CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1   Background

September 11 Attack, Yazidi Bombings, and the Christmas Massacre in the Democratic Republic of Congo are only a few out of numerous horrific terrorist attacks that the world has witnessed. The causes of these attacks may vary, but they have one thing in common, the belief that fear is needed to be produced to achieve their political goal. Among many countries affected by terrorism, Iraq becomes one of them that is most damaged.

Terrorist attacks are often organized by transnational terrorist groups. Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) which has affiliation to Al-Qaeda becomes one of the most notable terrorist groups. ISIS is an active religious militant group created by former criminal Abu Musab al-Zarqawi in 2000.[1] As a group with the purpose of building its own state, ISIS needs more than just its leaders and followers. ISIS also needs territorial foothold. Thus, incorporating the Iraq in its name implies its intention to claim the country as its territorial foothold. As the name suggests, ISIS. Aims to establish a caliphate state mainly on the territory of Iraq and Syria. However, for the sake of this thesis, I will focus solely on ISIS' in Iraq as Sunni resistance movement against Iraq Government 2003-2006, whose name at that time

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[1] Ahmed S. Hashim. "The Islamic State: From Al-Qaeda Affiliate to caliphate." *Middle East Policy* XXI, no.4 (2014):69.

was Islamic State of Iraq (ISI). ISIS' original name was Jamaat al-Tawhid (JTJ) and had joined Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) in 2004.[2] From then, its original names, the name has changed several times. The change of name also showed changes in leadership and operation scope over time. In 2006, following the death of Al Zarqawi, AQI with Al Masri as its representative appointed Abu Omar al-Baghdadi as ISI's leader.[3]

ISIS follows Salafi Islam (*Salafiya*), the most conservative and puritan of Islam, believing that any modification in the teaching is considered as an apostate.[4] The Salafi believes that the Prophet Muhammad's words (*Sunnah)* must be followed precisely and that *Ummah* should copy the way of living of Muhammad in the early age.[5] Looking at this extremist version of Islam and ISIS' aim to establish a caliphate state, it is clear that ISIS' interest is to fight those they believe as an apostate and establish a state.

ISIS' development was enabled by the exacerbation of Iraqi domestic political situation, namely the discontent and uprisings led by Iraqi Sunnis following the 2003 United States (US) invasion. The discontent was the immediate response of the new government that oppresses the Sunni that has stayed in power in Iraq for centuries. To understand better why the Sunni were deeply aggravated by the invasion and the new government, it is imperative to grasp first the sectarian

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[2] Ahmed S. Hashim. "The Islamic State: From Al-Qaeda Affiliate to caliphate." *Middle East Policy* XXI, no.4 (2014):71.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] Joas Wagemakers. *Salafism or the Quest for Purity.* Oasis Center. July 26, 2018. oasiscenter.eu (accessed February 2020).

[5] *Ibid.*

division between Iraqi Shiites and Sunni as well as the treatment towards those two groups along Iraq history.

Sectarian division in Iraq can be traced back to the British Colonization, where the Sunni Muslims were empowered and were facilitated a better standard of living than the Shiites.[6] The situation slightly changed since the rise of Saddam Hussein, who eagerly was determined to be secular. As a matter of fact, the Iraqi Baath Party, his backing party is based on secular Pan-Arab movement. This secularization program, however backfired. Saddam Hussein used the word secularization only as a propaganda to stop any uprisings coming from Shiites.

In 1979, Iranian Revolution that replaced the Pahlavi Dynasty with Shiite government and theocracy broke out. The revolution gave a sense of confidence to all Shiites living in Shiite-dominant country. To contain this, Iraq invaded Iran. Instead of being deterred and stop the revolution, Iran backed Iraqi Shiites to copy Iranian revolution in the country.[7] Iraqi support towards Saddam Hussein drastically deteriorated. The invasion initiated the Iraq-Iran War. Starting from 1991, Hussein's regime became even more aggressive towards its opposition, namely Shiites, organizing systematic killing and disbandment of learning centers.[8]

In 2002, under the exclusive authority of UN Resolution 1441, UN sent its inspectors to investigate in Iraq WMD possession, the authority that was interpreted

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[6] Abbass Kadhim. *Reclaiming Iraq: The 1920 Revolution and the Founding of the Modern State* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2012).

[7] Mansour Farhang. "The Iran-Iraq War: The Feud, the Tragedy, the Spoils." *World Policy Journal* 2, no. 4 (1985): 659-80. Accessed April 21, 2020. www.jstor.org/stable/40209178.

[8] *Ibid.*

by the US to be given also to its member states.[9] For that reason, US cooperated with the UK to intervene in the country. The US and UK then proposed a resolution of invasion and war, while the rest three permanent members of the security council opposed.[10]

This invasion was also enabled as US' high-ranking official were neo-conservatives, such as Vice President Richard Cheney, Chairman of Defense Policy Board Advisor Richard Perle, Deputy Secretary for Defense Paul Wolfowitz, Under Secretary of Defense Douglas Feith, and a handful more. Neo-conservatism is a political ideology that deeply believes in American Exceptionalism, convinced that the US has to partake in the restoration of the world order through democratization efforts.[11] Neo-conservative suggestion had been dismissed in the previous regimes. However, the 9/11 bombing and the rise of neo-conservatives in a more strategic position allow their ideas to finally be executed.

While the poorly-decided invasion proved no WMD, the invasion successfully overthrew Hussein's regime. After the invasion, Iraq is under the occupation of the US, with CPA Paul Bremer as the US-appointed acting president.[12] The exiled Shiites were also welcomed back in the country and started to fill government position, they were not any better than the previous government. In fact, spending time abroad and years of hatred towards Sunni only created a revenge-based governance. From the year 2003 to 2010, the new government made

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[9] Al Jazeera. *The UN's decline: Timeline.* March 16, 2004. aljazeera.com (accessed September 23, 2020).
[10] *Ibid.*
[11] Lewis Scott. " The Iraq Invasion: the Neoconservative Perspective." September 2015: 1.
[12] *Ibid.*

changes, that were not the wisest of decision. Those changes became the trigger to Sunni discontent and eventually the birth of ISI.

Those main triggering policies are the de-Baathification, the new constitution, and the dysfunctional power-sharing system. First, de-Baathification policy, where the government is cleaned from all affiliates from the Sunni-dominated Baath party.[13] The policy did not only affect those in the party, but also many non-partisan Sunnis, as many of them gained access to power and jobs through nepotism.

Second, new constitution that undermines Sunni rights was created in 2005.[14] The new constitution is often criticised as the symbol of Sunni abandonment in the newly Shiite-governed Iraq. The constitution, both in its legislating process and its contents substantially left out Sunnis. Thus, the constitution does not reflect Sunnis; interest. The main issues highlighted by the Sunnis are the issue of federalism and the consequential wealth distribution. Sunnis suspected federalism would dismantle Iraq and would only benefit the Shiites and the Kurds with regional autonomy they had been longing.[15] Additionally, federalism also gave regions to control and manage their own wealth.[16] Sunnis whose areas are resource poor would eventually left with nothing compared to the oil rich Kurds and Shiites region. Thus, the

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[13] Alissa J. Rubin. "Ahmad Chalabi and the Legacy of De-Baathification in Iraq." The New York Times. The New York Times. November 3 ,2015. https://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/04/world/middleeast/ahmad-chalabi-and-the-legacy-of-de-baathification-in-iraq.html

[14] Toby Dodge, et al. *Understanding the Drivers of Conflict in Iraq*. Synthesis Paper, Middle East Center, London School of Economic and Political Sciencces, London: The London School of Economic and Political Science, n.d., 12.

[15] Lionel Beehner. *Why Sunnis Don't' Support Iraq's Constitution.* Council on Foreign Relations. October 12,2005. https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/why-sunnis-donts-support-iraqs-constitution (accessed September 2020).

[16] *Ibid.*

popular referendum held on October 2005 drove the Sunnis further from the government.[17]

Third, the new government called the implementation of *Muhasasa Ta'ifia*, a power-sharing system that assigns political power based on sectarian proportion.[18] The Shiites as majority have the biggest power, followed by the Kurds, and Sunni which had significantly less power. Thus, Iraqi prime minister (head of government) is a Shiite, the president (head of state) from the Kurds, and the speaker of the parliament from the Sunni. Consequently, this system patronizes citizens from the same ethnic background in each their reserved posts, as staffs for Prime Minister are mainly Shiites and so on.

The changes alienated the Sunni and snatched their power ascendancy, sparking Sunni's discontent towards the government. Inevitably, Sunnis reacted through organizing insurgencies operated by five groups, one of them being JTJ. As Sunni's grievances intensified, the easier it became for ISI (then JTJ) to gain followers and expand its organization. While the organization grew rapidly, the government showed deficient counterinsurgency effort. Ultimately, JTJ became stronger, paving an easier path for the establishment of ISIS.

ISIS in Iraq has managed to grow into a national terrorist group whose attacks have killed and injured immeasurable amount of people. ISIS' in Iraq operations have severely damaged facilities massive terror, as well as exacerbated national

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[17] Jonathan Morrow. *Iraq's Constitutional Process II An Opportunity Lost.* Special Report 155, Washington D.C.: UNITED STATES INSTITUTE OF PEACE, 2005.
[18] Toby Dodge. *Tracing the Rise of Sectarianism in Iraq after 2003.* LSE Middle East Center. London, September 13, 2018.

security and stability. Not only that, ISIS eventually was able to impose its goals and ideology to Iraqi Sunnis. Thereupon, the case of ISIS becomes an interesting issue to discuss.

1.2   Research Questions

Based on the conditions explained previously, this research suggests the following research questions:

1. Why did Sunni Muslims in Iraq resist against Iraq Government 2003-2006?

2. How did Sunni resistance movement against Iraq Government 2003-2006 develop into ISIS?

1.3   Research Objectives

The objective of the research is to identify the causes leading to Sunni resistance against the Iraq Government from 2003 to 2006. After doing so, the research also aims to explain the process of how Sunni resistance movement develop into ISIS in Iraq in 2006.

1.4   Significance of Research

The outcome of this research will provide a better understanding of how ISIS is more than just a religious militant group with the purpose of creating a caliphate state. ISIS is also an evidence of Sunni resistance movement against the Shiite government in Iraq. The research will also give insights of the factors leading to Sunni's resistance in Iraq and how Sunni resistance movement develops into ISIS.

The research will also elaborate the sectarian division between Sunni and Shiites and as well explaining post US invasion policies, other factors that escalated the resistance. Hopefully, by understanding the factors leading to Sunni resistance and the process how resistance movement works collaboratively with terrorist group, scholars will gain a valuable insight to better grasp the condition in Iraq and able to take a step in tackling terrorism in Iraq. Due to time constraints, the thesis limited its scope to Iraq's domestic situation, thus only provide very limited explanation on the regional context of the issue. I, however, acknowledge that the thesis could be broadened to include the regional factors.

1.5   Research Structure

The first chapter, namely the introduction provides general view of the main focus of this thesis. The chapter consists of the background of the topic of the thesis, the research questions that will be answered in the upcoming chapters, the research objectives, and the significance of this research.

The second chapter, the theoretical framework collects and reviews literature sources on the issue to form a foundation for the research. The chapter also explicates the theory and concepts in International Relations that will be used as a framework to analyse and explain the findings for this research.

The third chapter, that is the methodology elaborates the research methodology that will be used in this research. It will explain what kind of research approach and research method that will be utilized. The chapter will also explain

how the data will be collected and analysed in regard to answering the research questions.

The fourth chapter is analysis in which the findings of this research will be analysed according to the theoretical framework mentioned in Chapter 2, as well as utilizing research methodology explained in Chapter 3. The result of the analysis will answer the research questions.

The fifth chapter is conclusion where the research will provide summary of the research, as well as the conclusion of the whole research.