stages of state formation, Shiites and Kurds were alienated from national politics. Over the entirety

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of monarchical rule, the five powerful ministries including the premier, the ministries of finance, interior, defense, and foreign affairs were controlled exclusively by Sunnis (Simons 1994, 195). According to estimates, of the most important political leaders in Iraq over the same period, close to 60 percent were Sunni Arab, 25 percent were Shiite, and 15 percent were Kurd (Marr 1989, 144). A similar pattern prevailed within the armed forces. While Shiites were well represented in the lower ranks, the officer corps was exclusively a Sunni domain (Anderson and Stansfield 2004, 20). Therefore Shiites and Kurds did not have the faith and passion to integrate into the Sunni-dominated political and military systems during the monarchical period (Dawisha 2009, 9, 14).

The monarchical rule in Iraq also coincided with the rise of Arab nationalism in the Middle East. Arab nationalism was a reaction to the post-World War I political settlement in the Middle East and based on the assumption that Arabs constituted a single nation, and therefore they must have a single state. King Faisal was in favor of both Arab nationalism and the Iraqi nation-building projects. While Faisal never wanted to lose sight of the broader Arab nationalist project, his priority was building an Iraqi nation and state and then define it within a larger Arab identity (Dawisha 2009, 82). Therefore, to build his "imagined community," the King had to harmonize his nationalist agenda with supra- and supernational aspirations in the forms of sectarianism and Arab nationalism.

Overall, in his state-building project, the king had to confront at least three social cleavages: Sunnis versus Shiites and Kurds, Arabs versus Kurds, Arab nationalism versus Iraqi nationalism. To settle these disputes, Faisal and his successors, King Ghazi and King Faisal II, mostly took democratic measures such as adhering to elections and constitutional reforms. The three kings' main goal was to integrate the other political forces into the architecture of the Sunni-dominated Iraqi nation-state. But while the democratic measures did not work in practice, the state increased its reliance on means of control and coercion to maintain the Sunnis' domination over the state.

The catalyst that changed the power relations in favor of the Sunni-led Iraqi state, permanently, was the consolidation of Iraq's armed forces during the monarchical state-building project. The seeds of the Iraqi army were planted by King Faisal's lieutenants, a number of them Ottoman-trained officers, that accompanied him during the First World War (Dawisha 2009, 36). Iraq's royal army, which was mostly formed of Sunni Arabs

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coming from middle- and lower middle-class families, quickly turned into the true guardians of the state (Dawisha 2009, 36–37). However, the very same army soon became the source of military coups that toppled regimes one after the other. As a result, while the royal army initially guaranteed the survival of the state, it soon toppled the monarchy itself, opening new chapters of political development in the country.

The Republican Project (1958–1968)

The July 1958 military coup ended the age of monarchy, giving rise to the Republic of Iraq under the army officers. The Republican state-building project intensified the divide between Arab nationalism and Iraqi nationalism more than before. Following the demise of the monarchy, two officers named Brigadier Abd al-Karim Qasim and Colonel Abd al-Salam Arif stood at the helm of Iraq's political office, claiming the premiership and the deputy-premiership, respectively. They also assumed control of all military and security offices.

The two commanders followed different perspectives on state-building and nation-building. Qasim advocated a localized Iraqi identity and an independent sovereign state with national politics, while Aref cheered the pan-Arab nationalist project against Qasim's Iraqi nationalism (Dawisha 2009, 171–208). The dispute forced Qasim to dispatch Aref to Germany as the ambassador. Qasim remained the sole leader of Iraq until his nationalist regime was toppled in February 1963 in a military coup led by members of the Baath Party, which initially advocated Arif's Arab nationalism (Dawisha 2009, 174, 183, 197). Following the defeat of Qasim's nationalist regime by Baathists, Aref (not a Baathist) assumed the presidency of the country. His regime ended with the July 1968 coup, led by Baathist generals that were frustrated with instabilities and successive political crises under the Republic.

The Baathist Project (1968–2003)

The Baathist regime opened a new chapter of authoritarianism and militarism in Iraq's history. Following the July 1968 coup, Ahmad Hussein al-Bakr, the leader of the Baath Party, became the president, and Saddam

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Hussein, then 31 years old, became the second to Bakr both in the party and the state hierarchy. It took Saddam around a decade to become the president of Iraq in July 1979. Saddam's ascendency to the highest political position in Iraq was, in fact, the outcome of the gradual institutionalization and legitimation of his already established authority both in the party and the army (Dawisha 2009, 213). By Saddam becoming the president of Iraq, the Iraqi state transformed from a system being controlled by one party to a regime under one man (Anderson and Stansfield 2004, 58–59).

To consolidate Saddam's absolute political control over the country, the government heavily invested in developing the means of control of Shiites and Kurds, which included all methods of coercion including chemical weapons. For example, following the government's infamous *Anfal* campaign against the Kurds in 1988, which destroyed 4,000 Kurd villages and the forced relocation of up to 500,000 people, Massoud Barzani publicly declared, "Everything has ended; the rebellion is over. We cannot fight chemical weapons with bare hands" (Anderson and Stansfield 2004, 72; Mackey 2002, 263).

In addition to the anti-Shiite and anti-Kurd campaigns, the regime also engineered a parallel policy of "winning the hearts and minds" of the poor and the educated Iraqis to multiply its legitimacy basis (Anderson and Stansfield 2004, 62–64; Dawisha 2009, 220, 21). However, the regime's legitimacy basis did not extend beyond the Sunni Arab communities and populations with strong links to government institutions (Anderson and Stansfield 2004, 62–64; Dawisha 2009, 220, 21). However, regardless of its obvious lack of popular legitimacy, Saddam's regime maintained effective authority that was capable of defending the state against external invasions and maintaining the country's political stability and social order (Anderson and Stansfield 2004, 64).

Saddam also tried to settle the dispute between Arab and Iraqi nationalism by signaling a new direction in promoting an Iraqi identity. To balance the two nationalisms, the regime designed two parallel policies. First, it instructed the members of the Baath Party to self-identify, simultaneously, as Arab nationalists or *al-qawmiyya* and Iraqi nationalists or *al-wataniyya al-Iraqiyya* (Baram 1991; Baram 2005, 3). Second, the regime tried to introduce various bases for the Iraqi identity to overcome major internal cleavages. In this context, the regime developed a political and cultural program aimed to create a constructed link between modern Iraq and its ancient roots in Sumerian, Akkadian, Babylonian, and Assyrian civilizations (Dawisha 2009, 233).

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The main objective of Saddam's dual nation-building and state-building projects was to promote a unified Iraqi nation formed of Sunnis, Shiites, Kurds, and others under a Sunni-dominated Baathist regime (Dawisha 2009, 235). This project was backed by the state's strongest pillar, the armed forces, which ruthlessly suppressed any individual or group that refused to cooperate with Saddam's imagined community. Thus the Baathist state tried to cover all ethnic and sectarian cleavages under the thin blanket of primordialism, Arab nationalism, Iraqi nationalism, and state patriotism, all supported by the armed forces.

The eruption of ethnic and sectarian politics in the post-U.S. invasion era indicates that this nation-building project was not as successful as expected and propagated by the state. However, despite its failure in nation-building, the Baathist regime was successful in developing authoritarian state institutions and effective military and security apparatuses that were able to manage the country's resources and prevent any significant internal or external threat to the state (Dawisha 2009, 220–21, 240; Stansfield 2007, 96). Although invisible ethnic and sectarian cleavages were haunting under the surface of the Baathist coercive state-building project, the authoritarian state backed by the armed forces was able to overcome most of the challenges before the U.S. invasion in 2003 (Rosiny 2015, 95). Even in the 1990s, when the Baathist state was weakened due to multiple internal and external pressures, it managed to remain the preeminent force in the country. No empirical evidence supports the notion that a localized political force could have removed Saddam from power before the U.S. invasion.

State Fragility and Insurgency (2003–2004)

The U.S.-led invasion started on March 20, 2003, when the American and British forces crossed into Iraq from Kuwait. The defeat of Iraq's armed forces and the occupation of Baghdad were completed in less than three weeks by April 19 (Dawisha 2009, 242). Following the occupation, the entire structure of the state and the army shattered into pieces, going against the expectations of American policymakers that initially assumed that the defeat of the Baathist regime would not affect the state institutions. Colin Powell, then the U.S. secretary of defense, defined the outcome of the occupation as follows: an "unanticipated aspect of the postwar occupation was the extent to which the entire structure of military and

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civil society collapsed so completely as the war ended, leaving a vast problem for the American troops to handle" (Weisman 2003). The collapse of the state and the army also created a security vacuum that gave rise to sectarian violence and insurgency.

Initially, three prevailing military-political forces emerged in the security vacuum: a Shiite religious trend that sought to dominate the national government; a Kurdish nationalist agenda in which Kurdistan's autonomy was a priority; and a Sunni Arab position that was formed in reaction to both the post-Saddam domestic politics and the U.S. occupation. The Shiite force was divided among different poles of authority from seculars to Islamists, the Kurds were divided between two major Kurdish political parties, and the Sunni Arabs split between ex-Baathists, neo-Baathists, and an array of insurgent and Islamist groups (Stansfield 2007, 4–5). The Shiite rebellion and the Kurdish resistance were not necessarily against the post-Saddam political settlement but aimed to maximize their influence in the status quo. By contrast, the Sunni insurgency resisted the status quo in which they believed they had lost power to a Shiite- and Kurd-led government in Baghdad. The three political forces and their approaches to power shaped the post-invasion political environment of Iraq.

The Shiite force including the Sadr Movement and the Hawza al-Marjaiyya, led respectively by Muqtada al-Sadr and Ayatollah Ali Sistani, were intended to maximize influence in Baghdad rather than overthrowing the Shiite government under the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq (later renamed the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq in 2007) and the Islamic Dawa Party (Stansfield 2007, 176). The alliance of the two parties named the United Iraqi Alliance won the December 2005 general election and formed the first Iraqi government following the collapse of the Baathist regime. With the formation of a new government, the military branches of the two ruling parties (including the Badr Brigade and the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq's army) were dissolved in the government (George 2014). Similarly, the Sadr Movement took part in forthcoming elections and the Hawza gradually emerged as a supporter of Baghdad against ISIS and the Iranian influence.

The major Kurdish parties, in this period, included the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), led by Jalal Talabani, and the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), led by Masoud Barzani. The two parties had jointly controlled Iraq's Kurdistan region since 1992. They also did not aim to fight against the Shiite-led government. Instead they sought to increase influ-

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ence in Baghdad and maintain the autonomy of the Kurdistan region (Anderson and Stansfield 2004, 172–79). The Kurdish parties achieved both goals through the general election in 2005: following the election, Talabani became Iraq's president and Barzani was appointed the president of the Kurdistan Region in the same year. Therefore both the government and the Coalition forces did not consider the two Kurdish parties' military wings, which included approximately 80,000 combatants mostly organized in Peshmerga units, as a serious threat (Anderson and Stansfield 2004, 179). The Kurdish forces, alongside the new armed force and the Shiite militia, subsequently fought the Sunni insurgency.

In contrast to the Shiite rebellion and the Kurd militia, the Sunni insurgency aimed to defeat the Coalition, remove the Shiite-led government, and replace it with a Sunni-led government in Baghdad (Stansfield 2007, 178–82). The emergence of the Sunni insurgency, its mobilization under a religious ideology and agenda, and its evolution into IS highly benefited from state fragility conditions in Iraq in the aftermath of the invasion.

The Contribution of State Fragility to the Rise of IS

To prevent the expansion of the Sunni insurgency and facilitate the transition of power to a democratically elected Iraqi government, the Coalition set up a step-by-step political process that began with a direct rule period by the CPA from May 2003 to June 2004. In this period, the CPA designed an interim Iraqi administration that facilitated the establishment of a transitional government. The transitional government created a constitution that provided the roadmap for the general election and an elected government (Dawisha 2009, 246).

According to this roadmap, the CPA ruled Iraq directly until sovereignty was transferred to Iraqis. The CPA planned the de-Baathification policy that resulted in the alienation of the well-trained Sunni state administrators and army officers. The CPA also appointed an Iraqi Governing Council (IGC) in mid-July 2003 to provide an Iraqi face to decision-making. IGC created Iraq's Transitional Administrative Law (TAL). TAL dissolved the IGC into an interim government under the premiership of Ayad Allawi, an ex-Baathist Shiite who had gone abroad in 1971 and 1990 and created the Iraqi National Accord, an anti-Saddam political organization based in London (Shadid 2011). With the formation of Alawi's

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interim government, the CPA and the direct rule era came to an end formally on June 28, 2004. The TAL set a strict timeline for the country's transition to democracy by holding a general election by the end of January 2005 to produce a transitional parliament and government that would draft a new constitution (Dawisha 2009, 246).

The first Iraqi election to form a transitional government took place on January 30, 2005, in which the United Iraqi Alliance (UIA), an alliance of several Shiite parties, received more than 51 percent of seats in the transitional parliament; the Kurdish Alliance took some 27 percent and Allawi's Sunni campaign received only 14 percent of the seats (Dawisha 2009, 248–49).

The sectarian divide of Iraq's politics became more visible in the general election, which finally took place on December 15, 2005 (Dawisha 2009, 252–53). As a result of this election, Nouri al-Maliki, then a leading member of the Islamic Da'wa Party, formed a coalition government that included both Arabs and Kurds. However, Maliki intensified Iraq's already emerging ethno-sectarian divide by marginalizing the Sunni Arabs from the political and security arenas (Boghani 2014). He not only filled the key cabinet positions with Shiite politicians but also fired Sunni commanders from the newly established armed force in favor of Shiites during his tenure. This policy turned what was supposed to be a national army into "a little more than a sectarian militia" that took orders from the prime minister and his inner circle directly (Thompson 2015).

Many American officials in Iraq at that time described Maliki's sectarian policy in the army as a basis for both the failure of and corruption in the armed forces. According to Jack Keane, a retired American Army vice chief of staff and the architect of the surge of 30,000 additional U.S. troops into Iraq in 2007, "Malaki went into the army and pulled out all of its distinguished leaders, whose guys were devoted to them, and put in these cronies and hacks. And those guys pocketed the money that was supposed to be used for training" (Thompson 2015).

As a result, the 2005 general election created a government that demonstrated severe weakness in providing security, services, and a sense of broad-based statehood in the citizens' view. It not only failed to fill the security and governance gap caused by state collapse but also exacerbated state fragility by drawing on a sectarian agenda. The state institutions endorsed identity-based loyalties through purposeful policies and decisions, which deepened the already serious ethno-sectarian divide in the

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society. In the security and legitimacy gap, produced by Maliki's government, violence between Sunnis and Shiites increased significantly. As a result, by fall 2006, some 100 to 130 people were killed every day, mostly because of targeted sectarian attacks (Dawisha 2009, 262).

Plagued by a political and security vacuum, the country became the arena of a power struggle between Sunnis and Shiites, on the one hand, and the scene for a regional power struggle, on the other (Abdo 2013). The level of state fragility in this period increased significantly and afforded the political space for Iraq's Sunni insurgency and the foreign jihadi fighters. All three aspects of state fragility, including poor legitimacy, weak authority, and a lack of capacity, provided the necessary conditions for the rise of IS. While the poor legitimacy and weak authority were crucial elements of state fragility, the lack of state capacity reinforced their impact in the process of the evolution of IS.

Poor Legitimacy

State legitimacy was undermined by three critical factors, including flawed political participation, sectarian politics, and the regional power's intervention in Iraq. These factors provided a condition that brought all three elements of Iraq's insurgency—the Baathists, domestic jihadis, and foreign jihadi fighters—together, facilitating their interaction and evolution into IS.

Political participation in post-Saddam Iraq can be examined in three phases: the pre-2005 election phase, the 2005 election phase, and the post-election phase. The pre-election phase consists of the period from the U.S. invasion in March 2003 until the transitional election in January 2005. The election phase includes a time frame between the transitional election in January and the first general election in December 2005. The post-election phase encompasses a time frame from 2006 to the end of Noori al-Maliki's second term in office in 2014.

According to the three fundamental sources of legitimacy, including tradition, charisma, and rational law (Weber 1958), Iraq lacked both the traditional and charismatic sources of legitimation and, meanwhile, failed to develop a rational-legal legitimacy in the three phases of state-building. The Coalition force's initial state-building agenda was the establishment of a rational-legal state grounded in modern laws and procedures, rather

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than building a political system in which the obedience of people would be based on the capacity of a leader or an established tradition or religious system (Azeez 2010). In other words, the Coalition took a policy of improving political participation as the main force of enhancing the state legitimacy (Rothstein 2009; Weatherford 1992, 150).

Political participation relates to a power-sharing mechanism that reinforces the legitimacy of the state as a recognized property of state-society relations and political order (Brinkerhoff et al. 2012, 274). Political participation, in this sense, provides a condition under which the citizens voluntarily accept state authority and obey laws, which in turn enables the state to exercise power through consent rather than coercion (Brinkerhoff et al. 2012, 274; OECD 2010, 7). A low level of political participation disrupts state-society relations, making the exercise of state power difficult if not impossible. In the absence of meaningful state-society relations, the dissatisfied communities stop obeying the law and rebel (Brinkerhoff et al. 2012, 275–76; Rothstein 2009, 319–23). While the legitimation of the political system in Iraq through political participation and good governance was a priority, in theory, the Coalition failed to develop such legitimizing bases in practice.

In the pre-election phase, the main decisions were made on the sectarian basis that mostly led to the marginalization of Sunni Arabs, on the one hand, and the exacerbation of the sectarian divide, on the other. Therefore elections, which were presumed as an effective tool of political participation, resulted in the polarization of the society, sectarian-based voting, and eventually ineffective government (al-Tamimi and Grisham 2013; Stansfield 2007, 182–91). In this phase of state-building, the CPA created the IGC parallel to enforcing the policy of the de-Baathification of Iraq's military and civil services. The IGC was comprised of 25 members, including 16 Shiites, 5 Kurds, 5 Sunnis, 1 Assyrian, and 1 Turkmen. Meanwhile, it was a coalition of six parties, including two Shiite (Abd al-Aziz al-Hakim's SCIRI and Ibrahim al-Jafari's Dawa), two Kurdish (Massoud Barani's KDP and Jalal Talabani's PUK), and two pro-American (Ayad Alawi's INA and Ahmed Chalabi's INC) parties (Stansfield 2007, 169). The Shiite and Kurd members of the IGC were influential politicians, while the Sunni members included individuals like Naseer Chderchi and Adnan Pachachi that were disconnected from the society and were viewed by Sunnis as elements of the process of "disempowering Sunni Arabs for the benefit of Shiites and Kurds" (Stansfield 2007, 170). This means the IGC as the first domestic

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governing body was exclusively dominated by Shiites and Kurds, while the Sunni members were added to the council to only give it a national face.

The marginalization of Sunni Arabs in the first phase of state-building extended with the formation of the Iraqi Interim Government (IIG) in June 2004. The IIG, which replaced both the CPA and IGC, was stacked from top to bottom with politicians from IGC (Stansfield 2007, 175). Shiites and Kurds were placed in leading positions, with only "the celebratory position of the President given to a Sunni Arab returnee from London, Ghazi al-Yawer" (Stansfield 2007, 175). This process, which was designed by the CPA, led to the further polarization of politics and eroded any legitimacy of the new state in the eyes of Sunni Arabs. In all, the CPA's legacy to Iraq was to move the country from being ideological under Saddam to become divided along ethnic and sectarian lines after his removal (Stansfield 2007, 169).

The exclusion of Sunnis from politics became more evident in the second phase of state-building from the transitional election to the conclusion of the general election (January to December 2005). During the two elections, the electoral system was designed with the presumption of sectarian voting, all electoral camps were formed along sectarian lines, and the people voted based on their sectarian ties (Dawisha 2009, 252–53; Stansfield 2007, 182–91). The January 2005 election to form a transitional government was boycotted by the Sunni Arab parties because they claimed that they were marginalized "in the pre-election political process," and therefore did "not have equal access to resources to compete with the opposition groups" (Arvanitis 2006, 531). The outcome of the boycott was a low turnout in Sunni areas. For example, the turnout in Mosul was as low as 10 percent, and most of those were Kurds (Stansfield 2007, 182–91). The pattern was repeated in Tikrit, Baquba, Ramadi, Fallujah, and parts of Baghdad. In contrast, the turnout in Kurd areas was as high as 90 percent and in Shiite areas around 80 percent (Stansfield 2007, 182–91). The election result was far from satisfying for the Sunni Arab communities that used to rule the country since its creation in the 1920s (Stansfield 2007, 182–91). While the Iraqi List, the major Sunni Arab party in the elections, won only 13 percent of the votes, the Shiites and Kurds won 48 and 25 percent, respectively (Stansfield 2007, 182–91). As a result, the transitional parliament and government were largely polarized, with Sunni Arabs being isolated in both.

The sectarian divide was also present in the general election in Decem-

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ber. During the campaigns, the Shiite UIA hardly bothered electioneering in the Kurdish areas, and Kurd candidates avoided campaigning in the southern Shiite or the central Sunni Arab provinces. The election results show that Kurdish parties captured 100 percent of the vote in Kurdish areas, Sunni parties garnered 88 percent of the vote in Sunni areas, and Shiite parties received 86 percent of the vote in Shiite areas (Dawisha and Diamond 2006, 100). As a result, the Shiite UIA formed the government after they won 46.5 percent of the parliamentary seats and the Kurdish Alliance received more than 19 percent, while the Concord Front of Sunnis received only 16 percent of the seats (Dawisha and Diamond 2006, 99).

Regardless of violent threats by AQI, which denounced the elections as a "satanic project that violates God's law," Sunni participation in the general election showed a remarkable increase, with a turnout of 70 percent of registered voters (Pan 2005; White and Neuman 2005). The Sunnis' cooperation and high turnout raised hopes that they would join the political process to build a new political system and diminish the insurgency (Pan 2005). Nevertheless, Maliki's sectarian agenda and the Sunnis' minimal role under his premiership challenged the formation of an inclusive and legitimate government in Baghdad. The marginalization of Sunnis in democratic institutions increased their demand for alternative measures in Sunni communities (Arvanitis 2006, 549–50). Joining the insurgency was a difficult but straightforward option.

Finally, in the post-election phase, state legitimacy eroded more than before in Sunni areas because of the Sunnis' further marginalization from the political participation processes (O'Driscoll 2015). In the general election, the Accord Front of Sunni Arabs had won 44 of the parliament's 275 seats, which allowed it to secure the position of the deputy prime minister and six cabinet ministries in Maliki's coalition government that was announced on May 20, 2006 (Tran 2007; With the New Government 2006). However, the Accord withdrew from the government in August 2007, accusing Maliki's party of not consulting the Accord ministers on key issues (Tran 2007). Following its withdrawal from the government, the head of the Accord, Adnan al-Dulaimi, announced that they "don't want to take part in a government which claims it is a national unity one, but instead is sectarian rather than Iraqi" (Tran 2007). Although the Accord rejoined the government a year later, sectarianism and sectarian-based decision-making in the government were prevalent during Maliki's terms in office.

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During his first term in office (2006–2010), for instance, Maliki concentrated on the marginalization of his Sunni and Kurd opponents from power. During his second term, the prime minister invested heavily in the personalization of power and the elimination of his opponents more intensely (2010–2014). In this period, he occupied the positions of the minister of defense, the minister of interior, the minister of state for national security, and commander-in-chief of the armed forces, all besides his role as prime minister (O'Driscoll 2015, 7). In his second term in office, Maliki not only used the official sources of coercion for controlling his opponents but also mounted undemocratic attacks like terrorism and treason accusations against them. His campaign of excluding and eliminating his opponents started with the trial of the Sunni vice president, Tariq al-Hashimi, who was charged with "running death squads" and sentenced to death in absence after fleeing to Turkey (O'Driscoll 2015, 7). Similar accusations and arrests were followed by the arrest of many staff and bodyguards of the Sunni finance minister, Rafie al-Issawi, and the arrest of the al-Iraqiya MP, Ahmed al-Alwani, on terrorism charges (O'Driscoll 2015, 7). Maliki's sectarian campaign and amalgamation of power under his command led to further intensification of Sunni extremism, Kurd separatism, and the shrinking of his government legitimacy beyond Shiite communities (O'Driscoll 2015, 1–18).

Due to the lack of broad-based political participation, state legitimacy in the three phases of the post-Saddam state-building could not solidify in all corners of Iraq's society. State-society relations, particularly the relationship between the Sunni society and the Shiite-led government, remained highly fragile. This process created a political atmosphere that made Sunnis receptive to the Sunni insurgency and allowed the insurgency to expand in Sunni areas against a government that they did not recognize as legitimate (Boot 2014).

In this environment, when "Sunnis saw that their only chance of surviving in Iraq was to fight as Sunnis against a US-sponsored Shiite-led government," the insurgency played a far more prominent role than any of the Iraqi governmental or military organizations in the Sunni Triangle (Cockburn 2014, 69; O'Driscoll 2015, 1). This situation facilitated the recruitment of jihadi organizations from the Sunni communities and, meanwhile, increased the desire for unification as a requirement for success. Thus the failure in building a broad-based and legitimate state in all three phases of political development in post-Saddam Iraq provided a condition highly favorable to Islamist insurgency and its transformation into IS.

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Taken together, the pre-election phase reinforced Zarqawi's so-called anti-Crusader-Safavid campaign and contributed to his Iraqification of AQI. The term Safavid or Safawi originally refers to the Iranian Safawi dynasty (1501–1722), which was used by Zarqawi to describe the alleged Iranian influence and to discredit Iraq's Shiite citizens as aliens. By using the term Crusader-Safavid alliance, Zarqawi referred to the alliance between the allied force and the post-Saddam Shiite-led Iraqi government (Eisenstadt and White 2005, 15–16; Graham 2005; Miller and Marshall 2005, 1). In this period, Zarqawi successfully sunk roots in the Sunni Triangle by interacting with and intensively recruiting from the dissatisfied Sunni communities.

Likewise, the second phase of state-building contributed to further radicalization of Sunnis and increased their sympathy to the insurgency as an alternative means of politics, compared to the democratic process that was only capable of producing a sectarian-based regime in favor of the Shiite parties. Finally, the Iraqi state's legitimacy was gravely deteriorated during the third phase of the political process due to Maliki's personalization of power and his usage of military force and political accusations against Sunni politicians. In this phase, the scattered insurgent and jihadi organizations were motivated to unify under a religious banner that could operate more effectively. The unification of AQI with five other insurgent groups, including Jaish al-Taifa al-Mansurah, Katbiyan Ansar Al-Tawhid wal Sunnah, Saray al-Jihad Group, al-Ghuraba Brigades, and al-Ahwal Brigades under the MSM umbrella organization in January 2006, was an outcome of this situation (Lister 2014, 8). MSM was rebranded as the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI) in October 2006. Thus in the face of the Coalition's failure in building a state through democratic participation, the Sunni insurgency expanded as an alternative force to create a state based on religious legitimacy.

Besides the failed political participation process, the exacerbation of sectarian politics in this period also had its roots in the Coalition's de-Baathification policy, which put an estimated 400,000 employees of the security and 100,000 employees of the civil sector out of work (Eisenstadt and White 2005, 3; Galbraith 2006, 119; Sly 2015). This policy helped Shiites and Kurds replace the traditional Sunni rulers, which escalated group grievance in Sunni communities in which both the newly established government and its security force hardly found support. According to U.S. army trainers in Iraq, only people in the Shiite-dominated greater

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Baghdad supported the ISF, whereas in the surrounding Baghdad belt that had a Sunni majority the ISF could not function without the help of Shiite militiamen (Zucchino 2014). The ISF's reliance on the Shiite militia groups increased communal disputes between Sunnis and Shiites instead of helping improve the security of the country. Sunnis viewed the activities of the Shiite-led ISF and its supplementary militia in their neighborhoods as a Shiite scheme for dominating their areas (Recknagel 2014).

Stories and observations from years after the invasion provide a clearer picture of the sectarian politics that led to a discriminatory environment throughout the country. The story of Ismail Muhammad Juwara, a former mid-level employee of Iraq's intelligence service, the Mukhabarat, who was humiliated by his Shiite countrymen, is an example in this regard (Baram 2005). A clerk at one bank where Juwara held an account called him a dog when he went to withdraw funds. The clerk told him: "he should go to Saddam to ask for his money" (Baram 2005). In an interview with the *Washington Post* in January 2004, Juwara expressed his situation as follows: "We had dreams. . . . Now we are the losers. We lost our positions, our status, the [economic] security of our families, and stability. Curse on the Americans. Curse on them" (Baram 2005).

Other observations indicate more frightening pictures of the country when sectarian attacks on Sunni communities increased in the coming years. For example, by 2005, the Mahdi Army of Moqtada al-Sadr, a major Shiite militia group, initiated a total cleansing of Baghdad's Sunni and mixed neighborhoods (Hagan et al. 2015, 680). By the end of 2006, the Mahdi Army gained dominance over the traditionally advantageous Sunnis in multiple areas of the capital city. As a result, by 2006 and 2007, Sunnis living in Baghdad were driven out of much of the city by the Shiite security forces (Cockburn 2014, 70).

According to a U.S. embassy cable in September 2007, Sunnis had largely fled to outlying areas of Baghdad or were "concentrated into small enclaves surrounded by Shia neighborhoods" (Cockburn 2014, 70). As a result, Baghdad's neighborhoods that were mixed in 2003 became exclusively under the occupation of Shiite militia by 2008 (Hagan et al. 2015, 681). Reports by international organizations, including the UN, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and others, show that Sunni communities increasingly became a target of forced displacement, kidnapping, abduction, killing, and looting by Shiite militia groups during this period (Country Information 2016, 23–24; Higel 2016; Iraq 2016; Joint

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Written 2016; Security Situation 2015; The State of the World's 2015). The increasing communal disputes were further intensified by the government's sectarian policies during Maliki's two terms in office.

The communal disputes and the government's sectarian agenda together created an environment of fear in Sunni communities. In this environment, Sunnis found themselves without an effective voice in the government (Reid 2005). Under this condition, the Sunni insurgency emerged and expanded as an alternative force, claiming to represent the community and fight the occupation that had imposed the suppressive status quo. The rough environment made the Sunni population receptive to the insurgency as they increasingly supported and joined insurgent and jihadi groups (Eisenstadt and White 2005, 17–18; Stansfield 2007, 168).

Some local elements of the insurgency, particularly the ex-Baathists and neo-Baathists that had initially created independent underground resistance groups, soon integrated into the jihadist camp to fight more effectively against a common enemy. For example, the Baathist insurgent groups like Kata'ib Salah al-Din, or the Saladin Phalanx; Kataib al-Mujahidin, or the Jihad Warriors Phalanx; Hizb al-Baaath al-Arabi al-Ishtiraki, or the Baath Arab Socialist Party; and the like soon became providers of training, weapons, and finances to jihadi elements and groups (Baram 2005, 6; Eisenstadt and White 2005, 3; Eisenstadt 2004, 101–6). Moreover, high-ranking Baathists such as Sib'awi Ibrahim Hasan (Saddam's half-brother) and General Tahir Jalil Habush (ex-chief of the Mukhabarat) became important providers of financial and strategic support to jihadis while lower-ranking Baathists were actively joining jihadi operations in the early years after the American occupation (Baram 2005, 6).

As the insurgency expanded, the Baathists played a far more significant role in the evolution of the insurgency to IS. When IS was officially launched in 2014, its caliph's two immediate deputies were former ranking officers in Iraq's military (Abu Ali al-Anbari, IS's chief of Syria operations, was a major general in the Iraqi Army, and Fadl Ahmad Abdullah al-Hiyali, IS's chief of Iraq operations, was a lieutenant colonel in Iraq's Military Intelligence and a former officer in the Iraqi Special Forces) (Lister 2015, 76–77; Sherlock 2014). Furthermore, two of the four members of IS's military council, Abu Aiman al-Iraqi and Abu Ahmad al-Alwani, were former officers in the Iraqi Army (Exclusive 2014). IS also maintained 1,000 "medium-and-top-level field commanders of the very Iraqi army which was disbanded by Americans" (Lister 2015, 35, 76–77; Sherlock 2014).

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Besides the ex-Baathists, there were thousands of so-called angry Iraqis, including citizens that had lost family members in the war or were humiliated, treated roughly, and wrongly detained at the hands of the Coalition and the Shiite-led forces, that were ready to join the resistance (Eisenstadt and White 2005, 10). While the ex-Baathists provided the insurgency with their expertise in such areas as strategic planning, military operations, and finance, the "angry Iraqis" provided effective manpower to the insurgent groups. The combination of jihadis and Baathists with ordinary Sunnis developed the insurgency into a multilayered and flexible force that was able to interact with multiple segments of the society and operate broadly.

Another sectarian factor that motivated Sunnis to join the insurgency was the formation of independent Shiite and Kurdish militia brigades that freely operated in Sunni neighborhoods. Some of those militia groups, particularly the larger and more established ones including the Shiite Badr Organization and the Kurdish Peshmerga units, were tied to Iraq's leading political parties and supported by the government (Beehner 2005). These militia groups were initially created to fill in the security gap left by an ineffective ISF. They were mobilized to fight alongside the official troops of the ministries of Interior and Defense against the Sunni insurgency (Beehner 2005). However, some of these groups gradually set up their operations independently in Sunni areas, which resulted in violent reactions (Beehner 2005).

The Shiite militia groups' sectarian affiliation, structure, and independent operations undermined the idea of a national security force and a unified government in Iraq. It also increased skepticism toward the government's security policies in the Sunni communities (Beehner 2005). In general, the Shiite militia operations, whether independently or alongside the ISF, were highly unwelcomed and exacerbated the antigovernment sentiments in the Sunni Triangle. In this environment, the jihadis easily moved and maneuvered throughout the Sunni areas by self-advertising as a Sunni resistance army against the foreign occupation and the Shiite domination. The expansion of the anti-Shiite sentiments in Sunni communities, which was fueled by both the government's sectarian policies and the insurgency's propaganda, contributed to the insurgency's recruitment and its evolution to a jihadi Salfi organization.

Interviews with captured IS fighters show that the organization broadly used the anti-Shiite rhetoric and the Sunni grievances in its recruitment campaigns. For example, Walid Ismail, a 20-year-old IS fighter who was

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captured by the Kurdish forces in November 2016, joined IS because Sunni leaders told him he will be a member of freedom fighters to rescue Iraq from the Shiite domination. Walid, the former bakery worker, expressed his feelings as follows: "We loved [IS] because they relieved us from the oppression of the Shiites who branded all Sunnis as terrorists" (Barnes 2016). Other evidence shows that even the well-disciplined fighters of the Sahwa Movement, which emerged as a Sunni tribal force against the insurgency in 2007, switched sides because of Maliki's *Shiafication* of ISF and his unwillingness to integrate the Sahwa members into the security force structure due to their sectarian differences. As a result, while hundreds of Sahwa fighters directly joined ISI, thousands of those fighters who were still on the government payroll covertly aided the insurgency (Williams and Adnan 2010). The sectarian politics also put the Sunni tribal sheikhs that initially resisted the insurgency in favor of IS. When these sheikhs' requests to arm their tribes against the insurgency were refused by Baghdad for sectarian reasons, they pledged allegiance to IS (ISIL Wins Support 2015).

Taken together, the legitimacy of the new Iraqi state and its armed forces dramatically dropped in Sunni areas because of the Shiite and Kurd militias' intervention and operations in Sunni areas, the *Shiafication* of Iraq's armed forces, and the government's sectarian policies that increased group grievance in Sunni communities. The sectarian environment that remarkably intensified the divide between *us* and the *other* in Iraqi society made the Sunni communities receptive to the insurgency as part of the *us*. This environment not only eased the insurgency's recruitment from Sunni communities but also provided the insurgency with a broad sanctuary and support basis in Sunni areas. The expansion of the insurgency and its evolution to IS benefited greatly from this condition.

In addition to the failed political participation and the government's sectarian policies, regional politics also undermined the legitimacy of the Iraqi state, providing another state fragility condition for the rise of IS. In the absence of a legitimate and effective government in Baghdad, regional powers, particularly Iran and Saudi Arabia, intervened in the country to support their proxies in the sectarian war. The defeat of Saddam, hostile to both the Iranian ayatollahs and the Saudi sheikhs, upended the regional balance of power, opening Iraq's doors to regional rivals (Fisher 2016b). Following Saddam's defeat, Iran increased its influence in Baghdad and also wielded Shiite militias to control Iraqi streets (Fisher 2016b). Saudi

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Arabia, by contrast, sought to match Iran's reach by fostering sectarianism and allying itself with ex-Baathist and Sunni militants (Fisher 2016b).

Iran increased its influence in Iraq through the Shiite-led government, the major Shiite militia groups, and the pro-Iranian Shiite religious figures such as Moqtada al-Sadr (Fisher 2016b; Krohley 2014). The two leading Shiite parties including the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), which was renamed the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI) in 2007, and the Islamic Da'wa Party were deeply influenced by the Iranian establishment. ISCI was founded in Iran and the Da'wa is headquartered in Tehran since 1979. Both parties received huge amounts of support from Iran during their campaign against Saddam in 1980 (Bakhash 1984, 233; Wright 2001, 124). Following the fall of Saddam's regime, the two parties became Iran's great source of influence in Iraq. In addition to its official influence through the two ruling parties, Iran also controlled the Shiite militia groups. The major Shiite rebellion groups including the Mahdi Army and the Badr Organization were pro-Iranian (Al-Marashi 2016; Profile 2012; Simon and Takeyh 2006; Stansfield 2007, 176–78). Iran also funded and mobilized many other Iraqi Shiite militia groups like the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF), which was created against ISIS in 2014.

Overall, the regional intelligence agencies report that Iran trained and armed as many as 40,000 Iraqis to prevent a retreat of Shiite control in the early years after the U.S. invasion (Simon and Takeyh 2006). Moreover, Tehran deployed a large number of the Revolutionary Guard's Quds Force besides officers from the Ministry of Intelligence, the National Security, and the Lebanese Hezbollah in the first three years following the U.S. invasion in Iraq (Simon and Takeyh 2006). The Iranian personnel in Iraq monitored the movement of the Coalition forces, looked after weapons caches, facilitated cross-border travel of Shiite clerics, smuggled munitions into Iraq, and recruited locals as intelligence sources (Simon and Takeyh 2006).

By having Iraq under its control, Iran followed a regional agenda to dominate a Shiite coalition in the region against Saudi Arabia and its allies. The agenda was perceived by King Abdullah of Jordan as Iran's attempt to form a *Shiite Crescent* that expanded from Iran to Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon (Cordesman and Davies 2007, 131). Iran's multilayered activities in Iraq not only led to the increasing influence of the Ayatollahs in Baghdad but also turned Iran into a key player in Iraqi politics, giving Tehran leverage

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at the international level. For example, Iran used its Iraqi card openly in its nuclear stalemate game with the United States (Simon and Takeyh 2006).

With the establishment of a Shiite-dominated government in Iraq that was profoundly influenced by Iran, Saudi Arabia found itself isolated in the country. Before the U.S. invasion, the Saudi government had invested in a regime change agenda in Baghdad, which was supposed to replace the anti-Saudi Baathist regime with a government led by pro-Saudi Iraqi generals (MacLeod 2003). The rise of the Shiite-led government in Baghdad caused a political shock in Riyadh. Therefore, from the beginning of the political development in post-Saddam Iraq, Saudi politicians designed both formal and informal approaches to balance Iran's growing influence in Iraq.

The Saudis' formal approach was based on diplomatic measures directed at pressuring the Americans to bring Sunnis together by giving them leadership roles in Baghdad (Cordesman and Davies 2007, 211). The kingdom's purpose, in this context, was to keep the ex-Baathists involvement in a power-sharing arrangement (Keynoush 2016, 178). In contrast to its formal policy, the Saudi state's informal approach to Iraq included the promotion of the jihadist ideology in Sunni communities as a response to the Iranian government's efforts of projecting an ideological war in the region (Tisdall 2010). The U.S. officials' communications suggest that the Saudi government provided financial and logistic support to ISIS and other extremist groups through its informal policy in Iraq. For example, an email by the United States secretary of state, Hillary Clinton, shows her deep concern with the Saudi support of Sunni jihadi groups including ISIS:

> We need to use our diplomatic and more traditional intelligence assets to bring pressure on the governments of Qatar and Saudi Arabia, which are providing clandestine financial and logistic support to Isil and other radical Sunni groups in the region. (Samuel 2016)

Moreover, the emergence of the Sunni jihadi movement in Iraq was completely in line with the Saudi Wahhabi agenda that sought to expand Wahhabi influence in the Islamic world by mobilizing and legitimizing jihadi organizations. For this reason, the Saudi powerful clergy provided religious justification in support of the Sunni insurgency in Iraq and beyond. The Iraq-based insurgency was publicly announced as jihad by several Saudi

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clerics in October 2004, and a month later 26 prominent Saudi clerics, including Sheikh Salman al-Audah and Sheikh Nasser al-Omar, signed a fatwa calling upon Iraqis to rise against the occupation (Bender 2005; Obaid and Cordesman 2005). Young Saudis perceived the fatwa as a religious call for jihad in Iraq. Therefore the fatwa motivated thousands of Saudi citizens to join the insurgency (Hegghammer 2008b, 11). Although the real figures of Saudi fighters in Iraq are somewhat disputed, official sources suggest that 2,000 to 3,000 Saudi citizens join the insurgency in the early years following the U.S. invasion (Hegghammer 2008b, 11).

Overall, the intervention of Iran and Saudi Arabia in post-Saddam Iraq fueled the sectarian conflict, aiding the development of the Sunni insurgency as a response to the growing Shiite domination in the country. While Iran was attempting to form its Shiite Crescent by controlling Baghdad and Saudi Arabia was trying to counter Iran by expanding influence in the Sunni communities, the evolution of the Sunni insurgency remarkably benefited from the sectarian competition between the two regional powers. Although the Saudi government has constantly rejected any links to JSGs in Iraq, no informed observer can ignore the Saudi and the Iranian hand in a fueling sectarian competition between Shiites and Sunnis that facilitated the formation of the most aggressive JSG of the modern age, IS. In this hostile environment, IS climbed on the shoulders of the states that competed in the Sunni versus Shiite battle in Iraq and beyond (Gerges 2016, 4, 20).

Weak Authority

Weak authority, in terms of the lack of a legitimate and effective security and law enforcement apparatus, created a favorable condition for the emergence of IS. Before the U.S. invasion, the state authority was consolidated and performed in the country by Iraq's 400,000 armed force, which was known as the most effective force in the Gulf region (Otterman 2003). The key components of the armed forces including its army, police, and intelligence were destroyed after the invasion, leading to a severe security vacuum that was not possible to fill immediately. Therefore the CPA designed a step-by-step plan to rebuild Iraq's armed forces by fulfilling three major tasks: the neutralization of the insurgency through direct operations until an Iraqi force was able to assume responsibility, the rebuilding of ISF, and

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the reconstruction and reformation of defense and security institutions (Rathmell et al. 2005, 1).

To accomplish the first task, the Coalition forces launched a nationwide military operation to confront the situation directly. However, the operation was largely ineffective because when areas were cleaned by the Coalition force the newly built ISF failed to maintain them (Rubin 2004). As a result, disputed areas in the Sunni Triangle remained unstable and ungoverned, which provided safe havens to both the insurgency and the international jihadis. Security assessment reports show when the CPA handed authority over to the Iraqi Interim Government on June 28, 2004, it was clear that the Coalition forces had made little progress in its first task of restoring order and neutralizing the insurgency. By this time, the number of domestic members of the insurgency grew from 12,000 to 20,000 and its foreign members totaled 3,000 (Eisenstadt and White 2005, 7–8; Obaid and Cordesman 2005, 4–7). The ISF remained ineffective in restoring order for many years to come. Even by the time ISI grew stronger in 2012, the ISF was still a "brittle force which could neither control Iraq nor resist any major blow" (Knights 2016, 20–21).

The Coalition's failure in fulfilling the first task of neutralization slowed down its ability to accomplish the second and third tasks, including rebuilding the ISF and the reconstruction of its defense and security institutions. The two tasks, in general, consisted of building four major security sectors including a national security committee to coordinate various security-related activities, the defense sector that included the Ministry of Defense (MoD) and the armed forces, the security sector that included the Ministry of Interior (MoI) and the police force, and the justice sector that included judicial and prison systems (Rathmell et al. 2005). The plan excluded the restoration of the intelligence system. The process and flaws of building these four security sectors are discussed next.

(1) ***National Security Committee.*** In June 2004, CPA established Iraq's national security committee, called the Ministerial Committee on National Security (MCNS). This committee was comprised of the Iraqi politicians and the military-security leaders and meant to engage in the policy development of the security sector and consult Iraq's security with the IGC (Rathmell et al. 2005). However, because of the lack of a sufficient and effective domestic force when almost all military operations were planned and conducted directly by the Coalition, the MCNS remained a ceremonial body until it was entirely dissolved (Rathmell et al. 2005).

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(2) ***Defense Sector.*** The rebuilding of the defense sector, which included the MoD and the armed forces, suffered from three managerial, political, and contextual miscalculations. In terms of management, the CPA failed to balance the development of MoD institutions and the armed forces, with the latter being developed much faster than the former (Barton and Croker 2004, 27; Rathmell et al. 2005, 1). The unbalanced development made the civil management of the armed force extremely difficult, if not impossible.

Politically, a weak MoD paved the way for sectarian-based recruitment in the army's separate divisions that were largely commanded by Shiite officers. This in turn challenged the creation of a national army that was expected to reflect the ethnic, religious, and sectarian mosaic of the country.

Contextually, the initial plan to rebuild Iraq's armed forces did not take the real security problems in the country seriously. The Coalition force's initial plan was to create a classical army for external defense, yet the main problem in the country was internal, including sectarian violence and insurgency (Rathmell et al. 2005, 36). Therefore, while the Iraqi armed force was trained to fight an external enemy, it failed to execute key military functions when called upon to fight the insurgency (Rathmell et al. 2005, 41). The Coalition revised the plan by adding counterinsurgency lessons in the training of the armed forces in spring 2004, but it was too late to respond to the insurgency that was already expanding in the security vacuum (Eisenstadt and White 2005, 7–8; Hoffman 2004).

To fill the security vacuum and face the insurgency more effectively, the Coalition force created an extra military force named the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps (ICDC) in early 2004. The ICDC operations created more security challenges than it helped resolve. The corps' operations overlapped the police functions, even though its personnel were trained as soldiers instead of policemen (Rathmell et al. 2005, 41). As a result of the Coalition's managerial, political, and contextual miscalculations and its failure to effectively respond to the security problem, the security vacuum in the country grew wider, which a JSG like IS was preparing to fill.

(3) ***Security Sector.*** The reconstruction of the MoI and the police force had a mixed result. Unlike the defense sector, the MoI was not entirely dissolved through the CPA's de-Baathification because the Coalition initially planned to hand over responsibility for policing to domestic institutions as soon as feasible (Rathmell et al. 2005, 42). Police recruitment, equipment,

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training, and infrastructure development programs had made significant progress by July 2004 with the actual number of serving police personnel reaching 120,000 (Rathmell et al. 2005, 46).

Nonetheless, the development of the police force suffered from the Coalition's incoherent vision about Iraq's security priorities and the lack of state capacity in providing a national security agenda. The main reason for these shortcomings was the Coalition's interference in managing the day-to-day operations of the MoI and the police instead of developing a national agenda for institutional development and capacity-building in the security section (Rathmell et al. 2005, 53–54). The MoI's failure in delivering urban and rural policing, controlling the borders, and managing the population and weapons were the outcome of both the poor support system and the underqualified police force (2005, 53–56).

The police force's inability in conducting basic tasks allowed foreign jihadis to infiltrate Iraq and interact with domestic elements of the insurgency in ungoverned areas. The lack of an effective border control force was evident from the widespread smuggling, infiltration of transnational jihadis, and cross-border traffickings (Negus 2004; Rathmell et al. 2005, 55). To deter arms smugglers and foreign militants, the Coalition increased patrols along Iraq's borders in 2004, which did not provide a permanent solution (Schmitt 2004). Iraq's borders remained outside effective state control even after the formation of IS in 2014 (al-Mukhtar 2015).

The Coalition force and the MoI also failed to guard Iraq's 2,700 identified munitions sites. Parts of those sites were initially looted by elements of the former regime that supported the insurgency. Reports show that most explosives and weapons used in attacks against the American force and the Iraqi troops were supplied by those elements (Schmitt and Bergman 2003). Regardless of their vulnerability to the insurgency, the munitions sites remained poorly secured for years. The MoI's weapons control section that was assigned to manage the vast ammunition storage sites did not have the necessary force and resources to secure those sites (Rathmell et al. 2005, 56). In the absence of effective policing and the Coalition's failure in developing the MoI properly, thousands of foreign fighters from Saudi Arabia, Syria, Jordan, Egypt, Iran, Afghanistan, Chechnya, and elsewhere infiltrated Iraq unchecked, finding shelter and support in ungoverned areas of the Sunni Triangle, where all elements of the insurgency interacted and cooperated freely (Hawramany 2004; Schmitt 2004).

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(4) ***Intelligence Sector.*** The rebuilding of Iraq's intelligence apparatus was initially excluded from the Coalition's state-building agenda in Iraq. When coordinated intelligence was critical to the success of both the counter-insurgency and the fight against organized crime, the CPA assigned the establishment of domestic intelligence to future governments (Rathmell et al. 2005, 62). The CPA officials believed that the MoI and MoD intelligence had enough capability in collecting the needed information and the American 1st Armored Division in Baghdad's intelligence cell was also capable of providing enough support for the Coalition's intelligence efforts (Rathmell et al. 2005, 62). This means that the CPA did not see an immediate need to reconstruct Iraq's intelligence sector. This assumption caused an intelligence gap that was easily and immediately filled with the intelligence networks and operational cells of the insurgency. A typical insurgent cell in Iraq consisted of 5 to 10 informants and fighters. However, the CIA used the term *cell* in Iraq interchangeably, with the unit consisting of 20 to 100 combatants (Nance 2015, 108).

While the domestic insurgent cells were homogenous, the jihadi cells were multinational. The latter functioned as the *nuclei* of a transnational organization that brought all elements of the Iraq-based insurgency under a unifying and sense-making ideology and agenda (Partlow 2006). In the intelligence gap, the remnants of Saddam's intelligence apparatus also expanded their underground networks and activities that further facilitated the jihadi operations. The ex-Baathist intelligence was far ahead of the Coalition in its ability in gathering information, networking, and mobilizing the population in favor of the insurgency and the jihadi groups (Rathmell et al. 2005, 62).

Contribution of Weak Authority to the Rise of IS

In the absence of an effective ISF in the early years after the invasion, the Coalition force policed Iraq in ways that were unpleasant to the public (Rathmell et al. 2005, 3). Lack of a sufficient domestic force and the Coalition's direct operations created a condition of fear and chaos in which the seeds of the Iraq-based insurgency as forebears of IS were planted.

The emergence of IS's predecessors and their long journey toward the formation of a transnational jihadi organization were done in three phases.

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First, the infiltration of foreign jihadi groups, particularly Zarqawi's JTJ, into Iraq. Second, the emergence of an anti-occupation and anti-Shiite domestic insurgency and their interaction with trained ex-Baathists. Third, the interaction of the domestic and foreign elements of the insurgency and their integration in a uniform jihadi organization in security vacuums left by the weak state authority.

As early as May 2003, foreign jihadis and jihadi groups moved into the Sunni Triangle and quickly interacted and cooperated with domestic jihadis and ex-Baathists (Weaver 2006). The Sunni Triangle including parts of Baghdad very soon became a physical safe haven for the jihadi and the insurgent groups in 2003 and 2004. The *physical safe haven* refers to an ungoverned area "in which terrorist groups, because of inadequate governance capacity and security force, could freely organize, plan, raise funds, communicate, recruit, train, transit, and operate in relative security because of inadequate governance capacity, political will, or both" (Terrorist Safe Havens 2015, chap. 5). All three elements of the Iraq-based insurgency including foreign and domestic jihadis and the ex-Baathists mostly grouped, regrouped, interacted, and cooperated freely in ungoverned spaces of Falluja, Ramadi, Samarra, Balad, Mosul, and Tal Afar, all located in the Sunni Triangle. These ungoverned areas were self-controlled by Sunni tribes that for sectarian reasons facilitated and supported the activities of the insurgency.

In addition to ISF's inability to control the Sunni Triangle, the evolution of the insurgency also benefited from the support of discontent Sunni tribes that looked at the insurgency as a defensive and resistance force during Iraq's sectarian war. According to some tribal leaders, the people who supported the insurgency included both ex-Baathists and ordinary people that were *harmed* [by Americans and Shiites]. Some tribal leaders that did not cooperate with the insurgency even received death threats from their tribesmen. Sheikh Gazi al-Essawi, the leader of the Bu-Essa tribe in Falluja, for example, stated in an interview in November 2003 that he and other tribal sheikhs that regularly met the Coalition commanders received death threats from their tribesmen:

> Every week we meet with the [Coalition] commander, as sheiks and religious leaders, and I am one of them. Every week we meet with him. We are looked at as collaborators. Some say, "You go and meet with the Americans. What did you achieve?" We did get death threats. (Al-Essawi 2003)

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Therefore most tribal leaders preferred the insurgency to the Americans and the government. The alliance between tribes and the insurgency was broad and intense. The alliance between Ansar al-Sunnah Army and the Army of Muslims, two al-Qaeda affiliates, with Al-Janabi and al-Jbour, the two biggest and most loyal tribes to Saddam Hussein, in Latifiyah is an example (Abdullah 2008). The concentration and activities of the two jihadi organizations in Latifiyah were so intense that the locals assimilated the town to the famous tribal-insurgent alliance in Afghanistan, describing it as a *Taliban republic* (Abdullah 2008).

Although the Coalition operations in this area pushed the insurgency center to the border between Iraq and Syria in 2004, the jihadi cells and networks were too complex and multilayered to be eradicated by ephemeral operations in the absence of effective domestic force to control the area permanently (Owens 2009, 151). Therefore jihadis easily returned to their strongholds after surviving the Coalition's heavy military operations. For example, a joint Coalition and Iraqi operation in November-December 2004 removed jihadis from Fallujah, but due to the lack of sufficient and effective ISF to keep the city out of the jihadis' reach, jihadi groups returned and continued their attacks on the city and towns around it until ISIS completely captured the city in early 2014 (Hashim 2006, 40–46).

There are numerous examples of the ISF's quantitative and qualitative weakness in keeping the Tringle out of the jihadis' reach. The growth of jihadi operations and attacks in al-Anbar, for instance, was the outcome of a low number of ISF in the province. Until July 2006, there were only 200 uniformed Iraqi police officers and provincial troops in Ramadi, the capital of the province, that were supposed to protect the city against thousands of insurgents and jihadi militants (Caul 2007). When the number increased to 6,700 in mid-2007, insurgent attacks dramatically dropped (Caul 2007).

In addition to the lack of a sufficient number of security forces in specific areas, the qualitative ineffectiveness of the ISF was another problem. A remarkable example, in this regard is the fall of Fallujah and Mosul to ISIS in 2014. In Mosul, an estimated 30,000 Iraqi soldiers could not defend the city and fled after a quick confrontation with as few as 800 jihadis under the command of Baghdadi (Islamic State 2015). Even in areas under governmental control, the ISF was not able to provide basic security to its citizens and governmental authorities. In a famous case, the governor of al-Anbar province, Abdul Karim Barjas, resigned on August 5, 2004, following the kidnapping of his three sons by jihadis. In return

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for the release of his sons, Barjas appeared on a videotape, announcing his resignation and apologizing for his cooperation with the Coalition force (Fierce Fighting 2004).

In the absence of an effective domestic force and despite numerous Coalition operations in the Sunni Triangle, the area remained out of effective government control for years. In this circumstance, Zarqawi and his lieutenants managed to absorb both the foreign fighters and the domestic elements of the insurgency into his organization, developing it to AQI in 2004 (Eisenstadt and White 2005, 15–16; Graham 2005; Miller and Marshall 2005). AQI was the outcome of Zarqawi's interaction with al-Qaeda cells and safe houses located in tiny villages and towns around Baghdad and other parts of the Sunni Triangle where all other jihadi commanders and operatives were also sheltered (Filkins et al. 2006; Gordon and Cave 2007; Hawramany 2004). This area was key to the evolution of the insurgency to IS.

The Sunni Triangle was home to large numbers of the former regime military and security personnel that was motivated and prepared to support the insurgency against the Coalition and the Shiite-dominated government (Eisenstadt and White 2005, 11). This situation facilitated the gathering and interaction of the scattered jihadi and Baathist groups in the area (Eisenstadt and White 2005, 5). The AQI's incorporation with five other groups in MSM in January 2006 and MSM's transformation into ISI in October of the same year greatly benefited from this condition (Lister 2014, 8).

Before the establishment of ISI as a centralized and hierarchical organization, the Iraq-based insurgency was made up of a "web of networks" linked by personal, tribal, and group ties (Eisenstadt and White 2005, 15). Each group was involved in a range of activities, including recruitment, training, financing, developing propaganda, and conducting guerrilla and terrorist attacks. Most of these activities were supported by former elements of the regime who, in addition to providing other supports, supplied the insurgency with arms and ammunition (Eisenstadt and White 2005, 15). With the help of elements from the former regime, the insurgency obtained a very large supply of arms, explosives, and munitions (Eisenstadt and White 2005, 10; Schmitt and Bergman 2003; Graham and Ricks 2004). Moreover, former army officers and soldiers equipped the insurgent and jihadi groups with intelligence and trained them in military skills that demonstrably improved their operational effectiveness and

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organizational capacity (Eisenstadt and White 2005, 5). The insurgent and jihadi groups' quick interaction and their incorporation with ex-Baathists facilitated their incorporation into ISI.

The formation of ISI marked a new phase in Iraq's war. With the rise of ISI, all insurgent groups and jihadi organizations integrated into a hierarchical and centralized jihadi organization with a religious leader, a fully structured cabinet, a sense-making ideology, and a common goal (Lister 2014, 8). ISI combined all domestic and international elements of the Sunni insurgency in Iraq under a jihadi Salafi command that followed a caliphate-based objective (Lister 2014, 9).

The ISI evolved into ISIS by expanding its operational domain to Syria on April 9, 2013, and ultimately transformed into IS a year later when the caliph announced the establishment of a pan-Islamic state (Lister 2014, 13). As such, weak state authority, in terms of the lack of an effective and legitimate ISF, provided the condition necessary for the gradual evolution of the insurgency into a transnational jihadi organization that captured territory, operated beyond sovereign boundaries, created mini-states throughout the Muslim world, and expanded terrorist cells in Western countries.

Being aware of ISF's ineffectiveness and relying on its organized and motivated militants, ISIS attacked and captured Mosul on June 10, 2014. This was a turning point in the evolution of the jihadi organization into a state-like structure that not only took control of a major political and economic center with a population of 1.8 million but also acquired huge amounts of U.S.-made weaponry that included armored vehicles (Islamic State 2015). Mosul was entirely out of state control when most domestic and international jihadis freely entered the city to pledge allegiance to the self-declared caliph.

As such, in the absence of an effective ISF, a huge ungoverned area as large as Mosul was created to accommodate the establishment of the caliphate. Following the emergence of IS, both American and Iraqi officials admitted that the favorable condition for the evolution of the insurgency to IS was provided by Iraq's weak security apparatus, on the one hand, and the slow process of creating a professional ISF to fill the security gap, on the other. Some experts describe the slow process of creating an effective domestic force as "a huge strategic mistake" that greatly benefited the emergence of IS from the post-invasion chaotic situation (Thompson 2015).

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Lack of Capacity

Another significant aspect of state fragility in post-Saddam Iraq was the lack of capacity. Evidence shows that the lack of state capacity, particularly in terms of the state's inability to address poverty and unemployment in the Sunni communities, intensified the two other state fragility conditions (i.e., the poor legitimacy and the weak authority). However, the lack of capacity did not produce an independent condition for the rise of IS. Therefore, unlike the case of al-Qaeda, the lack of capacity played a marginal role in this case.

With the state collapse in Iraq, the country's overall economy worsened and the state institutions ceased to provide any meaningful services. The outcome was a high level of poverty and unemployment, especially in the Sunni communities. In this capacity gap, the insurgent groups expanded recruitment in the Sunni Triangle by offering attractive salaries and bonuses.

An opinion poll conducted in March 2005 indicates that some 44 percent of respondents in the Tikrit and Baquba areas, which are largely populated by Sunni Arabs, believed that the infrastructure and economy were the most urgent issues facing the country (Eisenstadt and White 2005, 14). However, both the government and the Coalition not only failed to address the problem but also were unable to restore the state institutions that traditionally provided basic services (Cordesman and Davies 2007, 88). As a result, living conditions, particularly in the Sunni Triangle, dramatically worsened (Humanitarian Briefing 2007).

While unemployment and poverty were dramatically increasing in Sunni areas to hundreds of thousands as a result of the de-Baathifaction and war, the Coalition was only able to create 30,000 jobs by July 2004 (Barton and Crocker 2004, 50). Unemployment in Fallujah, for instance, was close to 60 percent in 2004 (Cordesman and Davies 2007, 95). Dire living conditions and the government's failure in addressing them were largely used by the insurgency in its recruitment campaign. This situation further motivated the ex-Baathists and the "angry youth" to join the insurgency that was already emerging in ungoverned areas against a government that they did not recognize as legitimate. Those who had lost jobs and were not trusted to be hired again, along with the Sunni tribes that had lost the traditional state aid, had no choice but to join the insurgency as an alternative source that paid satisfactory salaries. The insurgent groups' amount

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of payment depended on the type of service one could offer and changed from place to place. According to one report, the insurgency "offered cash bounties of $1,000 for a Shiite, $2,000 for a member of the Iraqi National Guard and $3,000 for an American" in 2004 (Tringle of Death 2004). Another report from Latifiyah shows that insurgent groups in the same year "offered bounties of $1,000 for [killing] a policeman, $2,000 for a member of the National Guard, $10,000 for an Iraqi journalist or translator and even more for a foreigner" (Shadid 2004).

When the insurgency transformed into ISIS, the organization diversified its employment options by offering a variety of salaries for different jobs. According to Walid Ismail, the 20-year-old bakery worker who was captured by the Kurdish Peshmerga force in November 2016, payment was a significant factor in his decision to join ISIS. Ismail stated that to support his family he had no option but to join ISIS because the group offered him "500,000 dinars per month to hold a machine gun and stand guard on a street" (Barnes 2016).

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CHAPTER 7

Causes of al-Qaeda Revolt in Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia is the birthplace of Wahhabism and the cradle of modern jihadi movements. Saudi Wahhabism is the cornerstone of both modern Salafism and global jihadism. The jihadi Salafi movement and JSGs, in this sense, are historically and ideologically linked to Saudi Arabia and its Wahhabi tradition (Bunzel 2016, 25). Wahhabism is associated with the political thoughts and teachings of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1703–1792), a Sunni theologian who was born and raised in Najd in central Arabia. Wahhab created a Salafi school that aimed to reform and revive Muslims' beliefs and behavior per the strict methods of the *Salaf* or the earliest Muslims that lived during the time of the Prophet in the 7th century (Choksy and Choksy 2015). Wahhab's method was an extension of the Salafi school established by Ibn Taymiyyah (1263–1328), who emphasized Muslims to return to the Quran and Hadith as the only sources of guidance. Wahhab renovated and reinvented Taymiyyah's Salafist doctrine in the 18th century. Therefore adherents to Wahhabism prefer to be called Salafis while the term Wahhabism is mostly used by outsiders to define Wahhab's followers in Arabia and beyond (Choksy and Choksy 2015, 25; DeLong-Bas2008, 25).

Wahhabism emerged as one of the many Salafi or revivalist movements that arose in different corners of the Muslim world in the 18th century (DeLong-Bas2008, 8). Unlike the 19th- and 20th-century Islamist movements that emerged against external invaders, the 18th-century movements arose as a response to the internal conditions of the Muslim societies. They believed that Muslim societies and their systems of belief and behavior were being corrupted because of domestic anomalies, and therefore they

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needed to be reformed by a return to the fundamentals of Islam. Four principles shaped the revivalist strategy of reforming the Muslim society in the 18th century. First, adherence to Tawhid or monotheism and its reflection in public life and political order. Second, the implementation of the sharia as the law of the land that had historically helped the Islamic empires and caliphates to recover from material ills. Third, a call for a return to the Quran and Hadith as the fundamental sources of guidance and moral reconstruction. Fourth, an extreme reliance on a content-driven methodology in studying the Hadith, which suggested that the surface content of Hadith is key to understand the Prophet's message. As such, the revivalist movement broke from the tradition of Hadith studies that emphasized a focus on chains of transmissions, authentication, and historical contexts in understanding and interpreting the Hadith as a key source of Islamic guidance (DeLong-Bas 2008, 9–11).

Wahhabism was a pragmatist reflection of this movement that incorporated all major trends of thought that dominated revivalism in the 18th century. However, like any other similar movement that was the baby of its time and society, Wahhabism represented the socioreligious doctrine of the isolated desert tribes of central Arabia that was based on severe religious practices, isolationism, and xenophobia. In this sense, Wahhabism was different from the cosmopolitan Islam of diverse cities like Baghdad, Istanbul, and Cairo, which was more tolerant, multicultural, and interactive (DeLong-Bas 2008, 8; Shane 2016). However, Wahhabism was not violent in nature. It gradually transformed from a reformist movement to various jihadi and violent waves in different domestic and international contexts (DeLong-Bas 2008, 123–24). The second half of the 20th century is critical in this process.

Since the 1970s, the Wahhabi followers have not only participated in the global jihad against both communism and liberalism but also motivated domestic jihadi activities throughout the Islamic world. As a result, in the past four decades, Wahhabis and ordinary Saudi citizens have fought in all jihadi wars from Afghanistan to Chechnya to the Balkans to Iraq to Syria and elsewhere side by side with local jihadis, and they contributed to the formation of JSGs including al-Qaeda and IS. Saudi Wahhabism produced not only Osama bin Laden and his close lieutenants but also motivated Saudi citizens to take part in the global jihad against the West following the end of the Cold War. For example, 15 of the 19 hijackers of the 9/11 attacks were Saudi citizens, most suicide bombers in the

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post-Saddam Iraq held Saudi passports, and the numbers of Saudi fighters in ISIS were higher than any other country after Tunesia (Shane 2016). Moreover, Wahhabism turned to an ideological source for those individuals that conducted or plotted terrorist attacks in Western cities (Choksy and Choksy 2015, 23–25).

Modern Wahhabism motivates jihad throughout the globe. However, Saudi jihadis have mostly avoided waging jihadi operations inside Saudi Arabia. Instead they travel and fight in all jihadi frontlines outside the Peninsula. The Saudi citizens' interest in jihad outside the country is motivated and supported by the kingdom's policy of *projecting jihad abroad* to prevent violence inside. In this sense, both the Saudi state and its Wahhabi establishment are directly behind most of what occurs as both domestic and global jihad. Contrary to supporting jihad everywhere in the world, the Wahhabi scholars have publicly delegitimized any violent Islamist act inside Saudi Arabia. The Saudi state and its Wahhabi establishment have provided financial and moral support to the radicalization of the youth throughout the Muslim world to keep jihad abroad, on the one hand, and protect the kingdom from jihadi flames, on the other (Choksy and Choksy 2015, 23). Thus the Saudi state and its Wahhabi establishment have played simultaneously the role of the firefighters inside Saudi Arabia and the role of arsonists outside the country (Shane 2016).

The Wahhabi narrative of Islam that is financed and supported by the Saudi state has broadly disrupted local traditions in dozens of Islamic countries, paving the way for the rise and expansion of JSGs (Shane 2016). A well-known instance is the Afghan war against the Soviet Union in the 1980s. During this war, the Saudi Wahhabis motivated and supported jihadis of various backgrounds to join the fight against the Red Army in Afghanistan. Parallel to this direct engagement, the Saudi state and its Wahhabi establishment spent four billion dollars per year to spread Wahhabi centers in Afghanistan and Pakistan to train local students and fighters with the Wahhabi ideology (Choksy and Choksy 2015, 27). This project led to the defeat of Najibullah's regime in Afghanistan and a civil war between the Saudi-supported mujahidin groups. The Taliban, which provided a sanctuary to bin Laden and al-Qaeda, emerged amid the civil war. In other jihadi fronts from the Middle East to the Balkans to the Caucasus to Central and South Asia, the Saudi money, the Wahhabi ideology, and the Saudi-directed fighters played key roles.

The individual fighters and organizations that arose with the Saudi

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money and its Wahhabi arsenal eventually contributed to the rise and evolution of global jihadi organizations such as al-Qaeda, IS, and their affiliates. The influence of Wahhabi culture has motivated societies to become more conservative and Salafist and against their tolerant and to some extent secular domestic culture (Shane 2016). Millions of women and girls in South Asia, particularly in Pakistan and Afghanistan, wear the black Saudi style veil, which is entirely against their local cultures. Traditionally, Pakistani women wear Panjabi, which includes colorful trousers and a shirt with a light scarf that they usually put on their shoulders instead of the head. Similarly, traditional Afghan women wear a combined west-east dress with a light scarf on the head. The Wahhabi influence has changed this tradition. The burka and the black veil in the two countries present the Wahhabi tradition. In many other Islamic countries, the cultural change is visible compared to a half century ago. Besides providing the basis for radicalization in Islamic societies, the Wahhabi project's exclusionary version of Sunni Islam has put Sunni societies in a confrontation not only with Jews and Christians but also Shiites, Sufis, and many other Islamic traditions. This in turn has facilitated the expansion of the Salafi radical communities that provide a support base for JSGs in Islamic societies (Shane 2016). The Saudi-Wahhabi international project has not only funded the creation and expansion of extremist groups in the Islamic world but also changed the tolerant culture of Muslims in many Islamic countries and their diasporas in Europe and North America. Parallel to this exterior policy, the House of Saud has hugely invested to prevent any jihadi or violent activity inside the Peninsula.

The Saudi state and its Wahhabi establishment have clear domestic and foreign policy reasons for projecting jihad abroad. Their internal reason includes the prevention of violence inside the Peninsula by shifting jihadis' attention elsewhere. Meanwhile, the Wahhabi establishment advertises the House of Saud as the protector of Islam to delegitimize any internal revolt against it. This internally oriented effort has not entirely immunized Saudi Arabia from the jihadi threat. Three major cases including the Siege of Mecca (1979), bin Laden's effort to establish an al-Qaeda branch in Saudi Arabia in early 1990, and al-Qaeda's revolt in 2003 exemplify the consistency of the threat since the 1970s (Heggharmmer 2010; Hegghammer 2008a; Hegghammer 2007; Reidel and Saab 2008, 34).

The Siege of Mecca in November 1979 was a critical moment in Saudi Arabia's modern history. In this event, a group of Islamist insurgents led

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by Juhayman al-Otaybi, a Saudi Bedouin and former National Guard serviceman who aimed to overthrow the House of Saud, seized the Grand Mosque in Mecca for two weeks (Barmin 2018). Al Otaybi described his movement as the savior of Muslims that would cleanse not only Saudi Arabia but also the entire Islamic world of the modern corruption and establish an Islamic order (Barmin 2018). The seize of Mecca took place when Saudi Arabia was undergoing unprecedented instability as a result of King Faisal's modernization started in 1975 (Barmin 2018). The event was simultaneous with the Islamic revolution of Iran, which also put the Saudi rulers in an anti-Shiite dilemma, besides dealing with complex internal issues (Barmin 2018).

The Saudi rulers dealt with the Siege of Mecca as a significant security threat. The kingdom used all its armed forces to eliminate the revolt in just two weeks (Barmin 2018). The suppression of the seizure of Mecca had three consequences for the Saudi state. First, it rolled back King Faisal's modernization; second, it strengthened the Saud-Wahhabi ties and the state's conservatism; third, it empowered Saudi Arabia's anti-Shiite foreign policy that was directed to opt the Islamic Republic of Iran's expansion in the region (Barmin 2018).

After suppressing the Siege of Mecca, the Saudi state put forward strategies that proved to be effective in preventing the rise of an organized jihadi movement in the country. Besides many efforts and changes in internal and international policies, two long-term strategies that aimed to paralyze and dehumanize jihadi violence on the "land of the two holy mosques" proved to be very successful in counterterrorism.

The two strategies included measures inside and outside the country. Internally, the Saudi state put forward a suppressive security policy to prevent and paralyze any effort at creating a JSG in the Peninsula. Internationally, the Saudi state designed a foreign policy that aimed to shift Saudi jihadis' attention from doing jihad inside to joining jihadi movements outside the country. For example, the Saudi state broadly invested in shifting the attention of the domestic extremists from home to abroad, particularly to jihadi wars against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan and elsewhere in 1980.

In the 1990s, when thousands of Saudi jihadis returned home from Afghanistan, the Saudi state introduced those jihadis to the new battlefields in the Balkans, Chechnya, and elsewhere and motivated them to move and fight there. When some of those returnees, particularly bin

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Laden and his network, preferred to stay and function in Saudi Arabia, the Saudi government reacted swiftly and neutralized their effort by using both propaganda and coercion. Finally, when al-Qaeda launched its multidimensional and broad revolt to establish a base in Saudi Arabia in 2003, the revolt was suppressed by the state's strong security apparatuses, effective administrative institutions, and Wahhabi establishment. As a result, all Saudi jihadis and members of al-Qaeda fled to highly fragile states like Yemen, Iraq, Syria, and Afghanistan, to create new JSGs or become members of existing jihadi organizations (Hegghammer 2010; Hegghammer 2008a; Hegghammer 2007; Reidel and Saab 2008, 34). These three cases were the outcome of multilayered causes with deep and robust roots in the history of Saudi Arabia, its philosophy of formation, its social norms, and its Wahhabi tradition.

Of the three cases, al-Qaeda's 2003 revolt was the most organized, extensive, and violent effort for establishing a JSG in Saudi Arabia. It was a full-fledged rebellion against the Saudi regime and salient throughout the country that had a drastic impact on the state's security strategy and its counterterrorism perspective. Therefore the 2003 revolt represents a significant case study that explains why and how the root causes of JSGs did not lead to the formation of an al-Qaeda branch in Saudi Arabia, while similar causes have produced various JSGs in other societies. What can explain this contradictory outcome?

This chapter and the next explain that the answer lies in the *level* of state fragility in Saudi Arabia. Simply put, in the absence of state fragility conditions, jihadi efforts by Saudi fighters and their international allies failed to create a nest inside Saudi Arabia. To provide a comprehensive analysis of the puzzle, this chapter discusses the background and the root causes of the al-Qaeda revolt at the individual, group, and international levels of analysis. The next chapter will explain how in the absence of state fragility conditions the three-level root causes of JSGs did not lead to the establishment of an al-Qaeda base in Saudi Arabia.

Individual Level

Waging the 2003 jihadi campaign in Saudi Arabia was originally bin Laden's idea that was broadly supported by his circle of close followers that were mostly anti-Americanists. Although some classical Saudi fight-

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ers resisted any kind of militancy inside Arabia, bin Laden's idea dominated the debate. Jihadi leaders like Ibn Khattab, the Saudi commander of Arabs in Chechnya who preferred jihad in areas that were sanctioned by senior Saudi clerics as theaters of jihad, did not support actions like the 2003 revolt inside Saudi Arabia (Hegghammer 2008a, 706). The disagreement between the anti-Americanists and the classical jihadis was intense but did not discourage the former from waging a rebellion in the heart of Arabia. The 2003 al-Qaeda campaign, as the most violent rebellion in the modern history of the kingdom, occurred as a result. The al-Qaeda rebellion included car bombings, street shootings, and any other forms of terrorism (706).

Among other factors, elements of the quest for personal significance, including a sense of revenge and gaining glory through a confrontation with the House of Saud and the American troops in the heart of the Islamic world, were key underlying forces behind the Saudi citizens' effort to launch the 2003 revolt. The quest for significance had historically functioned as a key factor in motivating Saudis to partake consistently in all jihadi fronts throughout the Islamic world except Saudi Arabia. Al-Qaeda's 2003 revolt was an exception to this historical rule. The quest for significance, in this new context, directed the Saudi jihadis to gain glory and international significance by fighting both a domestic and foreign enemy in the heart of Arabia, collectively. Al-Qaeda defined the House of Saud as its domestic enemy and the U.S. troops in Saudi Arabia and beyond as its foreign enemy.

The ideologues and leaders of the al-Qaeda revolt in Saudi Arabia included two categories of jihadis. The first was a generation of veterans who had left for the Afghan war in the 1980s and also gained fighting experiences in other battlefields in the aftermath of the Cold War. The second was Saudi students who had studied religion either officially at university or privately with sheikhs and had little or no practical jihadi experience. Therefore the operatives of the revolt included individuals with and without practical jihadi experiences. Those with jihadi experience included retired jihadis who had returned from different jihadi fronts to Saudi Arabia in the early or mid-1990s and individuals who were trained in al-Qaeda camps in Afghanistan in the late 1990s and had returned home after the U.S. invasion in 2001. Those without experience were the new al-Qaeda members who were recruited from 2002 onwards inside Saudi Arabia and had yet to gain any jihadi experience (Hegghammer 2006, 47). The major

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factor that put the different categories of leaders and operatives together to launch the revolt and create an al-Qaeda branch in Saudi Arabia was their shared enthusiasm to fight the House of Saud and attack American targets in the land of the Two Holy Mosques.

The revolt occurred as a series of terrorist attacks on American and Saudi government targets from the first day in May 2003. While the campaign was initially motivated by a sense of revenge against Americans that had invaded Muslim lands, it was also an outcome of the jihadis' heroism and their desire for gaining significance by confronting American troops and independently operating in the heart of Arabia. The Saudi jihadis also believed that by fighting at home, they would gain prominence in terms of acquiring local recognition, refreshing and expanding their communal networks, and using the opportunity to emerge as an alternative source of political legitimacy in the country. All members of the campaign, including its leader, Yusuf al-Uyayri, were personally motivated by these individual-level factors.

Al-Uyayri, who was a jihadist ideologue and a supporter of jihad in Chechnya, gained prominence as bin Laden's intermediary on al-Qaeda's recruitment in Saudi Arabia between 1999 and 2001. Upon his appointment, al-Uyayri organized a network of Islamist fighters, socializing them with the objectives of al-Qaeda. Those individuals gradually became a valuable resource for al-Qaeda's 2003 campaign (Hegghammer 2008a, 708).

Before al-Uyayri's direct affiliation with al-Qaeda, bin Laden's network was limited mainly to his hometown, Hijaz, and his main Hijazi representatives, including Abd al-Rahim al-Nashiri and Tawfiq bin Attash who had limited access to the aristocratic religious networks in central Saudi Arabia (Hegghammer 2008a, 708). By contrast, al-Uyayri had significant family ties with the conservative communities of Najd in central Arabia. His family was from the city of Burayda in the Najd, which gave him access to influential religious scholars and rich donors of the Qasim province. He was also the brother-in-law of Sulayman al-Ulwan, an influential radical sheikh in Burayda, which eased his access to the conservative sheikh circles and the fundamentalist youths of the region (708).

Besides recruiting from the conservative communities of central Arabia, al-Uyayri expanded his network of jihadis by bringing in hundreds of al-Qaeda returnees from Afghanistan in the aftermath of the U.S. invasion. The data shows that in the first five months of 2002, between 300 and 1,000 al-Qaeda recruits had made their way home to Saudi Arabia via

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third countries (Hegghammer 2008a). Most of those individuals joined al-Uyayri's network. Many of those returnees, who were highly motivated by a sense of revenge against the United States and its allies, played a crucial role in the al-Qaeda revolt in 2003.

According to U.S. intelligence sources, al-Qaeda leadership issued the order of waging the terrorist campaign in Saudi Arabia in May 2002. The recipients of the order were al-Uyayri and al-Qaeda's most senior operative in the peninsula, al-Nashiri (Hegghammer 2008a, 709). Upon receipt of the order, al-Uyayri started preparing for the revolt by renting safe houses, establishing training camps, buying weapons, and attracting recruits (Hegghammer 2008a, 709). Although the data show that only 300 men were involved in al-Qaeda's revolt in Saudi Arabia, the Saudi police destroyed enough weapon stockpiles to suggest that al-Uyayri was prepared to equip several thousand men. Moreover, the existence of safe houses in every major city of the country indicates that al-Uyayri was preparing for a large-scale operation throughout the country (Hegghammer 2008a, 710). Al-Uyayri was initially motivated by the quest for significance as his main source of inspiration and so were the hundreds of his comrades and employees. Those individuals' effort to fight the House of Saud, at this level of analysis, was the outcome of their quest for significance and its key elements, particularly heroism and vengeance.

Group Level

At the group level of analysis, Wahhabism played a significant causal role in the occurrence of the 2003 revolt. The Saudi-based jihadi movements, from the Siege of Mecca to al-Qaeda's revolt in 2003, were inspired and justified by the Wahhabi doctrine. The Siege of Mecca, as the first social revolutionary Wahhabi protest in the modern history of Saudi Arabia, was justified by the Wahhabi rebels as a religiously legitimate revolution against the House of Saud and its foreign allies. Learning from this event, the Saudi state broadly used its Wahhabi establishment to delegitimize any form of Islamist violence inside the country. In this campaign, the formal Wahhabi establishment and scholars broadly contributed to the state's policy of projecting jihad abroad to keep Saudi Arabia safe from jihadi activities.

Following the Siege of Mecca, the Wahhabi establishment used its abil-

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ity and networks in advertising the war against communism in Afghanistan as a religious priority for all Muslims, particularly the Saudi fighters and supporters of jihad. In this campaign, all elements of the Wahhabi establishment, including clerics, preachers, policymakers, statesmen, and their regional followers came together to motivate every single Saudi fighter against communism, providing them with the necessary funds to travel to Pakistan and Afghanistan during the 1980s. Wahhabism also justified jihadi wars in all corners of the Islamic world after the collapse of the Soviet Union to keep any form of jihadi violence out of Saudi Arabia. As a result, the so-called Saudi Caravan of Martyrs has fought as the mujahidin in all jihadi frontlines, including Afghanistan, Bosnia, Tajikistan, Chechnya, Iraq, Syria, Kashmir, and elsewhere since the Siege of Mecca (Hegghammer 2007, 8).

The campaign of the Wahhabi establishment worked well in favor of the Saudi state in the 1980s and 1990s. However, Wahhabism has never ceased functioning as a double-edged sword in Saudi Arabia. Bin Laden's idea of creating a jihadi organization in a corner of the Arabian Peninsula in early 1990 was inspired by the jihadi-Salafi version of the Wahhabi doctrine. The creation of al-Qaeda in Afghanistan was also based on the same system of religious justification. Furthermore, during the 2003 revolt, al-Qaeda used the jihadi version of Wahhabism in both its recruitment and terrorist campaigns. Therefore the 2003 al-Qaeda revolt was drastically influenced by the jihadi version of the Wahhabi doctrine, which in this context provides the root cause of the revolt on the group level of analysis.

The idea of jihad inside Saudi Arabia was initially promoted and propagated by those Saudi citizens that had international jihadi experiences who had either returned from the frontlines or were still fighting in bin Laden's campaign. Most of those Saudis had the experience of interaction with Muslim combatants from around the Islamic world on battlefields. This experience had made them more radical, pan-Islamic, and far-enemy centrist. Those individuals' desire for violent transnational jihad and a pan-Islamic campaign is broadly expressed in their interviews and public statements. For example, Abu Jandal, a Saudi-Yemeni jihadi who fought on several battlefields in the 1980s and 1990s, expressed in an interview that his decision to partake in jihadi wars beyond Saudi Arabia was influenced by the idea of transnational jihadism and pan-Islamism rather than the modern nationalism:

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> The ideology of the Muslim nation [umma] began to evolve in our minds. We realized we were a nation [umma] that had a distinguished place among nations. Otherwise, what would make me leave Saudi Arabia—and I am of Yemeni origin—to go and fight in Bosnia? The issue of nationalism [*qawmiyya*] was put out of our minds, and we acquired a wider view than that, namely the issue of the Muslim nation [*umma*]. (Hegghammer 2008a, 703)

This pan-Islamic vision has its roots in Wahhabism and its jihadi-Salafism version that motivates Muslims to mobilize against occupying forces in the Islamic world beyond sovereign boundaries. The vision broadly influenced the Saudi jihadists of the 1980s and 1990s and became a dominant worldview among the Saudi youth in the 2000s and beyond. Most Saudi jihadis that either joined al-Qaeda or became members of other JSGs like AQI, IS, AQAP, and the like have emphasized their far-enemy-centric worldview and their passion to fight foreign forces and their allies in the Islamic world. For example, a Saudi student who lost two close friends fighting against the U.S. forces in Iraq in 2005 highlights this worldview in an interview as follows:

> The Americans can't imagine how a young man living a decent life in Riyadh could feel so much love and passion for a fellow Muslim and feel compelled to go and fight when he sees television footage of Iraqis or Afghans being killed and tortured. But that is a result of the strong Islamic blood ties. (Ambah 2005)

Jihad, in this sense, could take place anywhere in the world when the necessary conditions persist. In this context, fighting an invading force and its domestic ally at home becomes as important as attacking a foreign target. Therefore, despite the Saudi state's efforts to keep the jihadis' attention abroad, fighting at home or overseas did not matter too much to Saudi jihadis.

The Saudi jihadis' motivation to mobilize against the U.S. force and its domestic ally, the House of Saud, expanded and at the same time blurred the conventional boundaries of the far-enemy-centric jihadism. The 2003 revolt was deeply influenced by this expansive and aggressive Salafi perception of jihad that was able to provide religious justification to any form of violence against a far enemy and its allies at home.

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Overall, the revolt was based on the four pillars of jihadi Salafism, including the definition of a problem, an enemy that caused the problem, a method of war against the enemy, and a goal. In this context, the members of the revolt defined the American troops in the land of the Two Holy Mosques as a serious international problem in the Islamic world; highlighted the United States and the House of Saud as the enemy that has caused the problem; described jihad at home as the method of fighting the enemy and resolving the problem; and specified the removal of American troops from Saudi Arabia and the establishment of a jihadi base in the heart of Arabia as the goal.

Most of the jihadi returnees that joined the 2003 revolt had sworn an oath collectively in Afghanistan in late 2001 to end the U.S. occupation of the Land of the Two Holy Sites by fighting the American troop militarily in Saudi Arabia (Hegghammer 2006, 52). Those who pushed for waging the jihadi revolt in Saudi Arabia justified the decision and the action by referring to the Islamic texts, particularly the Prophet's injunction that "there shall not be two religions on the Arabian Peninsula" or "expel the polytheists from the Arabian Peninsula" (Hegghammer 2006, 52). This type of justification is a prevalent Salafi approach to make sense of modern actions and objectives by using the original Islamic texts. Therefore, besides the key elements of jihadi Salafism, its expansive and aggressive approach to international politics that aim to align all religious sources in support of its anti-Americanism played a crucial role in the occurrence of the 2003 revolt.

International Level

The international-level root causes of JSGs persisted in Saudi Arabia since the Siege of Mecca, which became more robust following Saddam's invasion of Kuwait and the outbreak of the Gulf War. With the beginning of this war, the Saudi fighters and jihadi leaders became suspicious of the U.S. foreign and military policies in the Middle East and largely tried to challenge the American power by creating jihadi organizations throughout the region. Bin Laden's effort to create a jihadi organization in the region was a product of this inflamed environment.

Although bin Laden's first effort to create a JSG in Saudi Arabia failed, the American projection of power in the Middle East, especially the sta-

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tioning of U.S. troops in the Land of the Two Holy Sites and the House of Saud's support of this policy, strengthened the root causes of JSGs in the country at the international level of analysis. The formation of al-Qaeda as a world Islamic front by bin Laden in 1998 and al-Qaeda's revolt in Saudi Arabia in 2003 have clear links to those international events and pressures in the Middle East.

In general, the international-level root causes of the 2003 revolt can be traced in three international events, including the Gulf War and the post-war settlement in the region, the return of Saudi jihadis from Afghanistan in the aftermath of the U.S. invasion in 2001, and the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003.

The seeds of a jihadi upheaval in Saudi Arabia were planted following the Gulf War when the United States created a permanent military base in the country. On the eve of the war, bin Laden requested the Saudi government to let him create a jihadi front against Saddam Hussein to prevent the Americans' involvement in Arabia. The request was immediately rejected by the government. According to bin Laden's senior bodyguard, Nasir al-Bahri, bin Laden explained to Saudi officials that he was ready to prepare more than 100,000 fighters in three months, of which 40,000 were Saudi citizens (Gerges 2005, 146). Al-Bahri believed that "bin Laden presented [to Saudi officials] an integrated military program and asked to open training camps for the young and recruit the jobless. . . . he got into a heated argument with them in this regard and they were angry with him" (146).

Nevertheless, the proposal was refused by government officials because they thought a mujahidin army in Saudi Arabia would pose a serious threat to the monarchy (Gerges 2005, 148). Upon the rejection of his proposal, bin Laden decided to implement his plan without the Saudi state's permission. However, the government put him under such heavy surveillance that everyone, even the powerful clergy and his Wahhabi network, was afraid of making any contribution to his cause (147). As a result, bin Laden and his lieutenants left the country to establish their ideal jihadi organization elsewhere.

Nonetheless, the American stationing of troops in Saudi Arabia became a permeant source of justification for waging a jihadi revolt in the country whenever possible. Therefore, soon after leaving the country, bin Laden strengthened his network of global jihadis and meanwhile called for an uprising against the House of Saud in the early 1990s. He also plotted terrorist attacks on American targets in Saudi Arabia in the mid-1990s.

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Although none of these efforts contributed to an internal uprising, bin Laden and his followers never gave up the idea of a revolt in Saudi Arabia.

As a second international factor, the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan in 2001 facilitated and accelerated the process of launching the revolt. Following the invasion, al-Qaeda lost its base in Afghanistan and its combatants, including the Saudi fighters, started returning home. The so-called Saudi returnees were highly influenced by anti-Americanism and were therefore ready to reorganize and fight. Upon their arrival in Saudi Arabia, the returnees were invited by Al-Uyayri to help him organize jihadi activities inside the country. The recruitment of those returnees dramatically expanded Al-Uyayri's network, which was plotting the revolt since 1999.

The process of launching the revolt was accelerated by a third international factor, the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003. The invasion provided al-Qaeda with a great opportunity to call for a revolt against American troops in the heart of Arabia as a contribution to jihad in Iraq. The call, which was delivered by bin Laden in a major address to the Islamic world on the eve of the U.S. invasion on February 14, 2003, clearly requested for a jihad against the House of Saud and the U.S. military establishment in the kingdom (Reidel and Saab 2008, 34). The call also sought to justify the revolt by accusing the House of Saud of helping Americans to invade a Muslim nation (Reidel and Saab 2008, 34). Although some al-Qaeda elements described the call as a *premature* move, because they thought it was too early to operate inside Saudi Arabia, bin Laden did not change his idea. The revolt finally started on May 12, 2003, as suicide car bombs on domestic and foreign targets killed 34, including 7 Americans, and wounded another 200 people. The suicide attacks were the beginning of "the longest and most violent" internal uprising in modern Saudi Arabia since its formation at the beginning of the 20th century (Reidel and Saab 2008, 36).

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CHAPTER 8

Conditions of al-Qaeda Revolt

State Fragility in Saudi Arabia

Chapter 7 examined the root causes of JSGs at the individual, group, and international levels and explained the historical, social, and political background of jihad in Saudi Arabia. This chapter explains why and how the three-level root causes of JSGs, in the absence of the necessary state fragility conditions, did not factor into the formation of an al-Qaeda branch in Saudi Arabia. To highlight dimensions of state fragility in modern Saudi Arabia, the chapter begins with a brief overview of the process of the Saudi state formation and proceeds with examining the institutional and functional dimensions of statehood and their role in preventing the establishment of an al-Qaeda base in the country.

State Formation

The formation of the Saudi state took place in three phases. The first Saudi state was founded in central Arabia by the head of the Saud clan, Muhammad ibn Saud (1710–1765). The Saud clan included prominent families in Najd that became key players in the Arabi Peninsula after ibn Saud took control of the city of Dara'iyah, northwest of Riyadh, in 1726 (Kamrava 2013, 62). During his campaign of conquering territory in central Arabia, the young ibn Saud met the traveling sheikh Mohammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab in 1744, which led to an important political-religious agreement between the two in the small desert oasis of Dara'iyah. The agreement was the basis of the first Saudi-Wahhabi state (Gelvin 2016, 208).

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The bilateral agreement between ibn Saud and ibn Abd al-Wahhab was simple and objective: ibn Saud agreed to support Wahhab's religious mission of spreading a Salafist version of Islam throughout the Peninsula and ibn Abd al-Wahhab agreed to provide religious support for ibn Saudi's military campaign and political legitimacy (Bunzel 2016, 6). As a result, the Sheikh family aided the Saud family in battle in exchange for the imposition of Wahhab's narrative of Islam as the official religion of the first Saudi kingdom (Choksy and Choksy 2015, 25). The result of the Saud-Sheikh pact was the creation of the first Saudi state in which responsibilities were divided between the two families, with the ibn Saud family overseeing political and military command and the Sheikh family taking charge of religious affairs (Kamrava 2013, 62).

This strategic alliance created a political tradition that has shaped government and politics in Saudi Arabia to date. Another important outcome of the Saud-Sheikh alliance was the installation and support of Wahhabism by Saudi statesmen beyond central Arabia. Until the demolition of the first Saudi state by the Ottoman Empire in 1818, Wahhabi preachers and followers established numerous Salafi institutions in the Peninsula so deeply that no political change, even the dissolution of the first Saudi state in 1818, could eradicate them (Choksy and Choksy 2015, 26).

The first Saudi state was dissolved by the Ottomans following ibn Saud's grandson's seizure of the holy cities of Mecca and Medina in Hijaz. The Ottoman forces drove the Saudis from Mecca and Medina back to their stronghold in Najd. Failing to resist the Ottoman campaign, the first Saudi state was finally defeated in 1818 by the Egyptian army of Muhammad Ali, who was directed by the Ottoman caliphate to end ibn Saud's rule over Arabia. Ali was finally able to capture the Saudi capital of Dara'iyah after a seven-year campaign. The Saudi king, Abdullah ibn Saud, was captured by the Egyptian army and transferred to Istanbul to be beheaded. Other political and religious leaders of the first Saudi-Wahhabi state were either executed or exiled to Kuwait or other coastal towns along the Persian Gulf (Bunzel 2016, 7; Gelvin 2016, 208; Kamrava 2013, 62; Knauerhase 1975, 74).

It took the Saudi clan and the Wahhabi missionaries only six years to return to power and establish the second Saudi state, also known as the Emirate of Najd in 1824. The second Saudi state, which survived more than six decades mainly because its territory was no longer important to the Ottomans, stretched from central Arabia to the Persian Gulf (Gelvin

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2016, 208). In this period, the Ottomans were mostly occupied with resisting Europe's international domination and checking the British expansionism in the region (Kamrawa 2013, 62). Despite the immunity from a potential Ottoman attack, the second Saudi kingdom gradually eroded from inside as a result of intra-family disputes following the death of Faisal ibn Saud in 1865. The state eventually fell to a rival tribe led by the al-Rashid family, which drove the Saud force out of Riyadh in 1890, leading to a series of inter- and intra-tribal disputes in central Arabia for the coming years (Gelvin 2016, 208; Kamrava 2013, 62; Knauerhase 1975, 75).

Abdel Aziz ibn al-Saud, the founder of modern Saudi Arabia or the third Saudi kingdom, emerged from this chaos and tried to recover his clan's defeats and resume concurring territory in Najd and the broader central Arabia. In 1902, the 21-year-old Aziz, supported by the Shiekh family and its followers, returned from exile in Kuwait. He was quickly able to retake control of central Arabia and drive the competing tribes led by the Rashid family out of Riyadh in 1902 (Gelvin 2016, 208). In his campaign to recapture territory in Najd and the broader central Arabia, Aziz not only used military means and family reputation but also the Wahhabi rhetoric to attract tribes for his kingdom. He claimed that the Saudi-Wahhabi state will not only establish stability but also purify the Islamic faith (Horwarth 1964, 32; Knauerhase 1975, 75).

Through several battles with the Rashid family army that took place between 1902 and 1906, Abdel Aziz extended his control across the Saud family's original domain. He also gained the loyalty of various tribes in Nejd by exploiting their resentment of the harsh Rashidi rule and proposing alternative methods of power-sharing based on Islamic rules and loyalties (Knauerhase 1975, 75–76). The conquest of Najd was the beginning of the formation of the modern Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. However, it took Aziz more than two decades to entirely defeat the House of Rashid in the north, capture al-Hasa in the east, and defeat the Hashemite-Ottoman alliance in Hejaz to finally establish the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1932.

Aziz's success in a highly disputed region was not only an outcome of his abilities and domestic relations but also the consequence of international politics in the early 20th century. In 1906, Aziz was recognized by the Ottomans as the caliphate's client of Najd. Following the recognition, he captured most of central and northern Arabia and prepared for the conquest of Hejaz from the sheif of Mecca, Hussein bin Ali, who was supported by the British in its campaign against the Ottoman caliphate.

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Therefore, in his campaign to capture Hijaz, Aziz needed British support that required him to prove the Saudi force's momentum in the region.

The Saud-Sheikh alliance proved to be a strong regional force during the First World War and hence attracted the attention of the British Empire, which was struggling for control of the Suez Canal and the Gulf region. Aziz smartly tried to deter the Ottoman's influence in Arabia and as a result established his first contacts and relations with the British Empire. As a result, the British placed Saud's domain under a "veiled protectorate" that, unlike the French protectorates, did not have any international sanctions (Gelvin 2016, 208). In the 1920s, when the British became hesitant of supporting the Hashemite Kingdom of Hejaz, Aziz accelerated his campaign of capturing Hejaz and creating a unified Saudi state on the Arabian Peninsula. After completing the conquest of Hejaz in 1926, Aziz self-declared the King of Hijaz and the Sultan of Najd. He finally founded the third Saudi state by combining Najd and Hijaz and proclaiming himself the King of Saudi Arabia in 1932 (Gelvin 2016, 208; Kamrava 2013, 63).

State Fragility

Aziz was a brave warrior and a smart strategist who was not only able to use tribesmen to conquer territory but also to conduct intertribal marriage strategies and Wahhabi campaigns to bring all of Arabia under his control (Kamrava 2013, 63). Aziz's most significant approach to expand control over conservative tribes and societies was his loyalty to the historical Saud-Shiekh pact, which facilitated the establishment of a strong political-religious authority over the populations of central Arabia. In his early campaigns, Aziz deployed Wahhabism as a religious doctrine to unite tribes under a unique political-religious umbrella to rule them easily (Choksy and Choksy 2015, 26). Since then, the Saudi rulers have broadly used Wahhabism to prevent the infiltration of Arab nationalism, European secularism, Soviet communism, and pan-Islamic extremism in the Peninsula.

Another key factor that strengthened the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was the discovery of the largest oil reserves of the earth in the Peninsula by American prospectors (Shane 2016). The Arabian-American Oil Company, or Aramco, produced unprecedented wealth for the House of Saud to strengthen its state establishment, its army, and foreign relations. The oil wealth also helped the kingdom to expand its conservative rule over the

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population, reject reforms, and export Wahabism throughout the Islamic world (Shane 2016). Spreading Islam became the state's official policy in the 1960s after King Faisal acceded to the throne. In the next four decades, Saudi Arabia funded the creation of 1,359 mosques, 210 Islamic centers, 202 colleges, and 2,000 schools only in non-Muslim majority countries and Muslim communities residing in American and European cities (Shane 2016). Both the kingdom's religious establishment and the oil wealth were key forces behind this project. The Saudi state also became more radical and aggressive in intervening in the Islamic world in this period. Three events in 1979 radicalized and militarized Saudi Arabia's conservative foreign policy in the Islamic world.

The first was the Islamic revolution of Iran, which resulted in the formation of the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI). The IRI officially declared spreading Shiism, a competitive version of Islam to the Sunni Salafism, as its foreign policy. This event made Saudi Arabia more aggressive in the Islamic world, motivating it to use any means to prevent IRI's influence in Islamic countries.

The second was the Siege of Mecca when a group of 500 Saudi rebels seized the Grand Mosque in Mecca for two weeks. The rebels called the House of Saud the puppet of the West and demanded a power transition in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (Shane 2016). The Siege of Mecca provided the Saudi rulers with the idea of not only surveilling and dealing with potential Saudi jihadis inside the country but also mastering plans for exporting them outside. The policy of *projecting jihad abroad* was inspired by this historical moment.

The third was the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in the last days of 1979—a decisive moment for the House of Saud to legitimize its policy of preparing and sending thousands of jihadis against the spread of communism. In addition to motivating Saudi jihadis to partake in jihad in Afghanistan, the Saudi establishment launched a campaign of collecting *Zakat*, a form the Islamic tax, for the mujahidin that were ready to fight against communism. As a result, billions of Ryals were donated by Saudi citizens to be spent on the frontlines against the Soviet's red army in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Part of the money went to the Afghan mujahidin through the Pakistani government and part of it went directly to the Arab jihadis like bin Laden who created al-Qaeda one and a half decades later.

The internal and international events accelerated and radicalized the House of Saud's policy of projecting jihad abroad and the Wahhabi estab-

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lishment provided robust religious justifications to rationalize the policy in return for maintaining control over certain parts of the state. This give-and-take strategy between the Saud and the Sheikh families is rooted in the tradition of state formation and governance that splits and specifies the boundaries of power and politics between two families. Since the creation of modern Saudi Arabia, every king has been of the ibn Saud family who rule the military, political, and economic affairs while the religious, cultural, and education sectors are consistently controlled by the Sheikh family (Barmin 2018; Gelvin 2016, 208–9).

The Saud-Sheikh alliance has created a conservative authoritarian regime that has its roots in the political strategy of the two dynasties: the Saud family follows the strategy of maintaining power exclusively and authoritatively, while the Wahhabi establishment and ulema consolidate the authoritarian regime that supports their brand of Islamic conservatism by opposing modern norms, values, and innovations. The Saudi state has recognized the right of the Wahhabi establishment and ulema in controlling the social and cultural affairs of the country unchecked. In return, the state uses the religious authority of the Wahhabis in strengthening its authoritarian basis. In this context, it is not surprising if Wahhabi ulema, in support of the House of Saud, preaches the message that Islam demands obedience to authority and submission to a ruler so long as that ruler is Muslim (Gelvin 2016, 209).

While the alliance between the Saud and the Sheikh families provides a strong political and religious basis for the modern Saudi state, the oil wealth provides the material basis for the consolidation of state authority. Since the beginning of the commercial exploitation of oil in 1938, the once-impoverished kingdom became a rich country that increasingly used its oil wealth to institutionalize its sovereignty and tackle the historical and emerging challenges (Kamrava 2013, 64–65). The oil boom period of the 1970s was key to state-building in Saudi Arabia. In this period, which also resulted in the nationalization of the oil industry, the House of Saud completed the state-building project that began several decades ago by King Aziz (Chaudhry 1997; Gelvin 2016, 291). Since then, the state has claimed monopoly over the use of violence so extreme that no independent social or political movement has been able to challenge it significantly.

In general, the Wahhabi establishment and the oil money together played a crucial role in the formation and consolidation of state institu-

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tions in the country. Therefore, unlike other Arab authoritarian regimes such as Syria, Egypt, and Iraq, which lacked democratic legitimacy and were unable to fill the legitimacy gap by other means, the Saudi state has been resilient in using the Wahhabi ulema and institutions to advertise Islam as an alternative source of state legitimacy. Lack of democratic legitimacy, in this sense, has not posed a serious challenge to the existence of the Saudi state. Most internal threats to the state, particularly by jihadis, were caused by other factors, including pan-Islamic and pan-Arab connections, rather than domestic reactions to the state's source and dimensions of legitimacy (Hegghammer 2008a, 703). The state's religious apparatus has done everything to delegitimize internal revolts including the Siege of Mecca in 1979, the 2003 al-Qaeda revolt, and the expansion of the Muslim Brotherhood and its offshoots in Saudi Arabia during the Arab Spring of 2010–2011 (Gelvin 2016, 209).

While the Saudi state suffers from a lack of legitimacy in the rational-legal sense, it has managed to escape the so-called legitimacy trap by relying on mechanisms of religious legitimation through the vast influence of the Wahhabi clerics. The government's strong authority and capacity, along with its religious legitimacy, has generated a functioning state that has proven to be effective in deterring JSGs, at least from the Siege of Mecca to the Arab Spring. The state has consistently and effectively used its power to fill the statehood vacuums by balancing its authority and capacity with religious legitimacy. The state's effective authority and strong capacity benefit, significantly, from the oil wealth and the traditional social structures, while its religious legitimacy is a dedication of the Wahhabi establishment and ulema.

The Saudi rulers have consistently tried to gain religious legitimacy by using the Wahhabi establishment and officially describing the kingdom as the purest model of an Islamic state, "saying it is modeled on the example of the Prophet Muhammad's state in seventh-century Arabia" (Bunzel 2016, 4–5). As the most recent example, King Salman bin Abdulaziz al-Saud, following his ascension to the throne in 2015, repeated the rhetoric to maintain the state's religious authority: "The first Islamic state rose upon the Quran, the prophetic Sunna [that is, the Prophet's normative practice], and Islamic principles of justice, security, and equality. . . . The Saudi state was established on the very same principles, following the model of that first Islamic state" (Bunzel 2016, 5).

Taking the quality and dimensions of statehood in Saudi Arabia into

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consideration, no state fragility index has categorized the country as a highly fragile state in the past three decades. The CSP index of fragile states scores the kingdom moderately on the category of legitimacy and very highly on effectiveness, particularly the security effectiveness, since 1995 (CSP 1995–2018). In the CSP index, which ranges from 0 "no fragility" to 25 "extremely fragility," the Saudi state's annual fragility score from 1995 to 2018 floats between 7 and 11, which indicates low to moderate fragility. The Saudi state's level of stability is comparable with highly stable countries like China and Israel. China, for instance, receives a fragility score ranging from 6 to 12, and Israel receives a fragility score ranging from 7 to 9 (CSP 1995–2018; Martiall and Cole 2014, 51). The data also show that state authority, particularly its security effectiveness, is the most decisive indicator of statehood, which has steadily received a score of 0–2, meaning no fragility in this area. Drawing on the CSP data, figure 8 provides a general image of state fragility and statehood in Saudi Arabia from 1995 to 2018. The figure also helps follow the patterns of state fragility during the al-Qaeda revolt from 2003 to 2007, which eventually failed due to the lack of required conditions. State fragility scores in this period float between 7 and 9 indicating low to moderate fragility.

Despite the Saudi state's strong authority and capacity and its formal religious legitimacy, the kingdom has been a permanent target of jihadi Salafis. The two significant jihadi organizations of the modern age, al-Qaeda and IS, have repeatedly targeted the House of Saud, blaming it as a betrayer of true Islam. These two organizations and their affiliates have produced online and offline literature that declares jihad not only against the West but also the Saudi monarchy as a Western ally (Bunzel 2016). Bin Laden called the United States "the head of the snake" that should be the first target of the global jihad and simultaneously plotted attacks on the House of Saud and tried to establish an al-Qaeda branch in the heart of Arabia. Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the self-declared caliph of IS, took an even more extreme position against Saudi Arabia, calling the House of Saud "the head of the snake" that should be cut first (Bunzel 2016).

Although al-Qaeda and IS competed in increasing their influence in the Arabian Peninsula, IS, despite declaring the Peninsula one of its provinces, did not have any clear chance to militarily challenge the House of Saud. IS-related attacks in Saudi Arabia in 2014 and 2015 were mostly limited to a few suicide bombings in mosques and far-flung shootings that targeted civilians and military personnel (Bunzel 2016, 12). These inci-

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dents did not pose a serious challenge to the Saudi state, while IS networks in the country were disrupted very quickly by security forces. As a result, more than 2,000 Saudi supporters of IS had to leave the country as of March 2015 to join IS and other jihadi groups in Iraq and Syria (16).

In general, IS failed to launch an effective campaign in Saudi Arabia for three reasons: first, the Saudi state's effective counterterrorism infrastructure that was put in place following al-Qaeda's 2003 revolt; second, IS's lack of a charismatic leader in Saudi Arabia; third, IS's Saudi followers were more motivated to fight abroad than revolt at home (Bunzel 2016, 18). Therefore, since the emergence of the new wave of global jihadism following 9/11, the most significant threat to the House of Saud came from al-Qaeda, highlighted by the 2003 revolt. The next section explains the rise and demise of this revolt within the context of state fragility in Saudi Arabia.

State Fragility and the 2003 Revolt

The 2003 revolt failed because of three reasons. First, it did not obtain popular support inside Saudi Arabia because the Saudi population historically advocated the classical jihadism that defined jihad as a religious duty overseas. Second, the emergence of the anti-American insurgency in Iraq attracted the attention of Saudi jihadis who were more motivated to fight the American troop directly in Iraq than revolting against the Saudi state. Third, limitless resources and an effective counterterrorism campaign helped the Saudi state paralyze the al-Qaeda revolt before it could attract more attention (Hegghammer 2008a, 712–13). As a result, the remnants of the revolt split into two groups. The first moved to Iraq and joined AQI and the second crossed the border to Yemen and established AQAP in ungoverned areas in 2009 (al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula 2015; Ambah 2003; Hegghammer 2008b, 11; Obaid and Cordesman 2005).

Of the three reasons, effective statehood played a crucial role in terminating the revolt quickly. At the beginning of the revolt, the Saudi state ranked moderately fragile, which was improved to low–no fragility in the coming years (fig. 8). The vast investment in the security, administrative, and religious apparatuses of the state had an enormous impact on the improvement.

Therefore the revolt did not necessarily occur in the state fragility gaps.

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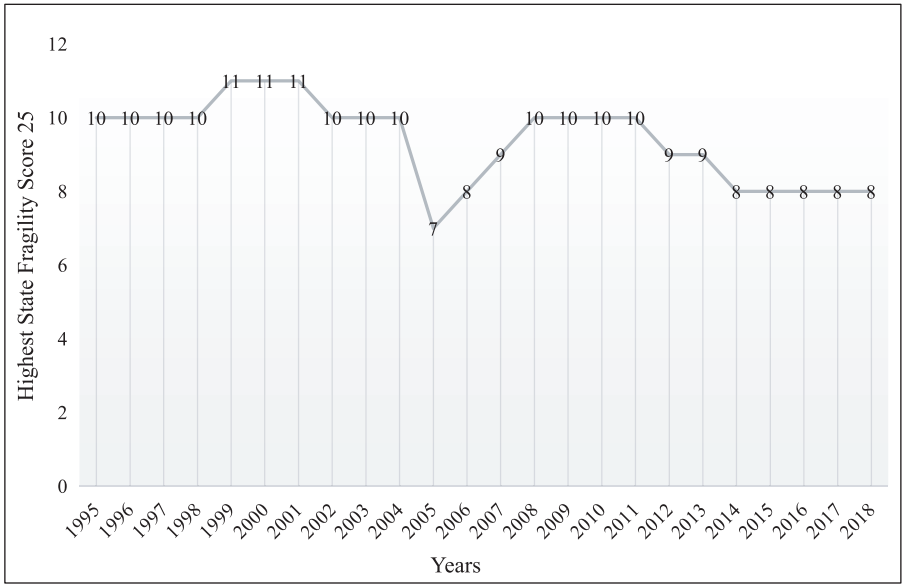

Fig. 8. State Fragility in Saudi Arabia (1995–2018). (Data from CSP 1995–2018.)

Rather it was an outcome of external pressures following the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan and the flow of al-Qaeda combatants returning home. Another part of the problem was the non-confrontational culture of the state in dealing with nonstate actors and its limited experience in counterterrorism at home. Despite the Western perception of the Saudi state's authoritarianism, it has been less of a police state than many of the Arab republics. In the face of a strict social conservatism, which has reduced the need for criminal policing, and the long history of the civilian government, there has been no need for militarization of the state. Moreover, the combination of oil wealth and the traditional social structures has created a consensual political culture in which political dissent has been handled with cooptation more often than with coercion (Hegghammer 2008a, 710–11).

While the soft approach to policing has been effective in containing political opposition without producing violent counter-reactions in normal circumstances, it provided an opportunity for extremist forces to expand inside the country, especially when pressures increased from outside. For example, soft policing tactics very successfully contained almost

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all local uprisings after the Siege of Mecca (Hegghammer 2008a, 710–11). However, this non-confrontational and soft policing method provided a formidable opportunity for experienced jihadis who had returned after fighting in heavily militarized frontlines and were ready to reorganize and plot violent attacks on a large scale.

Another, and most important, part of the problem was the government's attitude toward terrorist attacks. Before the 2003 revolt, key elements of the security establishment had simply refused to acknowledge the seriousness of the threat from the jihadi community (Hegghammer 2008a, 710–11). The dominance of this approach in security communities can be seen in official statements by security leaders and empirical evidence. For example, the interior minister of Saudi Arabia did not highlight the seriousness of the jihadi threat in his statements in 2001 and 2002, and none of the many attacks on Westerners between 2000 and 2003 were properly investigated by the government (710–11).

In this circumstance, the revolt began in May 2003 and lasted until April 2007. Some sources argue that it was not eliminated until early 2008 (Hussain 2007; Porter 2017; Reidel and Saab 2008, 36). In general, the revolt included 61 armed confrontations between security forces and jihadi fighters and 34 terrorist operations, mostly against Western targets. The overall street shootings, suicide bombings, and terrorist attacks caused a total of some 300 casualties that included militants, civilians, and Westerners (Hafez 2008, 7).

Before the revolt, Saudi Arabia seemed immune to Islamist violence (Hegghammer 2008a, 701–715). There had been only a few incidents like the Siege of Mecca, the 1995 Riyadh bombing, and the 1996 Khobar bombing that were not considered serious threats to the security of the state. The 2003 revolt marked the longest and most violent uprising inside the country since its formation in the early 20th century (Reidel and Saab 2008, 36). The revolt started as suicide car bombings on May 12, 2003. In the coming days and months, gun battles between Saudi security forces and bands of al-Qaeda operatives became almost daily incidents in major cities, including Jeddah, Khobar, Mecca, Riyadh, Taif, Yanbu, and many other cities and towns across the country (Hegghammer 2008a, 703). The vast majority of al-Qaeda attacks were organized and conducted by Saudi citizens, although they also had the help of volunteers from Yemen and elsewhere (703).

Al-Qaeda's operations and attacks during the revolt were mostly con-

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ducted by individuals and small cells that were equipped by al-Uyayri. Although al-Uyayri was killed in June 2003, his strategy of using individuals and small groups in terrorist operations was adopted by his successors like Abdel Aziz Al-Muqrin and others. Al-Muqrin believed that self-designed independent attacks by individual jihadis and small cells could last longer and produce more effective outcomes than following a hierarchical order of classical operations (Porter 2017). As a result, the cells became the core of the revolt. Each cell was individually responsible for planning and executing a variety of operations like shootings, car bombings, assassinations, and suicide attacks. Although the exact number of individuals and those operating in al-Qaeda cells is not clear, some sources speculate that 1,000 to 2,000 people were involved in the revolt (Hussain 2007; Reidel and Saab 2008, 36).

The revolt initially posed an unprecedented threat to Saudi security. However, it eventually failed to achieve its primary goal of removing Americans from Saudi Arabia and creating an al-Qaeda franchise in the country. As an immediate response to this campaign, the Saudi government mounted a very sophisticated counteroffensive that included both security and political measures. The security measure was based on a coercive strategy while the political measure was directed toward delegitimizing al-Qaeda's appeal and eliminating the root causes of the revolt.

According to the security plan, the armed and security forces were directed to eliminate or arrest all al-Qaeda elements as soon as feasible. In its first move, the government published a long list of al-Qaeda operatives in the press and sent the secret police and other security forces after them simultaneously. The outcome of this counteroffensive was remarkable. Many jihadis on the wanted list were either captured or killed and their safe houses were destroyed in a few months (Reidel and Saab 2008, 37). The list was updated periodically to take note of new operatives and the killing of experienced ones (Reidel and Saab 2008, 37). In addition, the government also used cyber warfare to target the communication of al-Qaeda elements and cut connections between Saudi jihadis inside and outside the country (Reidel and Saab 2008, 39).

Compared to the coercive security measure, the political project was broad, multilayered, and long-term. As part of the project, the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Islamic Affairs made extensive use of the Wahhabi establishment against al-Qaeda and its offensive jihadism. They assigned senior Wahhabi clerics to denounce al-Qaeda attacks on the Saudi

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nation. The two ministries also used Wahhabi clerics to prohibit religious extremism to prevent the expansion of jihadism in the Saudi territory. One of the most prominent clerics who worked with the government in this project was Sheikh Abd al-Aziz bin Abdallah al-Sheikh, who issued a fatwa on October 1, 2007, prohibiting Saudi youth from engaging in jihad. In his fatwa, Aziz emphasized that jihad without authorization by the ruler [the Saudi ruler] will be a serious and punishable transgression (Reidel and Saab 2008, 38). The government also set up a re-education and rehabilitation program to turn the captured terrorists into peaceful citizens. The captured combatants were sent to special camps where pro-regime clerics engaged them in extensive discussions focused on the ideological errors of supporting al-Qaeda (Reidel and Saab 2008, 38).

The political campaign also included a long-term religious reformation plan that aimed to moderate extremist religious elements. In this campaign, the Ministry of Islamic Affairs started the examination of all mosques' officials, sent some off for retraining, and expand its monitoring of the 30,000 mosques and their attendant preachers and clerics. Standardized mosque sermons that were distributed by the government were full of messages against extremism (Hafez 2008, 16). To implement the plan completely, the government fired some 3,500 imams for refusing to renounce extremist views and sent another 20,000 to retraining between 2004 and 2012 (Shane 2016). At the same time, the government launched a program of recruiting the *Sahwa* scholars to use them against al-Qaeda and its jihadi narrative. These scholars had been imprisoned in the early 1990s for opposing the U.S. presence in Saudi Arabia and therefore were well-respected in Salafi communities (Hafez 2008, 16–17). The state's political campaign against al-Qaeda was also supported and propagated by the official press. Media programs like *Facts from Within the Cell*, for instance, featured repentant militants talking about their experiences in a negative light (Hafez 2008, 16–17).

Taken together, the government mobilized all its instruments of security, political, and religious control and brought together the soldiers, politicians, clerics, and the press together to paralyze al-Qaeda's revolt and delegitimize its appeal in Saudi Arabia (Hafez 2008, 16). As a result, more than two dozen attacks were thwarted and more than 260 jihadi operatives were killed or captured by 2006 (Reidel and Saab 2008, 38). By November 2007, the authorities managed to arrest another 208 suspected terrorists in six cells and thwarted several other planned attacks (Abou-Alsamh 2007;

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Reidel and Saab 2008, 38). Among arrestees were up to 112 people whom the Ministry of Interior believed were in a cell responsible for recruiting Saudis and sending them for training in Afghanistan and Iraq so that they could later return and initiate attacks within the country (Abou-Alsamh 2007; Reidel and Saab 2008, 38). The revolt ended in four years with the most significant jihadi elements being killed or arrested. The remnants of the revolt either moved to Iraq to join other JSGs or infiltrated Yemen and established an AQAP base in ungoverned areas.

The story of the failed revolt shows that despite the persistence of the root causes of JSGs in Saudi Arabia, effective statehood prevented the formation of an al-Qaeda front in the country. The counterterrorism strategies and tactics that were set up and developed following the outbreak of the revolt not only suppressed and eliminated al-Qaeda's campaign but also contained other JSGs like IS to expand in the Peninsula in the years to come.

The state's reliance on a combination of security, political, and religious means helped prevent the infiltration of IS and delegitimize its religious cause in the country (Bunzel 2016, 19–21). Although the Wahhabi scholars remained in support of jihad against the Assad regime in Syria, none of them publicly supported jihad in Saudi Arabia (Bunzel 2016, 19–20). Rather, popular clerics joined the state's campaign against JSGs, particularly IS.

For example, in response to King Abdullah's demand from the Wahhabi establishment to speak up against IS, Abd al-Aziz Al al-Sheikh, the grand mufti of the kingdom and head of the Council of Senior Religious Scholars, characterized IS and al-Qaeda on August 19, 2014, as "an extension of the Kharijites, who were the first group to leave the religion" (Bunzel 2016, 23). In the same statement, the sheikh announced the establishment of a government-sponsored policy to deter vulnerable Saudi youth and ordinary citizens from joining the "Kharijite groups" including IS and al-Qaeda (Bunzel 2016, 23). Following the announcement, many Wahhabi scholars started conspiring against IS by attacking it with labels, saying it was "the creation of international intelligence agencies" and an organization with a "foreign agenda" against Muslims in the Middle East. In December 2015, the kingdom's mufti joined the list of conspirators, describing IS with pejorative terms like "soldiers for Israel" (Bunzel 2016, 23). As a result of the broad-based campaign that also led to the reform and expansion of the state's counterterrorism policies, Saudi Arabia has remained safe from considerable jihadi threats.

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CHAPTER 9

Conclusion

In the past three decades, several JSGs emerged in the Islamic world that eventually transformed into the most sophisticated terrorist organization of the modern age, the Islamic State (IS). IS claimed the restoration of the Islamic caliphate in 2014 calling upon all Muslims to pledge allegiance to its self-declared caliph and to join a global jihad on his behalf. In just two years from 2014 to 2016, IS managed to seize large territories in the Middle East and inspire thousands of individuals in Western countries to travel to its hotpots and take part in jihad or commit terrorist plots and attacks in major Western cities from London to Paris to Orlando to Ottawa and elsewhere.

The counterterrorism campaign in Iraq and Syria, led by a coalition of domestic and international forces in 2018, marked the beginning of IS's decline. The Coalition forces eventually announced the total elimination of the so-called caliphate in March 2019. However, despite IS's loss of its strongholds in Iraq and Syria, its offshoots such as the Islamic State-Khorasan in South and Central Asia, the Islamic State Greater Sahara, the Islamic State Libya, the Islamic State Sinai, and the Islamic State West Africa remain active. Moreover, IS's 20,000 or so experienced and highly motivated members spread throughout the Islamic world searching for ungoverned areas to reorganize for the next phase of global jihad.

Likewise, while al-Qaeda as the vanguard organization of modern jihadism is partly dissolved or integrated into localized jihadi movements, its leadership, its core organization, and most importantly its globalist ideology survive. Additionally, al-Qaeda and IS have given rise to several localized jihadi organizations that operate from South Asia to North Africa to the Middle East and elsewhere that could transform into a new global

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jihadist organization. Therefore, despite IS's loss of territory in Iraq and Syria and al-Qaeda's retreat, an increasingly diffuse jihadi Salafi movement is far from defeated.

Although the number of terrorist attacks in the West has remarkably declined since 2019, it does not mean that the threat of Islamist terrorism is over. In addition to the retreat of the two largest terrorist organizations, many other global factors have affected the number and quality of terrorist attacks in the West. One major factor is the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, which had a significant impact on all kinds of human movement throughout the globe. It also virtualized most of the human activities and public gatherings that might have pushed terrorist organizations to reassess their plans during the pandemic. Even though various branches of IS have used the security relief provided during the pandemic to reconstruct the organization and al-Qaeda has expanded its network in Arabia, Africa, and particularly in the Taliban-controlled Afghanistan, scholars have not considerably tracked terrorist activities and plans in this period. These JSGs' approach to the post-pandemic world could yet surprise its adversaries and challenge the national security of many countries. This means that JSGs remains a serious international security problem for years and decades to come.

This study of JSGs shows that these jihadi organizations are highly adaptable to different conditions and resilient to transform into new organizational structures periodically. Originally, JSGs were established and expanded in highly fragile states in the Islamic world. State fragility, in this context, provided the necessary conditions for the rise and expansion of these organizations. Therefore today one of the main questions in the field of political violence and international security is as follows: will the remnants of major JSGs transform into new forms of jihadi organizations in the fragile states of the Islamic world?

This book explains that the world is not completely immune to the new waves of jihadism, because the root causes and conditions fomenting JSGs have not changed much since the 9/11 attacks. The remnants of IS and other defeated JSGs will likely infiltrate and reorganize in the fragile states of the Islamic world. Today, many states in the Muslim world are highly fragile, suffering from acute gaps of legitimacy, authority, and capacity. The book highlights the significant conditional role of fragile states in the formation and expansion of JSGs and suggests that reducing the likelihood of the rise of such organizations in the future will require filling

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the legitimacy, authority, and capacity gaps in the collapsed states of the Islamic world.

This book develops an analytical framework for studying the relationship between state fragility and the rise of JSGs that applies to the study of similar cases in the future. The book studies the causes and conditions of JSGs in three crucial case studies and by using illustrative examples from the rest of the Islamic world. The book argues that JSGs are the outcome of, first, a series of causes on the three levels of analysis and, second, the formation of these organizations requires state fragility conditions including the lack of legitimacy, the lack of authority, and the lack of capacity. In short, JSGs emerge only in the fragile states of the Islamic world.

The finding shows that all three aspects of state fragility are crucial in the formation and expansion of JSGs. However, the lack of legitimacy and the lack of authority, particularly when they coexist, are the most significant conditions of the rise of such organizations. The lack of capacity exacerbates other conditions but is not a determinant factor in all cases.

The case studies of this book explain how state fragility conditions in Afghanistan and Iraq facilitated the creation of al-Qaeda and IS, respectively, while the absence of such conditions prevented the formation of JSGs in Saudi Arabia. The finding of these case studies shows that the lack of state authority, particularly when it coexists with the lack of legitimacy, provides the most critical condition of the rise and expansion of JSGs. By contrast, in countries that enjoy effective state authority, poor democratic legitimacy or weak capacity does not, separately, provide a determinant condition. Hence if the state enjoys strong authority and effective capacity, the lack of democratic legitimacy or the legitimacy trap alone does not provide a necessary condition for the rise of JSGs. Furthermore, while the lack of capacity supplements other state fragility conditions, it does not directly and separately affect the rise of such organizations.

The first case study shows that al-Qaeda was the outcome of causes on the three levels of analysis, including the Afghan Arabs' search for personal security and their quest for significance at the individual level, the jihadi Salafi ideology at the group level, and the U.S. military and foreign policies in the Middle East at the international level. These causes played a determinant role in the rise of al-Qaeda, and state fragility in Afghanistan in the 1990s provided the condition in which al-Qaeda evolved from several terrorist camps to a JSG that operates globally.

More specifically, the formation of al-Qaeda greatly benefited from

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the lack of state legitimacy, the poor state authority, and the lack of state capacity as three aspects of state fragility.

Concerning the lack of legitimacy, the Taliban's IEA did not represent the citizens nor was it officially recognized as a sovereign authority by the international community. Therefore it lacked both representativeness and accountability. The IEA's lack of representation was a key factor in the evolution of al-Qaeda. The IEA was not democratically elected by the citizens and therefore was not interested in responding to its people about the activities taking place inside Afghanistan. Anyone who wanted to intervene in the Taliban affairs would be subjected to interrogation and even execution. In addition to the lack of representativeness, the IEA's lack of accountability also provided a favorable opportunity for bin Laden to develop his terrorist camps in areas that were out of the international community's reach. In this period, the IEA was not simply interested in reporting any activities taking place in its territory to the international community that constantly refused to recognize it as a sovereign authority in the country. The formation of al-Qaeda greatly benefited from these two elements of the lack of legitimacy in Afghanistan.

Concerning authority, the IEA lacked a security apparatus able to defeat its internal rival militarily and secure the country effectively. This condition facilitated the infiltration of the Arab jihadis into Afghanistan and their interaction and organization in ungoverned areas. The IEA's weak security and military apparatuses also led to its dependence on military support and manpower from bin Laden, which expanded and exacerbated the Arab jihadis' influence in the Taliban's ranks. This condition provided bin Laden with another great opportunity to expand his camp-making project without the Taliban interference.

Regarding capacity, the IEA neither had a sufficient economy for managing a state nor did it have the administrative capability for extracting the means of producing official revenue to cover the costs of governance and war. Therefore it heavily relied on foreign funds, particularly from bin Laden. Moreover, in the absence of an efficient administration, the IEA failed to acquire sources of revenue and manage the state's economic affairs. As a result, economic issues and the financial management of the war were supervised mainly by Arabs and Pakistanis. This situation gave the Arab jihadis the necessary leverage to operate in Afghanistan without domestic interference. Taken together, the lack of legitimacy, the weak authority, and the lack of capacity in Afghanistan created a condition in

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which al-Qaeda camps spread and eventually evolved into what is known as al-Qaeda.

Like al-Qaeda, the formation of IS was the outcome of a series of causes on the three levels of analysis, while state fragility in post-Saddam Iraq provided the necessary conditions for the evolution of the Iraq-based insurgency to IS. Two measures of state fragility, including poor legitimacy and weak authority, functioned as the main conditions of the rise of IS, and the lack of capacity as a third aspect of state fragility contributed to the other conditions but did not play a crucial role as it did in the case of al-Qaeda.

The lack of a broad-based government, the discrimination and marginalization of Sunni Arabs from Iraq's political landscape, and the regional powers' intervention in Iraq's sectarian war significantly reduced the legitimacy of the state, which created an environment favorable to the establishment of IS. Following the collapse of Saddam's regime, Shiites and Kurds dominated the U.S.-sponsored state-building project, marginalizing the traditional ruling group, the Sunnis, from power and politics. As a result, the Sunni communities refused to recognize political development and its outcome in the 2000s as a legitimate process. The state's lack of legitimacy in the Sunni areas led to a legitimacy gap that the Sunni insurgency was prepared to fill. Parallel to the sectarian competition, the regional power struggle also accelerated the process of the evolution of the insurgency to IS. Among others, Iran and Saudi Arabia fueled Iraq's sectarian politics, which pushed the Sunni community further in favor of the insurgency. This environment reinforced the process of the transformation of the insurgency into a jihadi organization as an alternative source of power for Sunnis in the country's sectarian war. In this circumstance, insurgent groups openly recruited from the Sunni communities, and with the support received from the locals, freely assembled and interacted in the Sunni Triangle.

Poor authority in post-Saddam Iraq was another significant state fragility condition that contributed to the formation of IS. Following the defeat of Saddam's regime, all essential components of the state power, including its army, police, and intelligence, were disintegrated faster than was predicted. In the face of a fast-growing insurgency, the Americans and their allies failed to rebuild Iraq's security and defense forces as quickly as necessary. The dissolution of Iraq's armed forces and the slow process of its restoration resulted in a security vacuum that greatly favored the insurgency, its recruitment, cross-border interactions, and development into a multilayered jihadi organization.

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Finally, as a third significant aspect of state fragility in the post-Saddam Iraq, the lack of state capacity, particularly in terms of the state's inability to address poverty and unemployment in the Sunni communities, reinforced the two other conditions of the rise IS (i.e., poor legitimacy and weak authority). With the state collapse in Iraq, the country's overall economy worsened and state institutions ceased to provide any meaningful services. The outcome was a high level of poverty and unemployment, especially in the Sunni Triangle. In this capacity gap, the insurgent groups offered attractive salaries and bonuses to increase recruitment from the vulnerable communities.

In contrast to the rise of al-Qaeda and IS, the jihadi revolt in Saudi Arabia failed because of the absence of the necessary state fragility conditions. While the root causes of JSGs strongly existed on all levels of the three-level analysis, the Saudi state deterred the establishment of an al-Qaeda front in the country. Essentially, the strong authority, the effective capacity, and the government's resilience in using both official and unofficial resources helped prevent al-Qaeda from expanding the 2003 revolt in the country. Although the Saudi state suffered from the lack of a rational-legal or democratic legitimacy, it was able to fill the legitimacy gap by using its religious sources, particularly the Wahhabi establishment, during the revolt to delegitimize al-Qaeda's appeal while legitimizing the state's coercive campaign against it. The result of these efforts was the launch of a multidimensional counterterrorism campaign that not only eliminated the jihadi networks coercively but also used soft power to address the revolt's underlying causes.

The three case studies add new insight to the debate on the nexus of state fragility and JSGs. The existing literature lacks a detailed explanation of *why* and *how* state fragility contributes to the formation and expansion of such organizations. This book addresses the two questions by developing an analytical framework in which the root causes of JSGs are investigated in a connection with aspects of state fragility. By addressing the *why* and the *how* questions together, the book provides a comprehensive basis for a complete explanation of the rise of jihadi organizations.

The central argument of this book concerning the conditional role of state fragility in the rise of JSGs is supported by data from both positive and negative crucial cases and illustrative examples from other fragile states in the Islamic world. The book explains how the presence of state fragility conditions contributes to the formation of JSGs in positive cases

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like Afghanistan and Iraq, while the absence of such conditions in negative cases like Saudi Arabia contains the rise of such organizations. It also elaborates on how this analytical framework and the findings help study other positive and negative crucial cases. The positive cases include Syria, Yemen, Sudan, Somalia, Nigeria, Niger, and Chad where state fragility has contributed to the rise of JSGs. The negative cases include Qatar, the UAE, Oman, Jordan, Turkey, Morocco, and Senegal where a higher level of statehood, despite the existence of the root causes of JSGs, has prevented the rise of such organizations.

Beyond the two positive and negative categories of crucial cases, there are several hybrid cases that might be used as the basis for a counterargument. While I have argued that these cases are either out of the scope of this book or include case-specific variables that are neither generalizable nor pose a methodological challenge to my research design, a detailed examination of these cases may help draw out the limitations of the argument or assess its broader explanatory power. Therefore while this book provides a foundational understanding of the nexus of state fragility and JSGs and develops an analytical framework based on crucial case studies, testing the generalizability of the finding requires more research and new case studies.

Additionally, a separate study of case-specific variables that develop mechanisms and measures for preventing the rise of JSGs in the hybrid cases would contribute to a broader and deeper comprehension of the significance of these factors in counterterrorism. This in turn will lead to new research projects on why such country-specific variables do not persist or are not effective in crucial cases such as Afghanistan or Iraq. In sum, a detailed investigation of the hybrid cases would expand the debate on the nexus of state fragility and JSGs and add more insight into the causes and conditions of the rise and expansion of these organizations.

For example, case studies in West Africa would greatly contribute to knowing how country-specific factors intervene in the relationship between state fragility and the causes of JSGs. Case studies of highly fragile Islamic states like Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, Gambia, and Mauritania that have not given rise to JSGs would help address this puzzle. Moreover, case studies of local and near-enemy-centrist jihadi organizations, like JI in Indonesia, will provide useful insight into the dynamics of domestic jihadi organizations and the role of country-specific variables in the rise of such organizations in relatively stable states. Taken together, while the study of hybrid

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cases might challenge the key arguments of this book on an abstract stage, a closer assessment of them will be helpful in a better understanding of the scope of the puzzle of the relationship between state fragility and JSGs.

Besides its contribution to academic research, the findings of this book have implications for international security and international development policies. Today, questions on the rise, expansion, and future JSGs are more pressing than ever in the policy arena. Al-Qaeda and IS are organizationally dismantled in the Middle East but their leadership, militants, and affiliates have spread around the world. Moreover, despite the organizational destruction of the major JSGs, their underlying forces and ideology persist in the Islamic world. The highly motivated members of these organizations are searching for new safe havens in the fragile states of the Islamic world to reorganize and open a new chapter of global jihadism. Many Islamic countries that suffer from severe state fragility could provide terrorist sanctuaries in which the remnants of major jihadi organizations could assemble and plan new series of attacks. Therefore fragile states from Afghanistan to Iraq to Syria to Yemen and beyond require a special concentration in international security policies concerning JSGs and international terrorism. In short, in a world of fragile states, international peace and security require state-building.

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Index

Ibrahimi, S. Yaqub. *International Security In a World of Fragile States: Islamic States and Islamist Organizations.*
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