

An Adaptive Insurgency: Confronting Adversary Networks in Iraq

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS



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Jeffrey White was an adjunct defense fellow at The Washington Institute, specializing in the military and security affairs of the Levant and Iran.



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Iraq's Sunni Arab insurgency, which first emerged in spring 2003, continues today, and no blend of coalition operational strategy has succeeded in substantially diminishing it. In fact, by some measures, the insurgency has grown in scope and capability. What makes the insurgents such difficult targets? How have they been able to survive in the face of major changes to the country's political and military landscape?

In this new Washington Institute Policy Focus, Jeffrey White outlines the challenges inherent in confronting an insurgency composed of diverse groups capable of adapting to Iraq's hostile political-military environment. Using concepts from fields such as sociobiology, he demonstrates how coalition forces can better combat this "network of networks" by understanding the traits that allow it to operate within the Sunni Arab community. For the policy practitioner and lay reader alike, this paper offers an innovative means of gauging the prospects for success in Iraq, showing how unconventional analytical approaches can be brought to bear on the amorphous issues of understanding and defeating the insurgency.

• **29 pages**

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