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Counterinsurgency after Afghanistan

A Concept in Crisis

BY DAVID H. UCKO

Six years have passed since the publication of Field Manual (FM) 3–24, *Counterinsurgency*. Embraced by sections of the military and civilian defense community seeking a fresh approach to the conflict in Iraq, the new field manual gained a political significance and profile unlike previous doctrinal publications. When General David Petraeus was able to incorporate some of the manual's core precepts into the new U.S. strategy for Iraq, and casualties and instability in Iraq declined over the following few years, both counterinsurgency doctrine and the people associated with it gained unprecedented influence.

Since then, the buzz that counterinsurgency acquired has worn off—for several reasons. Most fundamentally, there is widespread frustration over the attempt to use counterinsurgency doctrine to stabilize Afghanistan. Second, there are now several counternarratives to the popular notion that U.S. counterinsurgency theory pulled Iraq back from the brink: key here is that local factors, not U.S. inputs, explain what happened during the period that Americans like to call *the surge*. Third, large-scale and protracted military operations to build nations, unify states, and establish legitimate and competent governments are undertakings that, even if workable, run counter to the fiscal realities facing the West today. In the end, the critics pile on, counterinsurgency is naïve in its assumptions, unworkable in its requirements, and arrogant in its unfounded claims of prior success.

Based on the rise and decline of counterinsurgency over the past few years, this article seeks to assess the utility of this concept and its future as a defense priority and area of research.[1] It concludes that the discussion of counterinsurgency is marred by the polarizing effects of the term itself, which have encouraged a bandwagon effect, both in favor of and now in opposition to the term. Lost in this heated and overly personalized polemic is a necessary and more careful analysis of what can and cannot be expected from this concept and its associated doctrine. By teasing out its contribution to military thinking, its limitations, and its proper use, this article seeks to identify those aspects of counterinsurgency

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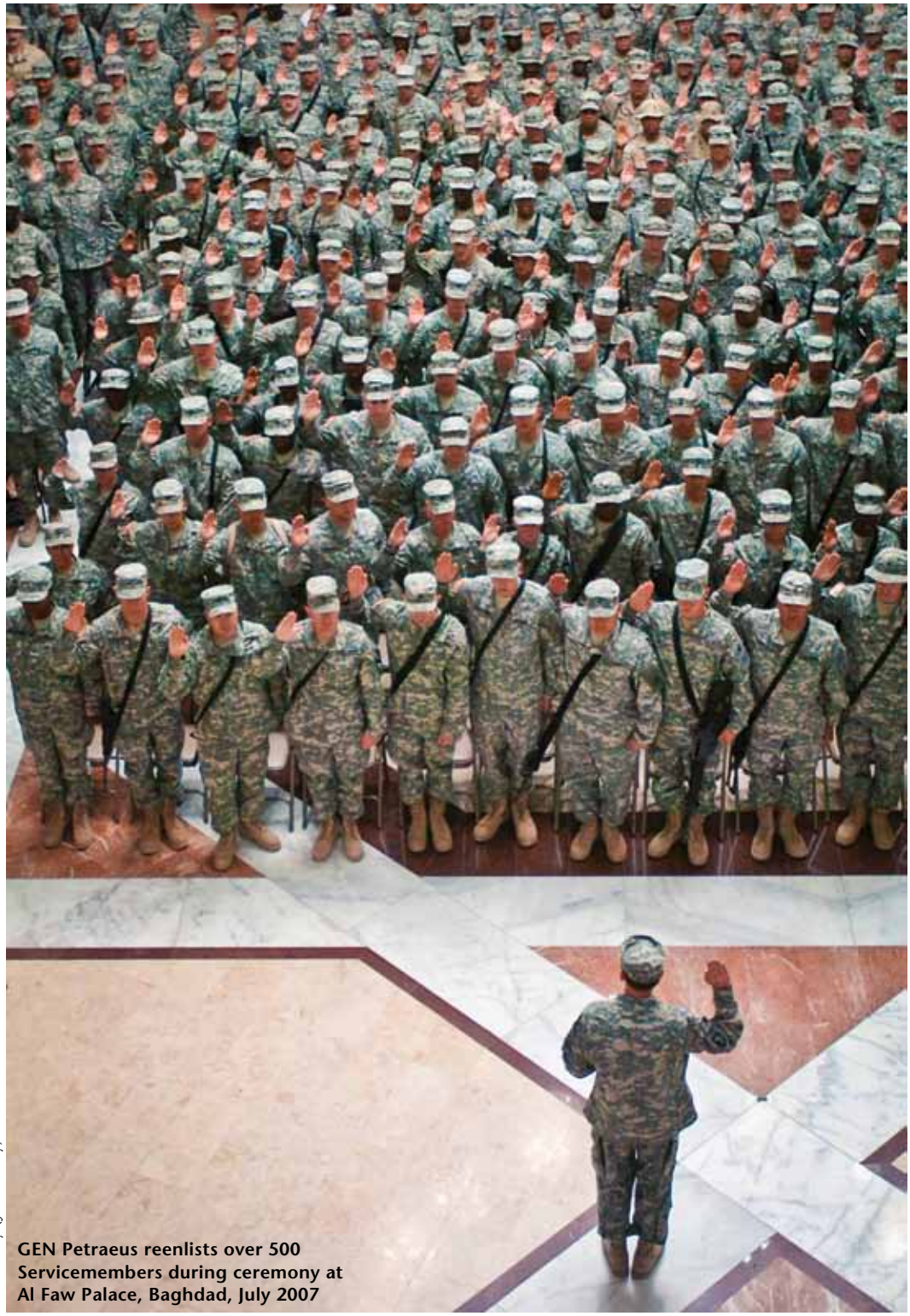
theory that should be retained even if the term itself is once again cast aside. This conceptual discussion has more than mere academic import, as it will shape the way recent counterinsurgency campaigns are remembered and the likelihood of past mistakes being repeated.

Contribution of Counterinsurgency Theory in Iraq

The discussion of counterinsurgency and Iraq now tends to focus on the degree to which the new doctrine helped U.S. forces stabilize the country during the so-called surge of 2007–2009. The instant wisdom on this issue suggested a stark discontinuity in strategy following General Petraeus's redeployment to Iraq in February 2007, this time as commander of Multi-National Force–Iraq (MNF–I). Before that, so the argument goes, most U.S. troops were confined to large forward operating bases and left their compounds only for discrete operations, typically to find, capture, and kill suspected insurgents. In changing course, General Petraeus relied on some of the principles in the counterinsurgency manual that he had published 2 months before arriving in-theater. The focus thus shifted toward providing security to the population, which required a dispersion of newly reinforced U.S. forces throughout their respective areas of operation, their partnering with local Iraqi forces, and sustainment of stability through the establishment of a fixed and combined presence in Iraq's most contested cities, towns, and neighborhoods. Along with other counterinsurgency practices—careful intelligence work, close partnering with Iraqi security forces, greater attentiveness toward issues of local governance—the shift in strategy produced a country-wide decline in violence.

> there is something febrile about the flurry of efforts seeking to discredit what was achieved by General Petraeus and the troops under his command

There have been many efforts to discredit this account, recounted here in its most threadbare form. One argument centers on the nature of counterinsurgency operations in Iraq and suggests that the new approach succeeded due to *increased* use of violence rather than softer notions such as "population security" and "hearts and minds." A second argument claims that U.S. forces in Iraq were peripheral to the change in security and that the real reason for the decline in casualties was the completion of ethnic cleansing across much of Baghdad, which obviated further violence. A third albeit related counternarrative ascribes the decline in violence to the evolution of the civil war in Iraq: by this argument, the contest between al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), various Sunni tribes and rejectionist elements, and the Shia-dominated death squads operating out of the Ministry of the Interior had by 2007 evolved to a point where a drop-off in violence was to be expected regardless of U.S. actions. In other words, U.S. forces were simply bystanders, later erroneously credited with a trend with which they had little to do. This last argument is sometimes supported by a fourth claim, namely that U.S. forces had implemented the tactics and techniques apparently "introduced" by General Petraeus prior to his return to Iraq, which again "proves" that it was the coincidence of his arrival with local phenomena, not the new strategy itself, that accounts for the drop in casualties during the ensuing 2 years. Finally, of course, there is the argument that the appearance of stability in Iraq is illusory and that the country's worst years still lie ahead—that the counterinsurgency campaign failed.



U.S. Army (Jon Soucy)

GEN Petraeus reenlists over 500 Servicemembers during ceremony at Al Faw Palace, Baghdad, July 2007

There is good cause to challenge the initial accounts of what happened during the surge, particularly as many of these paid insufficient attention to the Iraqi perspective on the events of this period. At the same time, there is something febrile about the flurry of efforts seeking to discredit what was achieved by General Petraeus and the troops under his command. Often this is more than a well-meaning attempt to learn more about a critical period of the Iraq War and descends into more parochial concerns, both within the American political scene and within the American military. Politically, the surge is significant for the fact that it was pushed onto a reluctant yet ultimately compliant Democrat-dominated Congress by a bullish and vehemently disliked Republican President who, to many observers, could do no right. To acknowledge some level of success in this endeavor, particularly when the benchmarks insisted upon by Democratic lawmakers were so unashamedly ignored, would be to show political weakness; better to insist the surge had nothing to do with it or that its results were disheartening.[2]

Within the U.S. military, the strategy behind the surge was driven by a group of officers inspired by the theory and principles of counterinsurgency against the backdrop of an institution resistant to such ideas. The accolades that these officers earned during and immediately following the change of course in Iraq may have antagonized those who either represented earlier (and by association "failed") strategies, or who simply resented the quick ascendance of a new cabal of purported "warrior-scholars." Lastly, within the think-tank circuit and academia, the increased interest in counterinsurgency has turned the field into something of a fad, which was bound to provoke dissent—particularly given the inevitably uneven quality of much of the associated scholarship. Most aggravating here is the perceived collusion among officers, pundits, and politicians in weaving a tale of success from which they all prosper.

The ulterior motives for revisiting the surge do not necessarily diminish the potency of the overall charge. However, as with most matters academic, the issue is rarely one of being right or wrong but rather one of balance and context. Take the argument that the surge relied on *increased* violence and civilian fatalities rather than any specific adherence to counterinsurgency principles. While there are statistics to support this claim, it would be premature to look at the spike in casualties during the initial months of the surge and conclude that counterinsurgency rhetoric about civil security is mere cant. Various estimates from Iraq show that whereas civilian casualties, security incidents, and recovery of weapons all increased in 2007, they then diminished fairly dramatically in the ensuing years.[3] Unless all of these estimates are wrong, the notion that the surge produced and relied on more violence is quite easy to counter, or at least to contextualize: while the infusion and sustained presence of U.S. forces in areas previously denied to them caused increased casualties, the long-term effect of the shift in strategy was undeniably stabilizing. This also explains the concrete walls, barriers, checkpoints, and other population-control measures imposed as part of the counterinsurgency campaign. While these may seem repressive, specific case studies from particular areas of Iraq show that they were introduced and placed to prevent armed attacks and halt cycles of violence—and there is evidence that it worked.

There is a second, deeper bone of contention here, namely that the authors of FM 3–24 deliberately misled their readers with promises of a "kinder, gentler war," in which populations would be secure, hearts and minds would be won, and no one would get hurt.[4] The increased

use of force during the surge is therefore brought up to "prove" the hypocrisy of counterinsurgency theorists who prescribe one form of war in their field manuals but conduct a far bloodier campaign on the ground. There is merit to this charge; some counterinsurgency experts arguably oversold the more pleasant-sounding facets of these types of operations when speaking to the press and civilians, perhaps to obtain the necessary buy-in for a campaign that, by 2006 and 2007, was deeply unpopular.[5]

More generally, the accusation against the counterinsurgency community tends to ignore the vital context in which the doctrine was written. The 2006 field manual was an antithesis to the previous approach toward operations in Iraq, an approach more concerned with rooting out individual terrorists than with local perceptions of legitimacy, the preferences of the population, and the deeper causes of violence. It was also an antithesis to previous understandings of counterinsurgency within the U.S. military, which emphasized a narrow range of security-related tasks geared toward the destruction of the enemy rather than the political drivers of instability.[6] This context explains any overemphasis in the manual on the softer or nonlethal instruments of counterinsurgency, though it should be added that the manual never refutes the importance of coercive operations as part of a counterinsurgency campaign. Given this context, the surge did not depart from the principles of the field manual, but reflects its delicate balance between coercion and co-option. Violence initially increased, but its purpose was to set the conditions for longer term civil security. This is not to say that coercion did not continue to feature as an important component of the overall strategy; reflecting the balance in the field manual, the Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) continued to launch precise and intelligence-enabled operations against those adversaries deemed irreconcilable.

If agreement can be reached that the change in U.S. strategy at least coincided with the gradual stabilization of Iraq, to what degree was it the U.S. military's doing? Most efforts to downplay the U.S. role point to local developments with supposedly greater explanatory value. One intriguing hypothesis is that ethnic cleansing in Baghdad had come sufficiently close to completion as to obviate any further violence.[7] Thus, rather than signifying a U.S. success, the declining levels of violence actually speak to a gross *failure* to prevent violence, which had simply burned itself out. It is difficult to evaluate this argument fully with the information

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available today. At the same time, adherents to this hypothesis face some challenges. First, even if ethnic cleansing had petered out by 2007, U.S. units deploying in 2006 witnessed sustained death squad activity and, importantly, were able to arrest such violence through practices that would later characterize the surge. Then-Colonel J.B. Burton's Dagger Brigade was based in northwest Baghdad from November 2006 and witnessed a cycle of violence generated by Shia death squads infiltrating the Sunni community, which as a defense mechanism sided with AQI for protection or retribution. By partnering with Sunni community leaders, Dagger Brigade was able to interpose itself—with concrete barriers, combined outposts, and checkpoints—between the two communities and thereby deny the death squads access to their would-be targets. Casualties in northwest Baghdad diminished as a result.[8] Put simply, this specific case reveals how counterinsurgency practices

actively helped arrest ethnic cleansing rather than just react to its final dividend—and there are other similar cases to go on.[9]

Second, the ethnic cleansing argument would need to explain why this process was not in itself destabilizing, given the forced population movements, seizure of property, and large-scale death toll involved. It seems odd that none of this would have provoked revanchist tendencies. At the very least, may it be claimed that the surge helped hold such tendencies in check? Going further, it may be conceivable that casualties would decline due to the forced separation of combatants, but this phenomenon can hardly explain the economic, political, and security-related progress seen in Iraq since 2007 or the nearly 160,000 internally displaced Baghdadis who had returned to the city by 2009.[10]

Third, the ethnic cleansing argument fails to explain the stabilization of much of Anbar Province in 2006 and 2007, where the vast majority of the population is Sunni. Here, as then-Colonel Sean MacFarland observed, the fear of a Shia central government and security forces had pushed the Sunni tribal leaders into the arms of AQI.[11] While this partnership had given these tribes greater clout, the alliance was by 2005 beginning to fray given the tribes' growing desire to participate in formal politics and the stark differences between their national goals and AQI's transnational and extremist agenda.[12] When the rift led to violent attacks and clashes between tribal and AQI forces, the United States was able to partner with the former to help target a common enemy. In other words, ethnic cleansing was neither a driver nor a solution to the violence in Anbar; in contrast, the careful implementation of various counterinsurgency practices played a major role in supporting one side against another.

On this point, a second factor used to downplay the achievements of the U.S. military in Iraq is precisely the role played by the Anbar tribes and the predominantly Sunni militias (also known as Sons of Iraq) that allied themselves with the U.S. military against more extremist organizations. The argument here is that the Sunni groups took the fight to AQI and U.S. forces were acquiescing bystanders. The only way the United States could have done wrong, in other words, was by obstructing these Sunni groups as they went about their business. Some might argue that this in itself represents something of an achievement given the U.S. active marginalization of Iraq's Sunni political leaders in previous years.[13] But there are two more fundamental points to be made.

First, the notion of the U.S. military as the "accidental hero" of Iraq belies the active measures taken by its forces to enable and consolidate the gains made by its local allies on the ground. As critics of U.S. operations in Iraq are often keen to point out, part of the effort involved putting some newfound allies on the payroll so as to finance their new agenda. A more generous assessment would also include the combined patrols, joint security stations, advising, and partnering—all new or enhanced initiatives that saw U.S. and local forces work together toward the same end. Also important in this regard are the aforementioned checkpoints, concrete barriers, and other resources brought to bear by the U.S. forces, which helped consolidate security gains. One can discuss the relative importance of local versus American forces in various parts of Iraq, but it would seem tendentious to suggest that the latter never had a role to play. It is in all likelihood, as the International Crisis Group found at the time, that "the surge in some cases benefited from, in others encouraged, and in the remainder produced, a series of politico-military shifts affecting the Sunni and Shiite communities,"

with the geographic variation suggesting a need for greater micro-level analysis of specific towns and areas to truly get at the root of the problem.[14] Such an analysis would also reveal the full range of U.S. actions included under the unfortunate rubric of the "surge," all of which were grounded in a political strategy designed to break the cycle of sectarian violence, move Iraq's communities toward sustainable political accommodation, and remove their sponsorship for extremist organizations and militias.

There is a second and broader issue here: the distinction between foreign and local inputs is not only artificial but also unhelpful when seeking to understand a counterinsurgency campaign such as that conducted in Iraq, where a third-party state intervenes to help one party prevail over another. Douglas Ollivant makes the point that in counterinsurgency, "success is deeply dependent upon the alignment of local interests with U.S. goals."[15] Indeed, partnering and relying on political structures and forces that share one's agenda, either in part or in full, does not represent an abdication of control or loss of initiative; it is in fact what a third-party counterinsurgency force *must do* to have effect. Yet working with local partners is not easy; it reflects proficiency in counterinsurgency for foreign forces to be able to read the local environment, identify opportunities for local partnerships, and build on these opportunities to further joint objectives. As emphasized in counterinsurgency doctrine, this requires a deep understanding of the local environment, its people, and their fears and aspirations, not least because such an understanding allows intervening troops to gauge the local legitimacy of those actors willing and able to support stated objectives.

What about the argument that many of the counterinsurgency practices related to the surge had already been adopted prior to General Petraeus's return to Iraq in February 2007? This argument has less to do with the merits of counterinsurgency as an operational approach and instead concerns the general's status as an innovator. Whether we speak of the joint security stations or the partnerships with Sunni tribes, it is true that these counterinsurgency practices predate General Petraeus's arrival, but this fact does not in itself devalue either approach. The suggestion has been made that because they had been tried before, it was not the practices themselves but the context in which they were implemented post-2007 that made the difference. This is problematic because it is largely impossible to assess a strategy in isolation from the context for which it was devised and in which it was implemented. Still, it is important not to undervalue General Petraeus's influence. As commander of MNF–I and with an additional five brigades, he was able to consolidate the approaches that he deemed successful, integrate them as part of the MNF–I campaign plan, ground that campaign plan in a political strategy that reflected the character of the conflict, and sustain and amplify the tentative security gains enabled theretofore.

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Finally, of course, there is the argument that the appearance of stability in Iraq was illusory and that the country's worst years still lie ahead. Many problems remained following the surge: the substandard electricity output had not improved, terrorist attacks remained a regular occurrence, and, more recently, the formation of a new government has been hugely problematic. Still, the

outcome of the counterinsurgency campaign in Iraq cannot be judged with rose-colored glasses. First, it is worth noting the starting conditions in Iraq in 2006, a time in which insurgent attacks, roaming death squads, and military operations contributed to 1,000 to 2,000 casualties per month.[16] Second, there is the hackneyed but nonetheless valuable point that counterinsurgencies take a long time and that the surge in Iraq lasted merely 3 years. Third, even the relative stability gained in these years continues to have effects. U.S. security forces now play an advisory role, yet large-scale violence has not returned. In the 2 years following the surge, the daily output of electricity doubled (and the demand for electricity skyrocketed).[17] And finally, even though the situation in Iraq remains tense, the aim of General Petraeus's campaign plan was to create space in which political reconciliation could occur. That this process stalled can be pinned in part on inadequate political engagement following the withdrawal of U.S. troops—perhaps the focus shifted too precipitously from Iraq to Afghanistan—but the main cause is of course the Iraqi government itself, a partner over which the United States only has so much leverage.

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A measured analysis of the use of counterinsurgency principles and doctrine in Iraq, from 2006 onward, reveals that they did inform the U.S. approach, which in turn helped stabilize the country. Much relied on the opportunity to partner with local armed groups sharing key objectives, an opportunity skillfully harnessed by U.S. commanders. It would be untrue to state that U.S. conduct of counterinsurgency operations *began* under General Petraeus in February 2007, but even so, his campaign plan helped consolidate various operational approaches and elevate them to the strategic level. Clearly, U.S. inputs were not the only or the main factor contributing to the decline in violence, and analysis must be sensitive to other developments on the ground. Still, the evidence strongly suggests that the United States was more than an opportunistic bystander claiming credit for something it did not help shape.

Afghanistan and the Limits of Counterinsurgency

If the introduction of counterinsurgency principles in operational planning helped turn the tide in Iraq, why has the same process not led to strategic success in Afghanistan? After all, General Petraeus was made commander of U.S. Central Command partly so that his remit would include Afghanistan and the regional conflagration driving the conflict there. Meanwhile, General Stanley McChrystal, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) commander appointed in 2009, was part of the "Petraeus team," having commanded JSOC in Iraq. The counterinsurgency guidance issued by General McChrystal strongly echoed the counterinsurgency principles of FM 3–24 and the guidance provided by General Petraeus in Iraq. Proponents of counterinsurgency therefore face a seemingly challenging question: why did counterinsurgency apparently work in Iraq and fail in Afghanistan? More fundamentally, what does this patchy track record say about counterinsurgency's credibility as a concept?

These seemingly poignant questions belie a gross misunderstanding of counterinsurgency—one that explains the heated polemic that the term has provoked. Counterinsurgency offers a

collection of insights and guidelines collected from past operations, which, if used and adapted in a manner sensitive to local context, can help in the design and execution of a specific campaign plan. Yet counterinsurgency is not a strategy. To the degree that the principles and practices of counterinsurgency worked in Iraq, it was because they were tied to a campaign plan informed by the specific enabling factors relevant to that operation. Few of these were in place in Afghanistan, yet this did not inform the attempted implementation of similar techniques and approaches. To put it succinctly, best practice is not best strategy.[18]

First, the coalition in Iraq had at least a moderately cooperative host-nation partner in Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, who by 2007 was recasting himself as a national rather than sectarian leader.[19] It is true that much of what the United States did in Anbar Province was done without the outright support of the central government, resulting in a problematic reintegration process for the Sunni forces that fought against AQI. Still, despite such difficulties, the situation in Iraq still compares favorably to that in Afghanistan, where Hamid Karzai proved either unable or unwilling to move against the warlords and other actors who had established themselves (often with coalition assistance) during the previous years. Furthermore in Iraq, the coalition was far more invested in reforming those ministries that had been penetrated by Shia radical elements, transformed into fiefdoms of sectarian power, and used to target and deny services to Sunni communities.[20] Specifically, the 2007 campaign plan stipulated working with Maliki to remove or ideally prosecute "highly sectarian and/or corrupt leaders within his government's senior ranks"—and pressure was applied to this end.[21] Until recently, there has been no similarly focused sidelining of obstructionist elements within the Afghan government, partly due to a lack of leverage. As a result, the central government is still seen as corrupt, illegitimate, and incompetent, which unsurprisingly has fueled the insurgency.

Second, the U.S. military in Iraq was able to make full use of the emerging rift between AQI and the Sunni tribes of Anbar. The causes of the rift are in contention: suggestions include a clash in illicit business interests, visions for the future of Iraq, and cultural mores; others claim the Sunni tribes designated AQI as an enemy in order to earn U.S. support and establish a better position for themselves politically.[22] Regardless of motive, the coalition has found no similar partner in Afghanistan, so its counterinsurgency practices on the local level have had to be conducted in isolation. Attempts to stand up an equivalent to the Sunni Awakening and Sons of Iraq in Afghanistan have stuttered because whereas the latter were based on preexisting structures, each with its own interests, grievances, and aspirations, the Afghan "replicas" have had to be manufactured from scratch. As such, these local defense forces typically lack the necessary unity of command, training, and purpose, which has in turn resulted in poor discipline, accountability, and effectiveness.[23]

Many other divergences obtain: the level of presidential commitment to the respective campaign, financial realities underpinning each operation, regional context, and respective level of unity of command. On this last point, it bears noting that whereas the United States controlled the vast majority of coalition forces in Iraq, the overall effort in Afghanistan has been hampered by the disparate interests and commitment of various North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) partners. Similar problems expressed

Royal Air Force (Neil Chapman)

Marine with Helmand Provincial Reconstruction Team offers water to Afghan boy

themselves in Iraq, with the United States ramping up in 2007 while the United Kingdom withdrew its troops. Even so, the scale of the problem in Iraq was far less serious with a mere two countries involved rather than the 47 currently contributing to ISAF. Only a handful of these 47 countries have authorized their troops to operate at an intensity appropriate for the campaign; others have imposed caveats on where and how their troops can be deployed. This in turn has further reduced the number of usable NATO forces—a number that despite substantial U.S. reinforcements has never reached the levels seen in Iraq.[24]

The broader point is that intervening troops need a strategy that makes full use of available means and existing opportunities in ways that help reach stated objectives. In Iraq, the objective was to stop the cycle of violence and create sufficient space for a possible process of bottom-up and top-down political accommodation, a difficult but achievable objective given the proper exploitation of the opportunities on the ground. In Afghanistan, the strategic objective has been to "disrupt, dismantle and defeat al-Qaeda in Pakistan and Afghanistan, and to prevent their return to either country in the future."[25] This aim is far more ambitious than that governing the surge in Iraq; it also conditions a counterterrorism operation against a transnational entity on an ambitious state-building effort based in one country.

U.S. policymakers are not blind to the ensuing dilemma and have sought to downgrade the plan's ambition by lowering the bar for how capable and accountable Afghan institutions should be before NATO troops can withdraw. Thus, in recent years, we have heard several times that there is no "objective of turning Afghanistan into Switzerland" and that Afghanistan will not "be a model Jeffersonian democracy."[26] These qualifications may help shape expectations but they also raise the question of

what indeed is being aimed for and how it will be achieved with the means and time available. Furthermore, even with ambitions officially downplayed, foreign occupation of Afghanistan remains formidably challenging given the country's terrain, size, geostrategic location, and history. Finally, as al Qaeda is constrained neither to Afghanistan nor Pakistan, it would subsist even if the counterinsurgency campaign was successful and the region was radically transformed.

For all of these reasons, counterinsurgency is often seen as an ill-suited and overly grandiose response to the problem of al Qaeda and is judged accordingly as a bad policy option for Afghanistan, rather than as a collection of principles and practices detached from any one campaign and operating below the realm of strategy. In part, this misperception is due to a dearth of substance and thought at the strategic level, which has sucked the operational and tactical precepts of counterinsurgency upward to fill the gap.[27] Some counterinsurgency proponents and operators have reinforced this tendency: in the absence of a clear strategy, the catchwords of counterinsurgency (*population security*, *governance*, *legitimacy*) are confused with strategic ends and pursued all at once, with no prioritization or clear end in mind. Missed in this hurried embrace of newly rediscovered theory is the need to adapt its premises and principles to meet specific political goals.[28] This is something far beyond the capacity of a field manual or an operational concept, though these can prove valuable in tying carefully defined strategic aims to the design of operations.

A Corrective Antithesis

By scaling back the expectations of what counterinsurgency as a concept can do, its value may be more fully appreciated. Counterinsurgency doctrine does not envisage or allow for painless foreign interventions; it does not provide a formulaic solution to the problem of political violence. Moreover, it does not substitute for a comprehensible *strategy* with which to tackle insurgencies, al Qaeda, or the threat of global terrorism. Finally, to value the theory and doctrine of counterinsurgency does not imply support for counterinsurgency campaigns around the world or for the use of this concept wherever political instability may arise.

counterinsurgency doctrine does not envisage or allow for painless foreign interventions; it does not provide a formulaic solution to the problem of political violence

What, then, does counterinsurgency do? In general terms, its main contribution lies in its various principles, which touch on the importance of achieving a nuanced political understanding of the campaign, operating under unified command, using intelligence to guide operations, isolating insurgents from the population, using the minimum amount of force necessary to achieve set objectives, and assuring and maintaining the perceived legitimacy of the counterinsurgency effort in the eyes of the populace. Most important, perhaps, is the exhortation to adapt and arrive at a tailored response rather than fall back on templates.[29]

These principles may seem commonsensical, even trite. For instance, there is nothing controversial about linking good intelligence to effective strike operations, and it is also clear that where adversaries and civilians look alike, obtaining good intelligence requires a special understanding of and with the local population. Similarly, it is difficult to fault the notion that understanding the environment, its people, and

structures presents external actors with more and better options, or that controlling and influencing key populations first require that they are adequately isolated from the intimidation and coercion of others. As to the focus on the legitimacy of the intervention itself and of the actors it seeks to support, this is a fairly obvious corollary of the need to establish political and military control over select populations.[30]

What then is the worth of these principles? The key lies partly in what precedes counterinsurgency dialectically: the thesis to which counterinsurgency provides the antithesis. In the last half century, counterinsurgency theory and principles have repeatedly helped illustrate the complexity of intrastate violence and its distinctiveness from the "conventional" types of military campaigns for which most Western armed forces are structured and trained. In the U.S. context, this pattern is particularly clear: interest in counterinsurgency has spiked when senior civilian and/or military leaders realize the limitations of conventional military force in managing the security problems of the day.

In the early 1960s, President John F. Kennedy grew concerned that the U.S. policy of "massive retaliation" was too inflexible to address the rising threat of political subversion. Reacting to the ascendance of communism in Vietnam and Laos, the instability of decolonization in Africa, and the communist revolution in Cuba, Kennedy pushed U.S. forces to learn about counterguerrilla warfare.[31] In the following years, the U.S. military developed new tactics and training exercises, expanded its special operations capacity, and increased its understanding of counterinsurgency. The most well known (but by no means only) application of the new knowledge was in Vietnam, a campaign whose unhappy history again served to relegate counterinsurgency to the margins of military priorities.

In the 1980s, a combination of international incidents, operational setbacks, and congressional pressure forced the military to return to the topic of counterinsurgency. Along with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the Iranian revolution and hostage crisis, U.S. policymakers noted with some alarm the ascendance of left-leaning regimes in several countries: Ethiopia in 1974, Mozambique in 1975, Angola in 1976, and Grenada and Nicaragua in 1979. The conclusion drawn was that the U.S. military needed to master *low-intensity operations*, a new term for counterinsurgency and other "irregular" activities.[32] Once again, new doctrine was issued, training exercises were adapted, and new centers and commands were opened (notably U.S. Special Operations Command). This time, the new knowledge was practiced in El Salvador, a testing-ground for a vicarious form of counterinsurgency that was fought with U.S. advisors rather than combat troops.

The U.S. military's most recent "counterinsurgency era" was also motivated by a previous failure to grapple with the political complexities of war.[33] Throughout the 1990s, U.S. military thinking was marked by a highly conventional and apolitical understanding of war, epitomized by the program of "defense transformation." Resistance to the peacekeeping operations of the Clinton-era dovetailed perfectly with a growing fascination with information technology and precision-strike capabilities: The future of war lay not with the infantry rotating in and out of seemingly endless peace operations, but with airstrikes, drones, computers, and satellites dispensing force swiftly, precisely, and decisively. Yet this understanding of war provided scant preparation for the insurgency created by the overthrow of Saddam Hussein. In the effort to understand and respond to the escalating violence, counterinsurgency came to experience its most recent peak. In that sense, the study

of counterinsurgency again brought a welcome departure from prior false expectations; it was a much-needed antithesis to a thesis that had not withstood its encounter with practice. Specifically, the concept instilled the idea that while wars are easy to begin, they are difficult to end, and that doing so requires a firm understanding of what causes violence in the first place. In reaffirming the political essence of war, it also forced a greater understanding of the local population and recognition of social and economic context, which in turn brought concepts such as legitimacy and governance to the fore.

"Counterinsurgency Is Dead; Long Live Counterinsurgency"

The (re)discovery of counterinsurgency represents a step forward from the conventional narrow-mindedness that dominated American defense thinking in the 1990s. Despite this important function as an antithesis, one that is still being served, it looks almost inevitable that the term *counterinsurgency* will fall out of use. A main factor is the gradual drawdown of NATO troops from Afghanistan, which will remove the primary impetus for studying and preparing for counterinsurgency. Those wishing to justify a continued focus on this form of warfare will then need to appeal to the possibility of future counterinsurgency campaigns, which will strike most audiences, whether governments, militaries, or electorates, as a singularly unattractive proposition. Counterinsurgency has not been a happy experience, and there will be no desire to prep for an encore.

Dropping counterinsurgency, however, would be to forfeit the functions that the term plays, first in grouping nominally similar types of operations into one helpful category for insight, comparison, and analysis, and second in providing the often-needed antithesis to the type of thinking on war and peace that has tended to dominate within Western militaries. It will be important to consider how these functions will fare should counterinsurgency, as a term and a priority, again be pushed off the table.

Upon further review, the grouping function can be useful but is probably dispensable. There are certainly as many risks and dangers as there are benefits in bringing together operations from different epochs and geographical settings just because they share the epithet *counterinsurgency*, a term whose meaning has evolved over time. Furthermore, the selection of operations for inclusion in this category is somewhat arbitrary and excludes from consideration many interventions and armed campaigns that have relevant traits, but that were referred to by different terms: *stability operations*, *small wars*, *robust peacekeeping*, or *postconflict peacebuilding*. It is better to group past and current campaigns based on their shared characteristics than by what they are called.

the (re)discovery of counterinsurgency represents a step forward from the conventional narrow-mindedness that dominated American defense thinking in the 1990s

Indeed, the study of counterinsurgency may even benefit from going beyond this one term and considering a far broader canvas of military interventions. To date, scholarship on counterinsurgency has been rather self-referential and inward-looking, rehashing the same case studies or obsessing over the intricacies of theory (such as the seemingly endless discussion of what is truly meant by "hearts and minds"). Indeed, it would be fair to say that counterinsurgency fares better as an antithesis—as a critique of what

preceded it—than as a thesis. Partly as a result of this, and because of the quick rise of counterinsurgency as a mainstream topic, outsiders often come to view the whole field as a fad, unworthy of serious academic attention. Looking beyond the confines of counterinsurgency and taking a broader interest in the dynamics of military intervention would provide fresh fodder for a field whose scope is often too narrow.

It is less certain whether the term's second function, as a useful antithesis, has been fully served. For that reason, abandoning counterinsurgency would need to be done with two critical caveats in mind. First, this should in no way signify a return to the status quo ante, that is, to an understanding of war as a conventional and decisively military confrontation occurring on an isolated, unpopulated battlefield. This archetype, entrenched in Western military thinking, stems from a grossly simplified recollection of just a few wars that disproportionately shape our understanding of this phenomenon, predominantly World War II. Yet it is an understanding of war that is blind not only to the history from which it borrows, but also to the real *purpose* of war, to wit, the consolidation of a political compact that is preferable to what came before it, and a compact that is also *sustainable*.[34] This means that even predominantly conventional wars will usually bleed seamlessly into a less conventional phase because the gains made in combat require consolidation through stabilization, political support, capacity-building, or reconstruction.[35]

Instead of returning to conventional war as an alternative to counterinsurgency, the point would be to arrive at a more integrated understanding of war that is informed by the experiences and campaigns of recent years, but dispense with the divisive and vague jargon that they have provoked. Ideally, this would also put an end to the bifurcation of wars as either conventional or irregular. In the American experience, each reencounter with counterinsurgency and similar missions has provoked such a dichotomy: in the 1960s, it was termed general versus limited war, in the 1980s, it was high- versus low-intensity conflicts, and in the 1990s, perhaps most awkwardly, it was war versus military operations other than war. While the cruder distinctions have since been abandoned,[36] it is still common to hear of irregular versus what must be presumed to be regular wars, and of asymmetric challenges as if there are conventional adversaries out there who would prefer to fight wars symmetrically.

At first, such distinctions are helpful, as they rightly frame stabilization and counterinsurgency as problems that require a different mindset and skills and that deserve independent study. At the same time, the theoretical dichotomies encourage an unspoken belief that these types of operations have rarefied equivalents in practice. In so doing, they suggest that states have that unlikely luxury of being able to pick and choose between conventional and irregular wars and that they can tailor their forces and interventions accordingly. Missed here is an appreciation for war as a complex political phenomenon, one that typically encompasses both irregular and conventional challenges and whose operating environment is rarely static but instead difficult to control.

This gives rise to the second caveat that must be taken onboard if counterinsurgency were to be pushed off the table: eschewing the term does not mean that the operational challenges associated with it will be avoided. Importantly, this remains the case even if we do not see another counterinsurgency campaign or stability operation in the near future. The bitter truth is that future land-based operations, whatever character they may take, are likely to involve a similar range of tasks as seen in today's campaigns. With the global

trend of urbanization, most operations will be conducted in built-up and inhabited environments where the local population cannot be ignored but, more often, must be co-opted and even protected against attack. Given U.S. expeditionary ambitions, operations will typically be conducted in foreign polities, languages, and cultures. While U.S. politicians may once more try to avoid future nation-building, most military operations occur in environments where the state's reach and institutions have suffered significant damage or destruction: either it is the lack of state control that prompts intervention (as in Afghanistan), or it is the intervention itself that removes the state (as in Iraq). In either case, U.S. forces will be operating in areas with weak formal structures, where criminality, informal networks of patronage, proliferation of small arms, and substate politics are all common and need to be understood. If one couples all this with the near inevitability of operating within a local population with whom the foreign forces will enjoy at best transient legitimacy, the broader relevance of experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan becomes clear.

Critically, this type of forecasting speaks not of conventional or of counterinsurgency operations, but relies on a broader conception of military intervention based on political purpose and likely challenges. At the same time, what this analysis suggests is that the lessons learned in recent counterinsurgency operations must be retained even if the term falls into disuse. This would also involve exporting the principles commonly associated with counterinsurgency to a broader realm of military scenarios where they are often equally applicable.[37] For example, while counterinsurgency is purportedly primarily political, the same holds for all military operations. Similarly, the exhortation in counterinsurgency theory to understand the environment is equally critical in wars of territorial conquest—though what it means to understand the terrain will naturally depend on its dominant features, one of which is the absence or presence of civilian populations. As to the requirements for effective counterinsurgency—in terms of troops, knowledge, and time—this has far broader validity, touching upon the need to support and resource operations to meet set objectives. Finally, the emphasis on the local population as a potential partner should not be a concern lodged exclusively within the domain of counterinsurgency, much as the need to adapt and learn faster than the enemy is a cardinal requirement for all warfare, not just wars conducted against irregular adversaries. These are principles of war, not of counterinsurgency, but it has taken the rediscovery of counterinsurgency, and difficult campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan, to give them new meaning.

The final exhortation would be that even with this broader understanding of war, the deployment of armed forces will lead to disappointment unless intervening governments devote more energy and resources toward the formulation of strategy. This touches upon the seriousness and sincerity with which the states that engage in expeditionary operations approach these endeavors. In turn, this raises the issue of whether and how convincingly foreign military interventions are linked to the national interest of the states involved. Further intellectual investment on this end may be the most useful first step in addressing the down-river problems of commitment, capability, and performance, and in transforming the armed forces and other relevant government departments accordingly.

Conclusion

Counterinsurgency has experienced a rapid rise and an equally rapid fall. The process has happened so quickly, within such a politicized and personalized context, that the initial reasons

for rediscovering this approach to operations tend to be lost. Instead, there is a loud polemic as to why counterinsurgency was a bad idea to begin with. Some of these arguments have merit; others are tendentious and lacking in context. Almost all of the polemic ignores two fundamental points. First, counterinsurgency theory does not advocate ambitious interventions in foreign countries, but provides guidelines and principles that have worked in similar settings and that may again be leaned upon if and when soldiers are deployed to stabilize war-torn countries. Careful study and research is needed to determine how best to apply these principles to ongoing and future operations, and it is fair to say that the theory is better at raising the right questions than in providing the answers.

Second, counterinsurgencies are not always optional and future interventions are therefore likely to occur, even after the operations in Afghanistan and Iraq draw down. This is not to say that these campaigns should be entered into carelessly, or that they would even take the form of a counterinsurgency or stability operation per se. Instead, given the nature of the contemporary operating environment, most land-based campaigns seem likely to reproduce many of the challenges faced in today's counterinsurgencies: those of operating in an urban environment, in the midst of a civilian population, in a different language and culture, all while countering irregular or hybrid adversaries. In the face of this enduring complexity, the principles and doctrine of counterinsurgency still have salience and a role to play.

After years of operational involvement in counterinsurgency, many of these principles may seem commonsensical if difficult to honor in practice. Even so, they still appear necessary in illustrating the logic of counterinsurgency and its distinctiveness from the types of campaigns for which most Western militaries train and prepare. This touches on the second function of counterinsurgency doctrine: its use as a powerful corrective to the unhelpful tendency not only in the U.S. military but also elsewhere in the West to divorce military affairs from political considerations.

It is on these grounds that the decline of counterinsurgency would be regrettable, if through this process the associated knowledge and learning of the last few years are also forgotten. The one good reason to abandon the term, and one that merits careful consideration, would be precisely because of its divisive and distorting connotations. The aim would then be to talk more plainly about the nature of war, peace, and war-to-peace transitions. This requires a shift from a myopic focus on the mechanical aspects of fighting (warfare) and the illusion that war can be detached from politics and policy. In itself, this would be a revolutionary step away from artificial delineations between conventional and irregular operations and toward a defense posture based on the purposes and most likely character of tomorrow's operations. It would signify the intent, at long last, to understand and study war on its own terms. **PRISM**

Notes

[1] In so doing, it builds on David H. Ucko, *Counterinsurgency and Its Discontents: Assessing the Value of a Divisive Concept*, SWP Research Paper 6 (April 2011). See also "Whither Counterinsurgency: The Rise and Fall of a Divisive Concept," in *The Routledge Handbook of Insurgency and Counterinsurgency*, ed. Paul B. Rich and Isabelle Duyvesteyn (New York: Routledge, 2012).

[2] This helps explain Nancy Pelosi's assessment that the surge "did not accomplish its goal" and that its success resulted from "the goodwill of Iranians" who "decided in Basra when the fighting would end." See

"House Speaker Nancy Pelosi on the Presidential Race, Her Legislative Agenda and Iraq," *The San Francisco Chronicle*, May 28, 2008.

[3] From 2006 to 2009, the Brookings Institution's Iraq Index estimates total casualties at 1,778, 3,500, 750, and 455, respectively. See Michael E. O'Hanlon and Jason H. Campbell, *Iraq Index Tracking Variables of Reconstruction and Security in Post-Saddam Iraq* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 2008), 4–5. Iraq Coalition Casualties puts the number of conflict-related civilian casualties at 3,000 per month in autumn 2006; 1,500 in April 2007; and 300 to 600 from September 2007 onward; available at <http://icasualties.org/>.

[4] Michael A. Cohen, "The Myth of a Kinder, Gentler War," *World Policy Journal* 27, no. 1 (2010), 75–86.

[5] Polls showed 59 to 68 percent of Americans opposed the surge. See Dana Blanton, "FOX News Poll: Most Think Troop Surge is Bush's Last Chance in Iraq," *FoxNews.com*, January 18, 2007; Brian Braiker, "Dirge for a 'Surge,'" *Newsweek*, January 20, 2007.

[6] See David H. Ucko, *The New Counterinsurgency Era: Transforming the U.S. Military for Modern Wars* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2009), 68.

[7] Patrick Cockburn, "Who Is Whose Enemy?" *London Review of Books*, March 6, 2008, 14–15. See also John Agnew et al., "Baghdad nights: evaluating the US military 'surge' using nighttime light signatures," *Environment and Planning A* 40, no. 10 (2008), 2285–2295.

[8] Following the introduction of these measures, security incidents in northwest Baghdad declined from 600+ in November 2006 to 380 in February 2007 and to 100–200 for August–October 2007. See J.B. Burton, "Dagger BCT Update," slides prepared for Institute for the Study of War, November 14, 2007.

[9] See, for example, the 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment (ACR) role under then-Colonel H.R. McMaster, USA, in stabilizing Tal Afar in 2005.

[10] Seventy-five percent "of Baghdad IDP [internally displaced persons] . . . would like to return to their places of origin" most often because of "improved security." See International Organization for Migration, "Baghdad Governorate Profile July 2009," *International Organization for Migration (IOM) IDP and Returnee Assessment* (Geneva: IOM, 2009), 5–7.

[11] Neil Smith and Sean MacFarland, "Anbar Awakens: The Tipping Point," *Military Review* 88, no. 2 (March–April 2008).

[12] Austin Long, "The Anbar Awakening," *Survival* 50, no. 2 (2008), 77.

[13] David H. Ucko, "Militias, Tribes and Insurgents: The Challenge of Political Reintegration in Iraq," in *Reintegrating Armed Groups after Conflict: Politics, Violence and Transition*, ed. Mats Berdal and David H. Ucko (New York: Routledge, 2009), 89–102.

[14] The International Crisis Group (ICG) continues: "Had [U.S. troops] remained mired in past conceptions, propitious evolutions on the ground notwithstanding, the situation today would be far bleaker." See ICG, *Iraq after the Surge I: The New Sunni Landscape*, Middle East Report 74 (Brussels: ICG, April 2008), I.

[15] Douglas Ollivant, "Countering the New Orthodoxy: Reinterpreting Counterinsurgency in Iraq," National Security Studies Program Policy Paper, June 2011, 2.

[16] See <http://icasualties.org/Iraq/index.aspx>.

[17] Iraq's subsidy on electricity also means that usage can be difficult to distinguish from waste. See Nayla Razzouk, "Iraq to Award Electricity Contracts by Early 2011," *Bloomberg.com*, November 28, 2010.

[18] I am grateful to Frank G. Hoffman for this phrase.

[19] Ollivant, 4–5.

[20] ICG, *The Next Iraqi War? Sectarianism and Civil Conflict*, Middle East Report No. 52 (Brussels: ICG, 2006), 10; Ucko, "Militias, Tribes and Insurgents," 98–100.

[21] Internal Multi-National Force–Iraq planning document, 2007.

[22] Ollivant.

[23] See Quil Lawrence, "Afghans Wary of Building Up Local Policing Forces," *NPR.com*, January 13, 2011; Refugees International, "Afghanistan: Responsible U.S. Transition Must Address Displacement Crisis," *Field Report*, June 28, 2011.

[24] At its peak, the force deployed to Iraq numbered 182,668 for a population of 31 million. In Afghanistan, the peak was just below 131,000 for a population of 30 million.

[25] "Remarks by the President on a New Strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan" (Washington, DC, March 27, 2009).

[26] Respectively, David Petraeus, as cited in David Jackson, "Petraeus: We're trying to keep Afghanistan from becoming a terrorist sanctuary (again)," *USA Today*, August 16, 2010; Barack Obama, as cited in "Afghanistan can't be a model democracy: Obama," Reuters, August 2, 2010.

[27] Hew Strachan, "Strategy or Alibi? Obama, McChrystal and the Operational Level of War," *Survival* 52, no. 5 (2010), 168.

[28] A foundation for doing so is laid out effectively in H.R. McMaster, "Effective Civilian-Military Planning at the Operational Level: The Foundation of Operational Planning," in *Commanding Heights: Strategic Lessons from Complex Operations*, ed. Michael Miklaucic (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 2009), 105–114.

[29] For some enumerations of these principles, see Robert Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency: The Lessons of Malaya and Vietnam* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1966); or Frank Kitson, *Bunch of Five* (London: Faber and Faber, 1977).

[30] Though cynics will point out that control can be achieved without any sense of legitimacy, the political and media environment of most Western interventions rarely allows for raw coercion.

[31] Michael McClintock, *Instruments of Statecraft: U.S. Guerrilla Warfare, Counterinsurgency, and Counterterrorism, 1940–1990* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1992), ch. 6.

[32] See Richard Downie, *Learning from Conflict: The U.S. Military in Vietnam, El Salvador, and the Drug War* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1988).

[33] For more on this, see H.R. McMaster, "On War: Lessons to Be Learned," *Survival* 50, no. 1 (2008), 19–30.

[34] On the reoccurrence of military governance in U.S. wars throughout history, see Nadia Schadlow, "War and the Art of Governance," *Parameters* 33, no. 3 (Autumn 2003), 85–94.

[35] See Nadia Schadlow, "A False Dichotomy: Critics of the Army's COIN Focus Ignore World and War Realities," *Armed Forces Journal*, September 2010.

[36] U.S. doctrine now talks of a "continuum of conflict" whereby "the level of violence may jump from one point on the spectrum to another" within one campaign. See Field Manual 3–0, *Operations* (Washington, DC: Headquarters Department of the Army, 2008), ch. 2.

[37] I am grateful to William F. Owen for this insight.

Negotiating Afghanistan

When? With Whom? About What?

BY THOMAS R. PICKERING

Under the George W. Bush administration, negotiations were not included in the strategic mix of dealing with Afghanistan or, for that matter, Iraq. One can only conjecture about reasons. They may have included a sense that a military victory was possible; a belief that talk about negotiations was in itself a sign of weakness that should not—and could not—be conveyed to the opponent; full-blown distrust of the Taliban; a need to have a better balance of forces and more success behind us before we took on the task; a hope that a reintegration process, together with raising the military stakes, would be sufficient to win the day; and a distrust of diplomats and politicians who might be expected to conduct the negotiations—a sense that all achieved with the expenditure of so much blood and treasure would be given away if diplomats and politicians were turned loose on the problem.

While the administration policy of President Barack Obama regarding Afghanistan negotiations does not represent a radical departure from that of its predecessor, there has been greater openness to debate prospects and issues, and a sense that an unofficial effort at the proper time could have a useful and positive impact on the interest in negotiations as well as setting out the problems to be undertaken and overcome to achieve success in them.

To this end, last year a group sponsored and supported by The Century Foundation in New York studied this issue under the leadership of Lakhdar Brahimi, former Foreign Minister of Algeria and United Nations (UN) leader in Afghanistan after postcombat 2001–2002. I had the honor to co-chair this group. The study that the group produced looked at a number of salient questions after visiting the region and the capitals of many states interested in and likely to play important roles in the outcome of the war in Afghanistan. Many of our members had a great deal of experience in Afghanistan. Others had backgrounds in military and strategic matters. Most of us had been engaged in one time or another with negotiations both in a bilateral and multilateral framework. All of us understood that fair consideration ought to be given to this possibility. Our work paralleled

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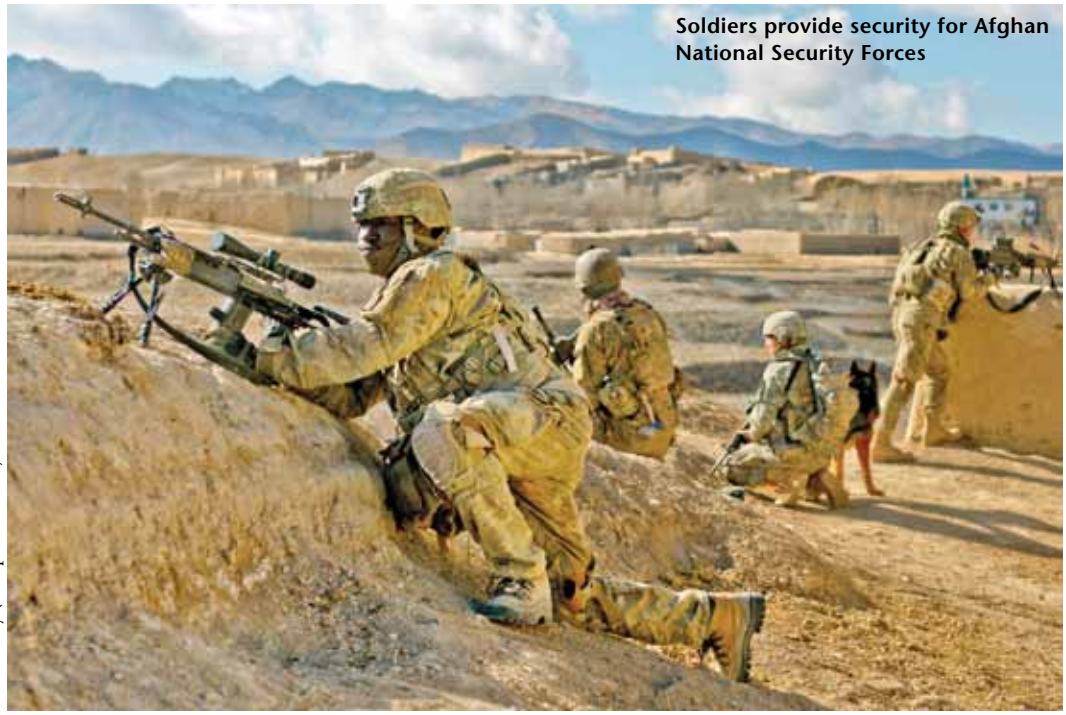

Soldiers provide security for Afghan National Security Forces

U.S. Army (Cooper T. Cash)

the efforts then being made by Richard Holbrooke on behalf of the United States to help shape and organize such a possibility. While our conclusions were completely our own and Ambassador Holbrooke tragically died before our report was finalized, we believe that a fair and open review of the possibilities inherent in a negotiating process deserves attention.

The study group as a whole, and its members individually, visited the region several times, and held discussions with a wide range of interlocutors, including nearly a dozen hours of conversation with various representatives of the insurgency. They came from a number of groups representing most of the major players. In addition, senior leaders in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India met with us, as did many retired leaders and others from the fields of journalism, academia, and nongovernmental organizations, among others. Travel also included visits to Moscow, Beijing, a Central Asian conference in Tajikistan including representatives from Uzbekistan, and with Turks, Iranians, Saudis, senior leaders in the United Kingdom, Germany, and France, and the UN.

The report addresses and attempts to answer three important questions: Should negotiations be undertaken, and if so, when? The resolution of what problems should the negotiations seek to address? How should the negotiations be put in place? Within these questions are a host of others—to mention only a few: Who might participate, what specific issues would have to be addressed, and how should the various relationships among the parties and possible parties be dealt with? It was also clear that such a study would not be able to address conclusively the individual positions of the various parties, their separate strategies, and how their expected negotiating postures might play out over the longer term of a negotiating process. That has been left to others and indeed the process itself, should it get going, to set out.

This article draws on the study, looks at the possibilities today, and seeks to answer some of the harder questions about this effort.

Should We Negotiate and, If So, When?

Despite skepticism, a good case could be made for negotiations. This conclusion is based on a number of factors. Most of those interviewed from the region and beyond supported (some very reluctantly) the idea of negotiations. Admittedly, they had widely varying and not necessarily congruent views about the outcome. But that is to be expected in any such process. Indeed, over the course of our study, many of the starting positions of both sides—those points that the other side had to meet before they would start to talk—had morphed into something more along the lines of "these are the points we have to achieve for the negotiations to be successful."

Even more important are some of the more strategic issues. Few now see a clear military victory in the offing for their side. War fatigue hangs heavy over the battlefield and even more so among the civilian population in Afghanistan and beyond. As a result of the financial crises of 2008, heavy expenditures on the war are widely questioned in both the United States and Europe. The U.S. election campaign of 2012 shows increasing signs that ending the war will be a key issue.

At a more tactical level, while the "surge" might produce some readjustment on the battlefield and in local control, no one sees it as a silver bullet solution to the end game for the United States and its allies. While the Taliban made an art form of being stiff-necked over the war, it is also clear that some of that intransigence is breaking down, and increasingly large numbers of Afghans are pushing away from the Taliban, in part to protect gains made in education and incomes, and benefiting from the programs of change of the government and its supporters in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

While some see negotiations as an alternative to the strategy of counterinsurgency with its attendant aspects of counterterrorism strikes, most are willing to accept that negotiations ought to be given a chance in the context of the present strategy, especially as the surge has the possibility of building a more positive situation in and around the battlefields. Many are prepared to accept the notion that military action alone will not produce the situation for satisfactory war termination. That fact alone has led many to the conclusion that civilian efforts at economic and social development to complement the military surge are also not within striking distance of something which could be called victory. The Taliban also increasingly does not see itself coming out on top. They tried to counter with the aphorism "You have the watch, we have the time!" Unfortunately, the counter to that, "We have the time, you just watch!" was also not totally convincing.

while some see negotiations as an alternative to the strategy of counterinsurgency, most are willing to accept that negotiations ought to be given a chance

What might make a difference is the fact that all wars end with political consequences. If we fail to take the opportunity to try to shape those consequences through negotiations, we are condemned to live with the result that military

operations offer: more uncertainty and perhaps, in the end, a withdrawal with no successful exit strategy. Negotiations are not certain to deliver a positive and helpful result, but not attempting to use them surely means we have set aside a potentially useful tool.

On the difficult question of timing for negotiations, there are many views. At the beginning of the study, the predominant view on the U.S. side was that it could not even consider negotiations until the military situation improved. Over time, this argument became tempered with the realization that it might take some time to put negotiations in place, that when we are at the height of our power, the other side knows that the future is more likely than not to be downhill for us. Moreover, bringing in the other side also requires time to convince them that they may have something to gain from a formula that converts their military campaign into a political effort based on electoral choice and fair rules of the game.

the issue of the future governance of Afghanistan is clearly the central pivot around which the negotiations will have to turn

The outcome was simple and straightforward in its recommendation: that negotiations had more to offer than no negotiations and that it was time to start preparing for them now rather than wait for some elusive optimum moment which might never arrive.

What to Negotiate About?

As painful as it seems for both sides, the issue of the future governance of Afghanistan is clearly the central pivot around which the negotiations will have to turn. Each side—the Taliban, government of Hamid Karzai, and United States—has approached the negotiations with a series of positions. These positions, which began as demands that had to be conceded to by the other side in order to begin talks, have now shifted more toward becoming the goals they wish to achieve in the process itself.

For the Taliban, the goals have included the removal of all foreign forces, release of all prisoners, and return of the Taliban Islamic Emirate as the form and substance of future governance of Afghanistan. On the non-Taliban side, the requirements were that there should be no more use of force to resolve problems, that there had to be a complete and irrevocable Taliban split with al Qaeda, and that the constitution of Afghanistan should be respected. In one way or another, all of these requirements centered around governance, and most of them represented areas where the resolution of differences will be very hard indeed.

The Taliban is, of course, not monolithic. The Haqqani Network operating out of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas is principally focused on Afghanistan but not exclusively. In our conversation with a representative from the network, it was made clear it would work with Quetta and Mullah Omar on negotiating issues. The Quetta Shura is considered to be under the control of Mullah Omar. Gulbudin Hekmatyar and his group have also indicated an interest in negotiations and noted a willingness to work with Quetta.

It appears that the greatest differences among the Taliban emerge on the field of battle in planning and executing military operations where broad autonomy is exercised. At the other end of the continuum of control

is theology where large deference is paid to Mullah Omar. Politics lies somewhere along the continuum, perhaps now closer to theology, since there is only at this point an opening consideration of the issue and little practical impact on the various groups and players. If things proceed and issues become more cogently defined, there may well surface differences of a larger and more apparent variety.

Some have asked whether the Taliban would indeed stick together throughout the negotiating process. The answer is unclear. What is equally unclear is why Taliban cohesiveness would or should be an interest, much less a priority, of their negotiating adversaries.

With regard to the key issues of governance, the following are likely to be some of the major points of contention, and among the players in the various groups as much as between them. The critical points of governance as they emerged from the study include, for example, what should be the future division of power in the government? Who gets what in terms of ministries and other high offices? A second closely related issue has to do with the future form of government—what institutions will be in place, and who gets to affect their working relationships? A key factor here will be the shape and scope of an electoral law. Next, the issue of who makes appointments will require settlement. There is also the overarching question of whether the present, heavily centralized presidential system will continue or whether, more perhaps in keeping with Afghan tradition, there is a shift away from a strongly centralized government in favor of the devolution of more authority to regional leadership. Finally, the issue as to whether or not a prime ministerial and parliamentary system might work more effectively than one dominated by a strong president will need to be examined. While there are no easy answers to these questions, the study group was strongly impressed by the interest in them among the people with whom we spoke and their centrality to any solution.

Beyond these political issues, we identified others that would play a role or be likely to play a role in the process of negotiations. A major issue is the place of Islam in the future governance of the country. The present constitution has put in place formulas on this point, which seemingly could be accepted widely. Much more difficult will be the guarantees of civil and human rights for all Afghans and—particularly based on the past history with the Taliban—the role and place of women in Afghan society. Will they be assured that the gains that have been made will stay in place and be expanded upon over time?

much more difficult will be the guarantees of civil and human rights for all Afghans and the role and place of women in Afghan society

In the past, more among non-Afghans (including human rights nongovernmental organizations) than Afghans, the problems of justice and accountability for the abuses and crimes of the past have been a centerpiece of interest. Afghans have had a tendency to want to put it aside and may well try to do so again. Also, security issues closely linked to the future include the questions of what will be the organization and role of an Afghan central security force that will have to carry a full share of the burden of assuring that any agreements are carried out.

Other issues of more salient interest to the international community will also need

to be addressed in some form in the process. These include the nature and continuation of economic and social assistance to whatever government emerges, along with continued security assistance to military and police forces of the future Afghanistan. A related question will be the continuing role of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and International Monetary Fund in the future development of the country. Capacity-building will be a continuing major demand in the economy if success—or even a breakthrough toward progress—is to be achieved. Access to natural resources and the role of the new state in controlling their exploitation and sale will be issues of importance. Finally, the need to begin to address the economic issues in particular on a regional basis will be significant. Because of its geography, Afghanistan plays a critical role in the future transportation structure of the region.

Beyond these issues and of real importance to the country, region, and well beyond are the problems of narcotics production and transportation.

Afghan political leaders will need to reach conclusions about and seek support for its preferred posture regarding its future neutrality or nonalignment.

capacity-building will be a continuing major demand in the economy if success is to be achieved

There will need to be consideration of a peacekeeping organization, probably led by the UN, but devoted principally to monitoring and verification. The sense now is that Afghan forces will have to deal with violations of the peace agreements.

This is a full and difficult menu. There will undoubtedly be more vexing problems to address as the issues outlined here are taken up.

How to Get to Negotiations?

We began with some assumptions that helped guide our work and thinking. No one party to the conflict, including the United States, was sufficiently well placed so that it could manage to bring all of the others to the negotiating table, much less to a successful conclusion. There are just too many differences between them for that to happen.

The obvious conclusion is that a neutral facilitator or "facilitation mechanism" might be a useful idea to move the conflict toward a negotiating process. A facilitator might be an individual, small group, state or group of states, or international organization. Whoever takes on this role must be familiar in some detail with Afghanistan, its history, and its political and cultural background. It would also require a person or a group broadly acceptable to the parties involved, but most particularly to the Afghan parties that would be at the center of negotiations (for example, the Karzai government, the "loyal Opposition," the old Northern Alliance, civil society including human rights and civil rights, and women's groups, and, of course, the Taliban). Each of these groups has its own internal divisions, so finding a facilitator will not be an easy task.

The facilitator might well be designated formally by the UN Secretary-General to give the position status in dealing with the effort. Some have also suggested that it might be advantageous at an appropriate time to have the facilitator approved or even appointed by the UN Security Council. This would help widen the basis of authority and indicate that the members of the council, including

the five Permanent Members—China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States—were on board with both the concept and the personality or personalities being chosen for this role. The process for selecting the facilitator(s) would certainly require, at a minimum, close consultation among the Afghan parties, Pakistan, and the United States. That might precede the more formal process noted above. While it is clear that a formal role for one of the major parties to the conflict is unlikely to be successful, it is equally clear that each of those major parties will have to come together around a candidate or candidates.

The role of the facilitator would be developed in two phases. The first would be devoted to bringing the parties to the table for talks and negotiations. The second would be to assist the principal negotiating parties—the four Afghan groups mentioned previously—in constructing an agreement or agreements between them leading to an end of the conflict.

The initial work for the facilitator(s) would be to discuss with the parties, on an individual basis, their interest in a process of negotiations, their ideas concerning how the process should unroll, as well as timing, participation, and so on. Also, in the first phase, a facilitator(s) would explore with the parties their substantive positions—that is, what they would expect from the other parties and what they would be prepared themselves to put on the table.

These two elements would form the basis for a judgment by the facilitator about the feasibility and possibilities for success in bringing the parties together around a table and what their agenda for discussions might be. In particular, it is unlikely that the starting positions of the parties will be close enough to provide a high assurance of success. But the facilitator will need to make careful decisions and recommendations on the basis of extensive contacts on both procedure and substance, and as a result fill a role that only he or she may be capable of carrying out.

The second phase for the facilitator should be to work with the parties and those in the various circles around them from the region and beyond to find agreement. This is a substantive role of singular importance and requires a facilitator who is imaginative, inventive, patient, willing to listen, and who commands significant authority among the parties engaged in the negotiation. Subsequently, the regional parties might also be encouraged by the facilitator not only to take on a constructive role with the parties in helping them come together, but also to engage in putting together agreements among themselves, the purpose of which is to support and strengthen any accords reached by the Afghan parties.

The same facilitator may or may not be appropriate for the entire process. The burden will be heavy, and several persons may well have to be involved, particularly if one person is not fully persona grata with all of the players.

Should the facilitator reach a positive conclusion on these questions, the process might then be developed in a way that incorporates the Bonn arrangements of 2001, which set up the present government in Afghanistan. Essentially, these arrangements were based on negotiations led by and among Afghans with outside parties in successive, concentric circles of regional and other parties around the Afghan parties playing a supporting role. There are differences today: inclusion of the Taliban, more regional players, and a greater regional interest and need

for regional arrangements for the purpose of providing stability and security.

The study group report recognizes that there are many ways to proceed. Rather than spell out a series of options, it presents in detail a specific negotiating framework that we believe has a good chance of succeeding. At the center of our proposal is the fact that the key negotiations must take place among Afghan parties. Others may come and assist, but the fundamental arrangements for Afghanistan's future governance must be agreed to among Afghans if the future is to see success. Afghan groups would therefore be at the center along with the facilitator. Among the Afghans, there are four basic interest clusters: the present government, "loyal opposition" (the former Northern Alliance), Afghan civil society groups including women and minorities, and the insurgent groups. In the inner ring, but just beyond them, would be the parties now closest to the conflict and perhaps most important in its resolution: Pakistan and the United States. The next ring would include the major neighbors—Iran, India (a near neighbor), Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan—and, moving out farther, China, Russia, key European nations, Japan, and perhaps Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and others.

there is no sense among Afghans or other interested parties that a purely institutional initiative would mechanically generate some successful response meeting the needs of all the parties

All parties would play the critically important role of working with the Afghan parties to reach fundamental agreement on the key questions involving Afghans and necessarily doing so with a developing area of agreement among themselves. Ideally, they would support and assist the facilitator to bring the Afghan parties into contact and help them think through and develop solutions to their differences. There is no sense among Afghans or other interested parties that a purely institutional initiative would mechanically generate some successful response meeting the needs of all the parties. However, on the basis of past success and given the special nature of the interests of all the parties, as well as the possibilities for synergy and mutual support, this construct, based on the Bonn Conference of 2001, could offer genuine advantages.

The Taliban made it clear that to participate they would need some kind of representative office at or near the negotiations, probably in a third country, and guarantees to move their people securely to the talks. We did not explore or seek to help resolve where negotiations might take place, but believed that would best be left for the facilitator to explore. We suspect that a Muslim country not engaged extensively on one side or the other in Afghanistan might well be a leading candidate for the locus of negotiations. It would also be necessary for the facilitator to have good relations with that country, which would also be interested in helping pursue successful negotiations for its own reasons.

Beyond the purely Afghan portion of the negotiations, should these show some promise, the regional parties and others could turn their attention first to putting together an agreement among themselves to support the arrangements agreed to by the Afghans. Beyond that, if the Afghans agreed and encouraged the agreement, they might set in place arrangements to ensure regional recognition of and support for Afghan neutrality or

U.S. Army (Daniel P. Shook)

Afghan National Policeman fires weapon during training exercise

nonalignment. There are further subjects for regional approaches and agreement: security issues, narcotics control, transportation, trade arrangements among the states in the region, and so on. These could result in an agreement or agreements among themselves to memorialize and make permanent those arrangements.

The Positions of the Parties

The Taliban Quetta Shura, led by Mullah Omar, the most influential of Taliban leaders on political issues as well as theological ones, has a number of interests in negotiating:[1]

- the death of many subordinate leaders in drone strikes and special operations raids
- impact of attrition on attenuating command authority by the Quetta Shura over the Taliban, perhaps significantly in military operations
- fear that the United States might remain indefinitely in Afghanistan
- alternatively, fear that the United States and NATO could be ready to negotiate the terms of their exit
- anger with Pakistan and fear of being sold out by Islamabad to Kabul or Washington[2]
- removal of foreign forces, perhaps with the exception of peacekeepers for a deal

- security for themselves, neutralizing the international and Afghan threat to them and ending the targeting of their leaders and families
- international recognition as a legitimate political actor, removal of key leaders from UN terrorist lists, and release of prisoners
- reestablishment of Emirate of Islamic law
- purge of corrupt government leaders and prosecuting or exiling unfriendly warlords.[3]

The following are some of the key objectives of the Karzai government:

- Karzai remaining until 2014 (and perhaps beyond) with security for him, his family, and inner circle and immunity for some key allies
- the orderly, phased withdrawal of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and U.S. forces with continued training and weapons through 2014 and beyond
- an international peacekeeping force for a limited period that provides security in place of ISAF
- power-sharing with non-Pashtun elements to forestall a civil war on sectarian lines
- a democratic Afghanistan with the current constitution largely preserved and some new minority and civil protections
- continued international financial support.[4]

Pakistani interests include:

- ensuring a neutral, stable Kabul government with the Afghan Taliban as a junior partner
- supporting Afghan and U.S. operations against the Pakistan Taliban
- withdrawing the United States and NATO in phases, but with continuing military and economic aid thereafter
- limiting Indian influence, including effective checks on aid to the Baloch insurgency
- expanding trade and investment in Afghanistan.[5]

U.S. interests include:

- preventing the resurgence of al Qaeda in Afghanistan
- assisting a reasonable stable, friendly, autonomous Afghanistan
- preventing further Afghan violence from destabilizing Pakistan
- preserving democratic and human rights in Afghanistan
- continuing credibility for NATO
- reducing illicit drug trade.[6]

Indian interests include:

- a friendly, or at least neutral, Afghanistan not dominated by the Taliban or other Pakistan proxies
- eliminating al Qaeda and other Islamic extremists who target India
- preserving a presence in Afghanistan, including political and military intelligence capacities
- expanding trade and investment, including transit routes through Pakistan
- ensuring basic human rights in Afghanistan
- strengthening growing strategic partnership with the United States.[7]

Iranian interests include:

- withdrawal of U.S. and ISAF military and intelligence forces
- a stable regime in Kabul, friendly to Iran, and not dominated by Pakistan or its proxies
- protection for traditional Iranian allies in Afghanistan: Hazaras, Tajiks, and Heratis
- trade, investment, and transit trade through Char Bahar
- return of 2 to 3 million Afghan refugees in Iran
- reduction/elimination of narcotics-trafficking
- Kabul cooperation in fight against Jundallah, in Iranian Baluchistan and beyond.[8]

Other states have similar objectives based on their individual goals and interests, many of which overlap. While an early assessment of the possible areas for agreement is possible, the uncertainties remain large enough at this stage to understand that conclusions may be nearer to "guesstimates" than hard judgments about real outcomes. It is useful to note that there are a number of overlapping interests, and this raises prospects for a positive outcome without of course in any way guaranteeing such.

The Report Today

The Century Foundation report received wide publicity, and many leaders and others were interested in the results.[9] The team that prepared the report briefed it widely. The timing of the report's release in March of 2011 was appropriate, coming as it did after Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's mid-February address on the subject to the Asia Society and following indications that some views among the Taliban were shifting in a more positive direction toward talks. Since that time, no state or national leader, and indeed very few nonofficial leaders, has criticized the report or its findings in any specific way. Quiet assurances of interest have been received along with indications that a number of the ideas and approaches in the report reflected and reinforced views already adopted by governments or being seriously considered by them. Press reports, not confirmed by governments, have indicated that contacts continue to take place among the various parties, including between the United States and the Taliban. The latter contact has seemingly been vexed by the publicity, and we may be in some form of stalemate regarding opening up the prospects for a start to negotiations, at least for the moment.

What has happened is that the process has moved from being almost entirely ignored to gaining serious consideration. It has become a process that, now in addition to discussion in public, has been favorably commented on by a number of players, including the United States. "Coming out of the closet" might be a fair way to describe what has been happening. Far from claiming credit, it seems that the report may well have come at a time when its ideas and proposals were more open to examination than previously. It seems also to be a time—for a host of reasons, including U.S. withdrawal, a sense of military stalemate, a growing sense of frustration with the conflict among the public, and a rapidly growing concern about financial drain—when the report may continue to help move the parties toward negotiations.

both the present government of Afghanistan, as well as Mullah Omar and the Taliban, would resist the United States as the authority organizing negotiations

Spoilers

No negotiation is without its vulnerabilities. This one will be particularly difficult. At the top of the list, there are the interests in and willingness of the parties to participate. This includes the central Afghan players. There is no question that while there is a general willingness to engage, there are many limitations to that process. President Karzai has made it clear at various times that he would like to supervise and oversee the unfolding and conduct of negotiations, but this will be strenuously contested by the insurgent factions. Both the present government of Afghanistan, as well as Mullah Omar and the Taliban, would resist the United States as the authority organizing negotiations. They are, to borrow the old expression, necessary parties, all of them, but they are not sufficient to begin, manage, or end the process on their own in a leadership role.

However, the failure of any essential party to attend the negotiations is almost by definition a killer. This would include the Taliban, Karzai government, and in the first circle of players, Pakistan and the United States. Without others, there will be a serious impairment of the process but most likely not a fatal one.

Those on the outer rings of the process are also potential serious spoilers, including those that may have, as Pakistan does, some serious influence with the Afghan Taliban. How they play their role and how they assist in developing positions and approaches to the other Afghan parties can be either a spoiler or something that can help encourage progress.

Other procedural and process problems can also serve as spoilers, sometimes absolutely, but often in a limited way, and sometimes opportunistically where they serve as potential trading cards for other concessions of interest to the spoiling party or parties. The first and outer ring players, if they are brought on board and share a number of common objectives and interests, can be considered as possible allies in overcoming some of the spoiler tactics on procedures that might be deployed. One is reminded of "shape of the table" issues over Vietnam, which played such a role.

Overcoming spoiler tactics can involve many techniques. These include concessions by one of the parties or by other players outside the context of negotiations. The United States and Pakistan are well placed to assist in this

kind of approach. Other techniques involve the use of packages to bring a series of interrelated tradeoffs to deal with concerns and interests that may result in a spoiler problem. Other ideas involve creating a series of stepwise deals or agreement, parsing the negotiating landscape into small packages and steps that can help to move things forward and build confidence, which is often absent at the beginning stages of a negotiation—a time when spoiler problems may be most intense and difficult to deal with.

Undoubtedly, there will be spoilers, both in process and substance. The task of the facilitator, the parties, and their friends and others in the various "rings" will be to encourage success by finding ways to overcome them. Nothing at the present stage seems to have emerged as a full and unconquerable spoiler. That gives a note of hope and limited optimism. But patience and perseverance will be required in what looks like a long and complex negotiation. It is highly unlikely that no spoilers will emerge. It is par for the course that they will. The dedication and commitment of the players will be sorely tested.

Some Remaining Key Questions

How can we trust the Taliban in a negotiation and observe the result? There is no certainty that we can, but we will not know whether they will be prepared to make a deal until we try. Some among them say that is what they want. Observing a deal is critical. With or without a deal, we will have to put in place sufficiently strong Afghan forces to assure the survival of a non-Taliban administration. It may well be better to construct a deal to do this than take a chance with a purely military outcome. Negotiations might even help to bring the conflict to an end sooner and support our exit strategy.

Why should the United States negotiate with the Taliban? The Century Foundation proposal does not suggest that it should. Instead, a process is proposed that would take place between Afghan parties, including the Taliban. In any conflict, a negotiated solution has to include the opposing parties in some fashion if it is going to be successful. The Taliban say they want to negotiate with the United States because they believe the United States can determine what will happen among those opposed to the Taliban. If that is the case, then we have leverage, most likely through our relations with the non-Taliban Afghan, to get a deal they and we could live with.

in any conflict, a negotiated solution has to include the opposing parties in some fashion if it is going to be successful

How can we get them to the table if they do not show interest in coming? Thus far, they seem to have shown such interest. They do not like publicity because it indicates to their supporters that they are preparing to negotiate and perhaps make a deal, which will fall short of the victory they have sought—that is, all foreign forces out of Afghanistan and the Taliban back in control.

What makes the present ripe for trying to resolve the question? Is the Taliban not likely to wait us out? Do they not perceive that their fortunes are improving? The answer is not yet clear. Some Taliban certainly seem to want to negotiate because even though they may see their fortunes improving, they do not have confidence that they will improve to the degree necessary to gain full power in Afghanistan. Much depends

on this critical question as we draw down from standing up Afghan forces that cannot only hold the line but also keep the Taliban off balance and out of control of key regions. That remains an uncertain proposition on both sides, but the Taliban seem interested in testing out the negotiating possibilities. There are signals that growing numbers of Afghans are against the Taliban—and the Taliban know this.

the U.S. goals in Central Asia need to be clarified

What lessons can we draw from negotiations with the Palestinians, North Koreans, Vietnamese, and so forth that might help us negotiate with the Taliban? Negotiate when the other side has come to the conclusion that it cannot gain its objectives by use of military force. Hold to key positions and make sure that the U.S. public will continue to support efforts. Put in place an arrangement that makes it clear that we can hold our ground whether we have negotiations or not.

What is the proper role for the United States? Support the Afghan parties that oppose a Taliban take over. Be prepared to agree to arrangements in which the Taliban become one among a number of political parties and factions and where they must face popular elections to gain support.

What endstates could we permit? It is easier to describe what we do not want or will not support:

- an enduring connection between the Taliban and al Qaeda
- the use of force or violence by the Taliban
- a solution that significantly alters the current Afghan constitution.

Can Pakistan block the process or slow it down? Either is possible. Pakistan is a key player. Pakistani leaders state that they are interested in a process and want to see it carried forward. Some in Pakistan have continued to support the Afghan Taliban, but among them are those who say they do not want to see the Taliban back in charge. Members of the Taliban also complain about their relations with the Pakistanis, saying they do not trust them. It will be critical for the United States and Pakistan to work to define an outcome they both can live with and even more importantly to define a Pakistan-Afghanistan future relationship that both sides can accept. Such steps should help to avoid a breakdown or breakup in the process.

Will the United States really pull out entirely when a relationship with Afghanistan gives it access to and a presence in Central Asia? President Barack Obama says he will pull out all U.S. combat forces. He may leave behind some trainers and others—such as Special Forces—to deal with al Qaeda and their leadership. The U.S. goals in Central Asia need to be clarified. The United States went there to be able to have access to Afghanistan. Now that we are in Afghanistan, we might want to stay in order to have access to Central Asia. Over the years, we have dealt successfully and well with Central Asia without having a military presence there. Such a presence is only likely to create opposition and animosity to the United States among their public. Once the United States has withdrawn from Afghanistan and al Qaeda is kept from returning, there would seem to be little reason for the United States to remain or return to Central Asia.

Will the Karzai government be able to survive after 2014 without a peace deal? Any answer involves significant speculation. U.S. strategy seems designed to provide for the survival of a non-Taliban government in Afghanistan after 2014 with or without a negotiated deal with them. President Karzai will have to face new elections to stay beyond his current term. A deal with the Taliban may well provide for greater stability and continuity in a non-Taliban government, representing the majority in Afghanistan, staying in office beyond 2014. Of course it should be up to the people of Afghanistan to decide who will lead them after 2014.

Conclusion

No one is able to predict whether negotiations will take place or succeed. It appears on balance that now is the right time to determine whether that can happen. The risk in negotiation is far outweighed by the potential for gain, even if the situation remains uncertain. There are clearly ways forward. Negotiations provide the best chance for success and must be part of an overall strategy that puts in place a stable and secure Afghanistan. We just do not know if negotiations can succeed unless we try. We have the capacity to make a serious effort in this direction. Because the situation on the ground cannot and does not support a military victory, the chances are increasing that a negotiation can happen, and is likely to work. Military stalemate, war fatigue, financial difficulties, domestic support for withdrawal, and Afghan interest in finding a negotiated solution all make this prospect more useful and potentially attractive.

U.S. leadership in this process is essential. Pakistan and the Afghan parties are all key players. Others in the region and beyond with interests and influence in Afghanistan and the region are also key players. Getting a process started will be as hard as keeping it together and bringing it to a useful and successful conclusion. With the growing interest in negotiation in the region and beyond, now is the time to develop this option and see if it can be put in place and made useful.

All wars end with political consequences. It is in the interest of the United States to attempt to shape those political outcomes in ways that are favorable to its interests, including facilitating its exit strategy. Negotiation is a key way to attempt to do this. **PRISM**

Notes

[1] While the report itself did not examine in detail the positions of the various key players, a subsequent report for RAND by two of our participants did so. See James Shinn and James Dobbins, *Afghan Peace Talks: A Primer* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, August 2011). I have drawn heavily on their work for this section of my article and thank them for it.

[2] Ibid., 7.

[3] Ibid., 24.

[4] Ibid., 36.

[5] Ibid., 42.

[6] Ibid., 48.

[7] Ibid., 54.

[8] Ibid., 58.

[9] See Lakhdar Brahimi and Thomas R. Pickering, Co-Chairs, International Task Force on Afghanistan in Its Regional and Multilateral Dimensions, *Afghanistan: Negotiating Peace*, Report of The Century Foundation Task Force (New York: The Century Foundation, 2011).

The State Department, USAID, and the Flawed Mandate for Stabilization and Reconstruction

BY RENANAH MILES

Fanfare as the last combat brigade departed, a prime-time Oval Office address, and an official ceremony in Baghdad marked the end of combat operations in Iraq in August 2010. Less scrutinized, but no less significant, is the December 31, 2011, deadline when the last U.S. troops plan to exit the stage, leaving operations completely in civilian hands. Concerns have centered on security and logistics, areas where the Department of State relies heavily on the military.[1] Beyond the ability to physically maneuver, there is a pressing question over State's ability to execute the mission: does the State Department have the capacity to finish the reconstruction mission and manage the transition to long-term diplomacy and development? Given the lessons of the past 10 years, the answer is no.

When glaring civilian inadequacies and the flawed strategy in Iraq became apparent by 2004, legislative and executive pressure prompted the State Department to move out in developing planning and operational capabilities to conduct stabilization and reconstruction. National Security Presidential Directive 44 designated the State Department as the lead for such operations, and it in turn established

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the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS) to coordinate operations. Last year, the first Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR) reaffirmed the mandate, calling it a "core State mission" to be supported by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).[2] However significant these commitments may be, the status quo continues to be marked by an inability to field a viable response capable of managing in the absence of the military or leading an integrated civil-military effort. The QDDR outlines reforms to close this capacity gap, but even if implemented, it is unlikely that these will be sufficient to address the root problems or timely enough to ensure a seamless transition in Iraq.

for State and USAID, the stabilization and reconstruction mission has been marked by indecision, preventing prioritization

There is a temptation, to which the QDDR occasionally succumbs, to blame current failures on limited resources. While resources are a critical component of capacity, priorities drive allocation of resources; external considerations combine with internal influences to determine capacity development. For State and USAID, the stabilization and reconstruction mission has been marked by indecision, preventing prioritization. Internecine conflict, indetermination over the mission itself, and aspects of each organization's culture have choked capacity-building efforts internally.

Writing on U.S. organization for postconflict reconstruction, Samuel Farr observes, "It is ironic that as we struggle to make only the smallest changes in our own systems and institutions, we are asking other countries to radically transform their governmental norms and structures."[3] The first order of business is to embark on the changes needed to get the State Department and USAID houses in order. As the final transition in Iraq nears, the State Department faces an uphill battle securing the resources and authorities needed from Congress. Without reconciling internal disconnects, State and USAID will remain unable to do the job or present a credible case to Congress justifying the support they desperately need.

External Considerations: The State-Defense Resource Gap

Stabilization and reconstruction are hardly new endeavors for the U.S. Government; despite numerous undertakings, lessons are typically observed rather than learned, and with each crisis, agencies scramble to reinvent coordination and execution processes. Political indecision over how much weight to give threats emanating from failed states and attention spans too short for long-term commitments of reconstruction have contributed to a government-wide failure to institutionalize the mission. Although the events of September 11 spawned a proliferation of offices and capabilities for stabilization, it is unclear whether buyer's remorse over the price of rebuilding Iraq and Afghanistan will reduce incentives to resource standing capabilities for such efforts moving forward.[4]

It was against this background of political uncertainty and inattention that the State Department and Department of Defense (DOD) fell short in postconflict planning for Iraq. As instability spiraled, the Pentagon was able to move out faster in developing response capabilities due to its resources. This resource gap between State and Defense has serious implications for the former's efforts to build a stabilization

Soldier from Provincial Reconstruction Team Paktika distributes reading material to shopkeepers

U.S. Air Force (Dallas Edwards)

and reconstruction capacity. It has helped create a cycle in which the military is the only entity resourced to act, thus becoming the default responder. The longer this lead role persists, the greater the gravitational pull on resources and authorities toward DOD, widening the capacity gap. An equation wherein the civilian mission owner is armed with intentions but no assets results in a serious imbalance of power.[5] The risks are twofold: a realignment of authorities from State to DOD, and the corollary to defense expansion, which is a State failure to take ownership of stabilization and reconstruction, delaying capacity development and creating an unsustainable reliance on a military presence.[6] The latter is the reality rapidly bearing down on the Embassy in Baghdad as December approaches.

State and USAID risk being overwhelmed by their military counterparts in the fight for resources against the Washington backdrop of two colliding budget cycles and increasing fiscal constraints. These are inescapable external considerations. Insomuch as Congress withholds authorities and resources, resource starvation is a cause of capacity problems. But internal to the department, failure to prioritize and make the tough tradeoffs necessary to ground the mission makes resource scarcity a symptom. This failure is rooted in bureaucratic and cultural challenges, and until these are resolved, no budget increase will ensure that the right resources target the right gaps.

Internal Influences: State House in Disorder

Bureaucratic rivalries and infighting have systemically choked State's efforts to build capacity. This conflict is part of the broader "strife between State and USAID over the priorities and direction of U.S. foreign assistance,"[7] and acutely manifests in stabilization and reconstruction due to their operational

Kindergarten students in Shikhan, Iraq, perform song for USAID personnel

U.S. Navy (Rufus Hucks)

demands and the overlapping capabilities that reside across the two agencies. The QDDR attempts to rectify issues by outlining an approach that gives the State Department the lead in political crises and USAID the lead in humanitarian crises. This leaves unanswered questions: demarcation lines are often hazy, and the lead agency approach does not confer operational control over the other agency.

The abbreviated history of S/CRS illustrates the challenge of establishing a cross-cutting capability that infringes on powerful bureaucratic turfs. Stood up in 2004 as a result of legislative pressure over Iraq shortcomings, S/CRS met intense internal opposition from the beginning. USAID, while opposed to short-term reconstruction work at the expense of longer term development objectives, took the tendentious view that if such a mission were to exist at all, it should belong to USAID with its orientation toward fieldwork.[8] Meanwhile, State's regional bureaus were suspicious of the underempowered, undermanned office that wanted to weigh in on areas under their purview.[9] As part of the S/CRS mandate to lead and coordinate U.S. Government civilian capacity to prevent and respond to conflict,[10] the office developed a crisis response framework for the interagency to follow—the Interagency Management System (IMS). Although the National Security Council approved the system in 2007, it foundered and was never implemented; a Government Accountability Office report revealed that the drive against the IMS originated in USAID and State offices that mutinied against it.[11]

These internal constraints reinforced the initial S/CRS decision not to focus on either Iraq or Afghanistan. Severely marginalized and underfunded, the first coordinators chose instead to focus on building up capability, in anticipation of using it in the next crisis.[12] Coming under fire for this decision, the office attempted to turn matters around in 2007. Despite an effort to deploy

its fledgling capabilities to Afghanistan, S/CRS was sidelined into nominal advisory roles. The QDDR tackles this problem in its primary recommendation for reform, which is to create a new Bureau for Conflict and Stabilization Operations led by an Assistant Secretary who will closely cooperate with the USAID Bureau of Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance. This bureau would subsume S/CRS and "build upon but go beyond the mandate and capabilities of S/CRS."[13] Although the mission and new organization have the imprimatur of the current administration and State leadership, the test will come down to whether the new bureau is actually given an opportunity to lead, and what resolution is reached concerning overlapping—and occasionally duplicative—capabilities between S/CRS and USAID offices.[14]

Although turf rivalries contributed to the S/CRS decision to opt out of Iraq and Afghanistan, there was another factor at play, which remains similarly unresolved: defining the mandate. Reorganization may tamp down bureaucratic rivalries by endowing the new bureau with hierarchal status, but ambiguity remains. State and USAID understanding of what activities stabilization and reconstruction comprise is evidenced in the QDDR, but left undetermined are how much of a response capability is needed and where it might actually be used. The main indication as to size is that whatever capacity is developed will target models other than Iraq or Afghanistan, which are deemed outliers.[15] Whether these conflicts should be dismissed as sui generis is debatable, but the broader question is how the State Department intends to plan without a clear sense of scale.

The current approach is marked by the somewhat circular logic that as the stabilization and reconstruction capacity housed in S/CRS is used, it will be appreciated and more recognition and resources will flow its way.[16] But without support or assets to begin with, what is there even to use? This conundrum stems in part from failure to clearly define the scale and scope of the mission. Laura Hall states, "Left unclear, however, is whether this role is a boutique, 'niche' operation or whether it represents the 'new normal.' This is an important distinction that affects recruiting, training, staffing, and organization."[17] In other words, this is a distinction that will drive culture change, as organizational culture is a key determinant of management styles, incentives, training, and institutional perspective.

State and USAID both suffer cultural disconnects between their agency values and mindsets and those needed for stabilization and reconstruction

State and USAID both suffer cultural disconnects between their agency values and mindsets and those needed for stabilization and reconstruction. Within any organization, structures crop up to address specific requirements, while cultures mold around enduring needs, promoting certain behaviors based on the organization's priorities over time. For the State Department, this has traditionally meant an emphasis on analytical reporting skills over action or management. James Dobbins unsparingly summed up the distinction between operator and diplomat in a 2004 Senate hearing: "We have a Foreign Service of farmers, in which cowboys are regarded with suspicion."[18] Conversely, USAID has an action-oriented, field-focused culture; however, it mirrors the development community's culture and rejects missions closely aligned with political agendas, such as stabilization and reconstruction. While USAID's longer term development goals arguably serve U.S. interests, the culture inside the agency at

times seems bent on distancing itself from anything perceived as militarizing development.[19]

These norms and values that comprise organizational culture have a significant impact on whether capacity is institutionalized and the speed at which it happens. Cultural values drive incentives and to date, little has changed to incentivize State and USAID personnel for the stabilization and reconstruction mission. A new generation of Foreign Service Officers has gained operational experience in Iraq and Afghanistan, but without incentive structures and processes in place to capture lessons learned, their newfound skills will disappear. Perhaps most significantly, a devalued, or undervalued, mission that lacks internal interest or support has a slim chance of garnering external support from Congress.

Congress: A Bridge Too Far?

All roads on State's quest for authorities and resources to build capacity will at some point end at Congress. The legislative relationship is second in importance only to State's relationship with USAID, yet is typically the most strained. Stacking the odds against the State Department, Congress is historically skeptical and even hostile toward the department and foreign assistance writ large. Foreign aid is an easy target for lawmakers, given the lack of a domestic constituency and the less tangible link to national security than the military institutions.[20] The different treatments Congress reserves for State and Defense is palpable; in just one instance, the House Republican Study Committee recently put forward a proposal to defund USAID.[21] If congressional antipathy toward foreign aid were not enough to overcome, budget treatments compound State and USAID challenges. The House and Senate Foreign Relations Committees have not issued authorization bills for foreign assistance in more than two decades, and funding for stabilization and reconstruction is splintered across eight different committees and subcommittees.[22]

The State Department suffers a "chronic gap" between its ends and means.[23] If anything, this gap was widened by the ambitious goals laid out in the QDDR. Although State and USAID cannot change their external focus, which by nature is divorced from domestic politics and constituencies, or the fact that budget treatments disadvantage them compared to DOD, they miss important opportunities that are within reach due to structural and cultural liabilities. As disorganized as Congress's budgetary treatment of foreign assistance is, part of the problem is the stovepiped nature of foreign assistance itself. More than two dozen agencies administer foreign aid. With some falling under State's purview and others not, the result is institutional incoherence that undermines the Department's ability to plan and present budget requests in the "competition for the national security dollar."[24] Lack of authority is coupled with lack of consensus; USAID's cultural aversion to security agendas impedes its willingness to appeal to national security immunity in the budget process. Moreover, internal rivalries preclude State and USAID from presenting a unified front.

In addition to these structural and cultural disadvantages, State and USAID face the difficulty of hard-to-quantify programs. Even the counterpart to conflict response—conflict prevention—is exceptionally difficult to quantify. Even if funds are secured, how do you measure effectiveness of dollars spent on conflict prevention? Additionally, State and USAID face liabilities in planning and failure to emphasize management. The tendency to plan on a yearly, rather than multiyear, basis hurts State's efforts. While the QDDR tackles this issue, it does not as fully address the management deficit. This deficit creates a vicious cycle in which Congress

balks at funding requirements without a robust justification, but the State Department lacks the people to justify the requirements.[25] Not only are management capabilities enervated, but State and USAID numbers have shrunk while congressional staffs have expanded. The State Department has no excess personnel to dedicate to program management or training and doctrine,[26] let alone relationship-building on the Hill.

Moving Forward

The State Department must ask two questions before committing to the long and difficult process of reform and reorganization for a new mission: is the need for this mission ongoing, and is addressing it a priority for the U.S. Government? As Dobbins points out, "In the long run agencies will sustain investment only in capabilities that they know will be used."[27] If the answer to both of these questions is yes, then State and USAID must take calculated steps to address the underlying bureaucratic, cultural, and structural considerations that undermine implementation of the reforms outlined in the QDDR.

The first step is to minimize bureaucratic strife and its ability to affect the mission. To remove the sources of contention, the State Department must clarify roles and responsibilities as well as consolidate redundant or overlapping capabilities. This must go further than the lead agency approach put forward in the QDDR, which even admits that its division of labor between the two agencies is "arbitrary."[28] So long as duplicative capabilities exist, infighting will continue. Moreover, having capabilities spread across two agencies makes assigning credit or blame difficult and impedes evaluation of combined performance. At a minimum, any matrixed approach must confer operational control over the other agency's or office's assets to enable effectiveness. If State and USAID will not work together, they will be immediately and perpetually disadvantaged trying to persuade a recalcitrant Congress or behemoth military apparatus.

The second step is to clearly define the mandate, articulate a strategic framework for developing and applying capacity, and then demonstrate that capacity. The circular reasoning that an underfunded, distrusted capacity will be allowed to lead, after which additional resources will flow in its direction, must give way to new logic. State leadership must define the scale on which existing capabilities can be leveraged and provide opportunities to demonstrate those abilities. If Iraq and Afghanistan are not the model, but Sudan is, then that fact should be made explicit. Moreover, it is not too late to revisit the S/CRS decision to opt out of Iraq. As violence subsides and Iraq begins the critical transition from reconstruction to recovery, operations may now be at an acceptable scale for S/CRS to demonstrate its skills. The office deployed just one person there in 2010;[29] with the S/CRS emphasis on planning and assessment, they have an opportunity to augment—or even lead—planning efforts for the transition on the ground.

the State Department has no excess personnel to dedicate to program management or training and doctrine, let alone relationship-building on the Hill

Defining the mandate and its future is a prerequisite to drive culture change. The question is not whether culture can change, but whether it should. The answer depends on the future of

State's and USAID's mandate for stabilization and reconstruction. While culture forms around enduring needs, it also influences whether missions are institutionalized. State and USAID leadership have an opportunity to guide culture changes to enhance the mission. For the State Department, the lessons learned in Iraq and Afghanistan must be institutionalized. Incentive structures must be changed to ground operational experience as enhancing for career advancement, linking promotion and hiring decisions to the skills needed for the mission. For USAID, cultural ties must be strengthened with the diplomatic and defense arms of foreign policy. This may come at the expense of ties with the development world and will require sustained leadership commitment.

the U.S. Government "can no longer afford to face every task with nothing but a hammer at its disposal"

The final step is to refocus State's and USAID's approach to Congress. The State Department and USAID together must improve the case for the mission and the cost of maintaining a standing capability. However appealing the idea might be, the concept of a unified national security budget that the QDDR nods to remains beyond reach for the immediate future. It will require significant realignment within Congress and a comprehensive reexamination of interagency structures, authorities, and resources.[30] Nonetheless, State and USAID can take steps now to present an integrated, cross-department front and to strengthen the ties between stabilization and reconstruction and national security objectives. The QDDR demonstrates new and creative thought on the budget process, but a number of the measures put forward are workarounds at best that create reliance on temporary measures such as overseas contingency operations supplemental accounts and pooled funding with DOD. These fill short-term gaps and are necessary measures in the face of budget cuts but are unlikely to last beyond today's contingencies, thus failing to meet the requirements for maintaining capacity.

Asking for more money and more people in a time of fiscal constraint is a hard sell, not least in light of congressional announcements such as the House Appropriations Committee's intent to cut nearly a quarter of the State Department and foreign operations budget request for 2012.[31] But the reality is that the alternative is much more costly, and State's time to make the case is running out. The mission in Iraq needs strong civilian leadership, the military needs a partner in the field in Afghanistan, and the U.S. Government "can no longer afford to face every task with nothing but a hammer at its disposal."[32] Building a robust State and USAID capacity for stabilization and reconstruction ultimately enhances both efficiency and effectiveness; this is the case that must be made.

Budget austerity and resource constraints will dominate Washington in the near future, and in lobbying for resources to build civilian capacity, the price of *not* having it must be clearly illustrated. An inability to prevent or mitigate conflict before it is full-blown results in large-scale crises that necessitate military involvement, along with its much higher price tag. Recognizing and funding State and USAID as part of the national security paradigm, as State's Director for Policy Planning, Jake Sullivan, said recently, will yield "huge savings for what we'd have to spend on military action down the road."[33] As the costs of Iraq and Afghanistan have demonstrated, a lighter, less costly civilian capability is needed for the Sudans and East Timors of the world. Not only is this the less expensive solution, it is the more

effective one. While the military is remarkable in its ability to adapt and adopt new capabilities, the requirements of stabilization and reconstruction are largely the political, governance, and economic skills that reside in the civilian arms of foreign policy. PRISM

Notes

[1] For an overview of these concerns, see Stuart W. Bowen, Jr., Inspector General, Office of the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, "Transition in Iraq: Is the State Department Prepared to Take the Lead?" testimony to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, U.S. House of Representatives, September 23, 2010, available at <www.sigir.mil/files/testimony/SIGIR_Testimony_10-005T.pdf>.

[2] U.S. Department of State, *Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office (GPO), 2010), 123.

[3] Samuel S. Farr, "From Idea to Implementation: Standing Up the Civilian Response Corps," *PRISM* 2, no. 1 (December 2010), 22.

[4] For this argument, see Colin S. Gray, "Stability Operations in Strategic Perspective: A Skeptical View," *Parameters* (Summer 2006), 4–14.

[5] Joseph J. Collins, *Choosing War: The Decision to Invade Iraq and Its Aftermath*, INSS Occasional Paper 5 (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 2008), 35.

[6] For a discussion of realignment of authorities, see Richard G. Lugar, "Stabilization and Reconstruction: A Long Beginning," *PRISM* 1, no. 1 (December 2009), 3–8. For a discussion of civilian reliance on military capabilities, see Laura A. Hall, "Transition to Civilian-led Operations in Iraq: This Time It's for Real," *The Will and the Wallet blog*, August 12, 2010, available at <http://thewillandthewallet.squarespace.com/2010/8/12/transition-to-civilian-led-operations-in-iraq-this-time-its.html>.

[7] Brian M. Burton and Kristin M. Lord, "Did the State Department Get the Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review Right?" *The Washington Quarterly* (Spring 2011), 118.

[8] Author interview, Ambassador John Herbst (Ret.), Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization, 2006–2010, Washington, DC, February 24, 2011.

[9] U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), *Stabilization and Reconstruction: Actions Are Needed to Develop a Planning and Coordination Framework and Establish the Civilian Reserve Corps* (Washington, DC: GPO, 2007), 13.

[10] Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS), "Mission," U.S. Department of State, available at <www.state.gov/s/crs/about/index.htm#mission>.

[11] U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) officers claimed the system was redundant to their existing capabilities, while State staff cited a lack of senior leadership endorsement for the system. See GAO.

[12] For the criticism of this decision, see Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, *Applying Iraq's Hard Lessons to the Reform of Stabilization and Reconstruction Operations* (Washington, DC: GPO, 2010).

[13] Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review, 135.

[14] USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives and Conflict Mitigation and Management own capabilities closely mirroring the S/CRS functions. For an overview, see Dane F. Smith, Jr., *Foreign Assistance for Peace: The U.S. Agency for International Development* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, April 2009), available at <http://csis.org/publication/foreign-assistance-peace>.

[15] Burton and Lord, 119; *Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review*, 125.

[16] See John Herbst's comments in Naveed Bandali, "Coordinating Reconstruction and Stabilization: An interview with Ambassador John E. Herbst (Ret.)," *Journal of International Peace Operations* 19, no. 4 (January–February 2011), 19–22.

[17] Laura A. Hall, "S/CRS 2.0: QDDR Upgrade Provides More Operating Capacity but May Not Have Eliminated all the Bugs," *The Will and the Wallet blog*, December 16, 2010, available at <http://thewillandthewallet.squarespace.com/2010/12/16/scrs-20-qddr-upgrade-provides-more-operating-capacity-but-ma.html>.

[18] James Dobbins, "Stabilization and Reconstruction Civilian Management Act of 2004," testimony to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, March 3, 2004, available at <www.rand.org/pubs/testimonies/CT218.html>.

[19] See Benjamin Sovacool and Saul Halfon, "Reconstructing Iraq: Merging Discourses of Security and Development," *Review of International Studies* 33, no. 2 (2007), 223–243.

[20] Steven W. Hook, "Domestic Obstacles to International Affairs: The State Department Under Fire at Home," *PS: Political Science and Politics* 36, no. 1 (January 2003), 23–29.

[21] Josh Rogin, "165 House Republicans Endorse Defunding USAID," *Foreign Policy.com*, January 20, 2011, available at <http://thecable.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2011/01/20/165_house_republicans_endorse_defunding_usaid>.

[22] Gordon Adams, *The Politics of National Security Budgets* (Muscatine, IA: The Stanley Foundation, 2007), 13, available at <www.stanleyfoundation.org/publications/pab/pab07natsecbudget.pdf>; Nora Bensahel, Olga Oliker, and Heather Peterson, *Improving Capacity for Stabilization and Reconstruction Operations* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2009), 58.

[23] Hook, 25.

[24] Adams, 4.

[25] Hall, "Transition to Civilian-led Operations in Iraq."

[26] In comparison, the U.S. Army has a command dedicated to training and doctrine. See Bensahel, Oliker, and Peterson, 49, for a discussion of State's inability to maintain a training float, or percentage of billets dedicated to training, as compared to Defense.

[27] Dobbins.

[28] Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review, 135.

[29] U.S. Department of State, *2010 Year in Review: Conflict Prevention & Stabilization Operations*, prepared by the S/CRS (Washington, DC: GPO, 2011), 20–21.

[30] For an argument toward achieving fungibility across development, diplomacy, and defense, see "Mr. Y" (Wayne Porter and Mark Mykleby), *A National Strategic Narrative* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center, 2011).

[31] The committee plans to cut $11 billion from the $47 billion budget request. See Kate Brannen, "Budget Crisis Will Hit U.S. State Department Hard," *Defense News*, June 2, 2011, available at <www.defensenews.com/story.php?i=6702504&c=AME&s=TOP>.

[32] John J. Hamre and Gordon R. Sullivan, "Toward Postconflict Reconstruction," *The Washington Quarterly* (Autumn 2002), 95.

[33] Jake Sullivan, quoted in Brannen.

The Promise and Peril of the Indirect Approach

BY BRIAN M. BURTON

Since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the United States has pursued a wide range of military activities abroad intended to degrade, dismantle, and defeat the al Qaeda organization and its network of loosely affiliated Islamist extremist groups. A disproportionate number of these efforts—in terms of manpower, materiel, money, and media attention—focus on two countries: Afghanistan and Iraq. In both instances, the United States toppled existing hostile regimes and is attempting to rebuild institutions of security and governance from the ground up. However, these intensive and expensive efforts at state-building are not necessarily the most important from the standpoint of understanding the future direction of U.S. strategy against violent Islamist extremist groups. Instead, U.S. strategy against transnational terrorist groups abroad is increasingly focused on a concept commonly referred to as the *indirect approach*.

As first publicly elaborated in the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), the indirect approach in the campaign against al Qaeda and its affiliates emphasizes "working with . . . and through partners" using "persistent but low-visibility presence" to build up the security and governance capacity of at-risk partner states.[1] The United States has long used various forms of security assistance as a key instrument of its foreign policy, but the new emphasis for counterterrorism-oriented assistance is on building partner capacity: improving the security and governance capabilities of partner states to defeat al Qaeda–affiliated groups and to stabilize weakly governed areas to prevent their being used as safe havens by militants.

This indirect approach to building partner capacity against al Qaeda–affiliated groups has been implemented in various places as part of the broader war on terror since 2002. Despite the Barack Obama administration's repudiation of the "global war on terror" as an organizing principle for U.S. national security strategy, the indirect approach to building partner capacity through security force assistance has

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been elevated to new prominence in American defense policy over the past 4 years based on arguments that it is more effective and sustainable in the long run than a strategy of large-scale, direct U.S. intervention. The Department of Defense (DOD) 2008 *National Defense Strategy* stated,

through the indirect approach, the United States is effective in building the capacity of partner states to counter terrorist groups and improve their ability to secure and govern themselves

"Arguably the most important military component of the struggle against violent extremists is not the fighting we do ourselves, but how well we help prepare our partners to defend and govern themselves."[2] It continued:

> *Working with and through local actors whenever possible to confront common security challenges is the best and most sustainable approach to combat violent extremism. Often our partners are better positioned to handle a given problem because they understand the local geography, social structures, and culture better than we do or ever could. . . .* [W]*e will help build the internal capacities of countries at risk. We will work with and through like-minded states to help shrink the ungoverned areas of the world and thereby deny extremists and other hostile parties sanctuary. By helping others to police themselves and their regions, we will collectively address threats to the broader international system.*[3]

The 2010 QDR highlighted similar themes. It emphasized security force assistance—that is, "'hands-on' efforts, conducted primarily in host countries, to train, equip, advise, and assist those countries' forces in becoming more proficient at providing security to their populations and protecting their resources and territories"—as a key means to improve the capacity of partner states.[4] It continued, "For reasons of political legitimacy as well as sheer economic necessity, there is no substitute for professional, motivated local security forces. . . . By emphasizing host nation leadership and employing modest numbers of U.S. forces, the United States can sometimes obviate the need for larger-scale counterinsurgency campaigns."[5]

The key assumption behind this preference is that through the indirect approach, the United States is effective in building the capacity of partner states to counter terrorist groups and improve their ability to secure and govern themselves. It is necessary to test this assumption through an analytical framework to assess the broad outcomes of U.S. efforts. It is critical that outcomes are not confused with input or outputs. *Inputs* are simply the resources used to execute a program, while *outputs* are the direct products of a given event, such as the number of foreign troops who have been through a U.S. military training program. *Outcomes* are best defined as "the effect of outputs" on participant countries or "changes in program participants' behavior, knowledge, skills, status, and/or level of functioning."[6] Success can only be determined through the examination of outcomes. Determination of cost-effectiveness weighs outcomes against inputs, but the aim of this article is simply to determine whether successful outcomes have been achieved through this strategy.

Of course, success in these cases is not easy to judge. There are few agreed-upon metrics to evaluate progress, and even definitions of what constitutes a successful outcome are open to debate. Furthermore, the building partner capacity framework can overstate the ambitions

of U.S. military security cooperation abroad. Security force assistance may be intended to serve simpler means, such as establishing relationships between the U.S. military and members of the security forces in developing countries. Should future U.S. military operations become necessary in or around any given country, close ties to local security forces could facilitate easy access to basing and supply facilities and other services. The cultivation of military-to-military or military-to-government ties in countries where none previously existed might therefore be considered something of a success in and of itself.[7]

U.S. security assistance also has a track record of establishing some forms of dependency in partner countries, arguably by design in order to ensure that the partner states have strong incentives to maintain the favor of the United States. The maintenance of U.S.-provided security capabilities tends to require a persistent or recurrent American support presence, which in turn serves to produce strong relations between the U.S. military and local security forces. The quality and capabilities of host nation security forces (particularly the Sahel states of Africa, which range among the poorest and least developed in the world) are so low in some cases that even the most basic and minimal training constitutes an improvement, even if it is temporary and sustainable only with persistent American assistance. Simply preventing a deterioration of host nation security and governance capacity might then be considered a successful outcome.[8]

While acknowledging these nuances, this article proceeds from the assumption that U.S. efforts to build partner capacity intend to measurably improve the ability of partner states to secure and govern their territories. Every engagement must be judged in accordance with its own stated objectives, but these objectives can be generalized across cases. Militarily, American security force assistance in the indirect approach framework should produce two key outcomes: a clear degradation of the targeted terrorist and insurgent group's manpower and capabilities, and a demonstrable improvement of the security capabilities of the host nation force to counter militant forces. These outcomes are best measured by assessing the ability of the host nation to conduct and sustain security operations in contested areas and degrade militant control, influence, and activity over these areas. Where there is a clearly identifiable organization that is the target of U.S. and host nation efforts—such as the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), an Islamist militant group in the Philippines—improved security capabilities should have some demonstrable effect on the group, such as attrition of personnel through combat deaths or defections and a reduction in militant attacks. In cases where building partner capacity is conducted mainly as a preventive measure, improved security force capabilities should deter the formation of militant groups and the execution of attacks.

host nations are expected to seek to extend their sovereignty throughout their territories and combat terrorists and insurgents on their soil

In addition to the development of security force capabilities, another key outcome the United States seeks through the indirect approach is the strengthening of the host nation's political governance capacity to combat insurgents and terrorists both through security operations and undertaking reform measures designed to undercut popular support for militants. A key assumption in U.S. policy toward

states to which it provides security assistance is that improving security capacity will increase the willingness of these states to act in ways that serve American objectives. Specifically, host nations are expected to seek to extend their sovereignty throughout their territories and combat terrorists and insurgents on their soil. They should not passively allow militants to establish safe havens through inaction, nor should they be willing to reach political accommodation with the most extreme al Qaeda–linked factions of an insurgent group, though partnerships of convenience with less radical elements may be productive. At the same time, they must govern in a sufficiently "good" way as to "win the population" rather than alienate it.

The development of effective, responsive host nation governments that provide reliable services and decisive leadership has long been identified as a key element to successful counterinsurgency (COIN) campaigns.[9] As former Secretary of Defense Robert Gates acknowledged, "The United States . . . recognizes that the security sectors of at-risk countries are really systems of systems tying together the military, the police, the justice system, and other governance and oversight mechanisms" and institutions.[10] While all U.S. allies against al Qaeda cannot be expected to function as models of liberal democracy, the third and final necessary outcome from U.S. efforts should be that host nations improve their capacities for effective and responsive governance. This will enhance their legitimacy and reduce popular support for militant terrorist or insurgent groups.[11] Concretely, this entails reducing corruption within security forces and local governance institutions and undertaking political and economic reforms that target underlying drivers of internal conflict. Counterproductive trends include increasing corruption and further entrenchment of unjust preexisting governance and judicial structures that help drive resistance to the duly constituted government.[12]

This framework can be tested against two cases where the indirect approach has been implemented since 9/11—in the Philippines and the African Trans-Sahel "core countries"[13]—to assess the broad outcomes relevant to host nation security and governance capacity and effectiveness. These cases represent examples of the indirect approach that have been ongoing in some form since the early days of the war on terror. They also represent somewhat different applications of the indirect approach. The Philippine effort is a focused, sustained effort in one country that is now regarded as something of a success in countering a specific al Qaeda–affiliated militant group despite early troubles. The Trans-Sahel effort is a regional-level program that has yielded more ambiguous results in a preventive action against a more amorphous potential terrorist threat.

The Philippines

Since February 2002, hundreds of U.S. troops have been persistently engaged in providing training, advice, and noncombat assistance to the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) that is mainly intended to counter the ASG, which is linked to the regional al Qaeda affiliate organization Jemaah Islamiyah on the southern Philippine island of Mindanao and several smaller islands. Today, the U.S. security force assistance effort in the Philippines is widely regarded as a successful application of the indirect approach.[14] The Philippine example was even held up as a model in the 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review:

> [S]*ince 2002 U.S. forces have trained and advised elements of the Philippine armed forces working to secure areas of the southern Philippines that had been a haven for*

> *the Abu Sayyaf terrorist organization and other terrorist elements. Over the past eight years, U.S. forces and their Philippine counterparts have trained together. . . . As their equipment and skills have improved, Philippine forces have patrolled more widely and more frequently, bringing security to previously contested areas.*

This model is being applied elsewhere to good effect.[15]

Yet even in this apparently successful case, U.S. forces are slated to remain indefinitely, and the southern Philippines remains a trouble spot for militancy and poor governance in Southeast Asia.

The Philippines has long been wracked by insurgency and terrorism, but after the 9/11 attacks, the presence of an al Qaeda–linked terrorist group spurred more active U.S. security force assistance programs. The core American objectives in the Philippines are to neutralize the ASG and other al Qaeda–linked militants on Philippine soil while extending the reach of the Philippine government to prevent these militants from exploiting ungoverned territory to plan attacks against U.S. interests. The U.S. approach since 2002 has emphasized three main lines of operations: building the capacity of the AFP to secure its territory by providing training, assistance, and support; civil-military operations to improve humanitarian conditions and governance; and information operations intended to play on the success of the first two activities to help enhance the population's perception of government legitimacy.[16] In what has become widely known as Operation *Enduring Freedom–Philippines* (OEF–P), U.S. Special Forces numbering in the hundreds have focused on training Philippine units in counterterrorism and COIN tactics, providing communications and intelligence support, and engaging in civil-military and information operations intended to wean the population from sympathies for the militants.[17] As one participant described it, "The heart of the strategy is based on building relationships, reinforcing legitimate institutions, building security force capabilities, sharing intelligence and information, developing focused civil-military programs and aggressively promoting local acts of good governance."[18]

Following the surge of troops for the Balikatan 2002 exercise, the American presence has comprised approximately 600 U.S. Army Special Forces conducting counterterrorism training and civil-military operations, along with an influx of approximately $1.6 billion in military and economic support funding.[19] The basic model for U.S. training and advising is through small-unit interaction with dozen-man U.S. Special Forces Operational Detachment Alphas (ODAs). Approximately nine ODAs were deployed to Basilan Island in 2002 with a focus on developing Philippine Light Reaction Companies as rapid-response units for counterterrorism. In particular, there was an emphasis on promoting proactive small-unit patrolling and intelligence-gathering among the Philippine unit skills that were previously not well developed.[20]

One notable feature of OEF–P has been the emphasis on civil-military action intended to alleviate local deprivations and improve the legitimacy of the government. U.S. military personnel have carried out many of these activities on Basilan and areas of Mindanao where lack of effective governance facilitated militant sanctuaries. One of the most visible civic actions that U.S. troops participate in is the medical civic-action program (MEDCAP), in which American medics treat maladies afflicting the local populace. One OEF–P commander asserted, "The medical programs were vital [as was] gaining the

confidence of the local people as well as enhancing force protection as the local residents would often provide information about potentially dangerous areas." Also, American forces participated in numerous small-scale building projects such as "repairing a mosque, repairing schools, repairing small bridges [and] establishing a water supply."[21] However, while U.S. forces have generally perceived these types of operations as effective, some observers have noted that they tend to be directed from the top down with relatively little understanding of or input from the local populations who are the targets, with the result that critical infrastructure and health needs go unfulfilled despite American good intentions.[22]

the ASG has demonstrated that it is still capable of carrying out attacks and maintaining a climate of fear across the southern Philippines

U.S. security force assistance to the AFP has substantially degraded ASG manpower and military capability; thus, it is unlikely that these pose a strategic threat to the Philippine government. ASG strength declined from approximately 1,000 men in 2002 to between 200 and 400 by 2006.[23] Its significance as an independent guerrilla organization has sharply deteriorated. Concerted, localized security efforts such as the Basilan operations in the Balikatan 2002 exercise appear to have had the most significant effect in rooting out concealed ASG cells.

The ASG has not been eliminated, however, and remains able to perpetrate acts of terrorism and facilitate transnational al Qaeda influence in the region. Under new leadership in the middle of the decade, ASG appeared "to have gained new effectiveness as a terrorist organization" through high-profile bombing attacks against civilian targets. These attacks include the involvement in the 2002 Bali bombing and a ferry attack in 2004 that killed 194 people and remains the deadliest act of maritime terrorism to date. Another troubling development has been the strengthening of ASG linkages to factions of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), Indonesian Jemaah Islamiyah, and Manila-based Rajah Solaiman Movement terror group despite U.S. efforts to bolster AFP capabilities to secure its territory and patrol the sea lanes between the Philippines and Indonesia. The ASG was driven from Basilan Island in the wake of the 2002 Balikatan exercise, but it moved into territory held by sympathetic factions of the MILF on Mindanao and Jolo. Several MILF bases are believed to be sites used by the ASG to plot attacks in collaboration with these other militant organizations.[24] The ASG has demonstrated that it is still capable of carrying out attacks and maintaining a climate of fear across the southern Philippines.[25] Examples include an April 2010 raid on the city of Isabela on Basilan that involved coordinated bombings and shooting attacks by apparent Abu Sayyaf members dressed in police uniforms.[26]

The indirect approach in the Philippines does appear to have achieved some success in reshaping the way the AFP approaches counterterrorism and counterinsurgency. A RAND study found that:

> [The Balikatan exercises] *underscored to participating officers that development assistance often goes hand-in-hand with military operations, especially in terms of the potential favorable impact on the attitudes of the local population. . . .* [T]*he military has now created a new division that is specifically dedicated to* CMO [civil-military operations] *efforts—the*

> *National Development Support Command. The rationale behind the unit is that the best way to defeat a terrorist insurgency is to provide people with what the rebels cannot: roads, bridges, businesses, houses, schools, electricity, medical centers, and medicines—in short, better governance.*[27]

These "hearts and minds" efforts by the AFP to produce more effective and responsive governance, with American support, appear to have some effect in increasing local intelligence tip-offs, which enable more effective security force operations to eliminate ASG leaders and cadres. Civil-military operations are conducted in conjunction with sweeps and other offensive actions that have apparently been effective in degrading ASG's manpower, if not its ability to carry out periodic bombing attacks.[28]

The effects of U.S. security assistance on the AFP, however, have been somewhat limited. ODAs focus mainly on training smaller units deployed to Mindanao and Basilan, and substantial U.S. security assistance funding has not addressed problems in AFP supply and logistics capabilities. Despite the improvement in individual units' combat abilities, the overall sustainability of AFP operations is questionable. Philippine troops are rarely well equipped, and the country's defense spending is limited. Additionally, the AFP has significant issues with corruption and lack of professionalism within the ranks. These factors have contributed to an environment in which the organizational reforms necessary to institutionalize lessons learned from U.S. training and assistance are rarely taken.

From a broader political standpoint, the results of U.S. assistance have been mixed. The Philippine government has willingly accepted American support, but it is widely believed that it is less interested in targeting ASG than the larger insurgent groups, such as the MILF and the Communist New People's Army, which it views as posing more significant threats.[29] Additionally, despite the apparently positive reception U.S. troops have received in the areas where they are actually assisting, their presence is politically controversial among citizens and some lawmakers in Manila, generating scattered protests that Philippine politicians can exploit.[30]

corruption within the military and government remains a pervasive problem that undermines both effective governance and legitimacy in the eyes of local populations

The government as a whole is still relatively weak and fearful of a coup attempt by military commanders, which is not unreasonable given military leaders' treatment of the force as personal power bases and fiefdoms and the precedents for military intervention in politics.[31] Corruption within the military and at all levels of government remains a pervasive problem that undermines both effective governance and legitimacy in the eyes of local populations who are targeted by militant groups and the government for support.[32] Despite the military's improved understanding of the necessity for better governance to counter militants, follow-on civilian authorities assigned to hold and control the areas cleared by AFP operations "fail to discharge their responsibilities in a meaningful and decisive manner."[33] The penetration of the central government's writ (particularly the legal justice system) and infrastructure into the Muslim areas of Mindanao and the southern islands therefore remains fairly minimal.

U.S. Navy (Michael Larson)

Nigerien soldiers practice field tactics during Operation Flintlock 2007, part of an interactive exchange with U.S. military and State Department's Trans-Saharan Counterterrorism Partnership

Economic development is weak at best, with poverty levels exceeding half the local population and most businesses forced to pay bribes to government officials; human rights abuses remain a significant problem across the southern Philippines; and, most concerning from a U.S. perspective, the government does not appear to be particularly dedicated to ameliorating this situation.[34] The government as a whole has not fully embraced the types of reforms recognized as necessary to consolidate improved governance in its troubled regions.

In sum, OEF–P success remains at best "incomplete," as former commander David Maxwell wrote in 2004.[35] While the Philippines has been a willing counterterrorism partner to the United States for the most part, U.S. assistance has not been able to change some of the more pernicious aspects of the Philippine government and military institutions that impede more comprehensive success against ASG and more capable governance. U.S. assistance, perhaps because of its success in degrading the ASG and advancing limited improvements in the AFP, may actually enable the Philippine government to continue to avoid more significant governance reforms to address the drivers of conflict.

The African Sahel

The countries of the Sahel feature significant swaths of terrain that can be considered ungoverned. State capacity is generally weak, infrastructure is undeveloped, and international borders are poorly marked and monitored. These states experience ethnic strife stemming from tensions between the settled population and traditional nomadic tribal groups such as the Tuareg that still move

through the region. These factors combine to create conditions of insecurity and conflict that can be exploited by extremist groups.[36]

U.S. policymakers have become increasingly fearful that al Qaeda could exploit ungoverned spaces and state weakness in the Sahel to establish a recruiting, training, and planning presence in the region. In prepared testimony for a 2005 House of Representatives hearing, Rear Admiral Hamlin Tallent, then Director of Operations for U.S. European Command, asserted, "In many areas of the Sahara Desert (Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and Chad) there is very little military or police presence, and often no central government influence."[37]

Terrorist attacks such as the Madrid train bombings were seen as harbingers of future militant activities emanating from the trans-Sahara region.[38] Africa was also found to be the source of up to one-quarter of the foreign fighters attacking U.S. troops in Iraq.[39] Militant groups participate in sporadic attacks on local government outposts and occasionally target Western tourists.

The most attention-grabbing shift, however, occurred in early 2007 when the Algerian Salafist Group for Call and Combat (*Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat*, or GSPC) declared itself al Qaeda in the Islamic Mahgreb (AQIM). The GSPC had previously vowed allegiance to Osama bin Laden in 2004, but this action produced more consternation among U.S. policymakers because it seemed to provide clear evidence of al Qaeda's spreading influence to affiliated regional groups.[40] Despite being largely driven from Algeria, the organization has managed to reconstitute cells in the Sahel countries. AQIM continued the GSPC pattern of attacking local security forces and targeting Westerners for kidnappings.[41]

The United States has set the prevention of al Qaeda havens in the region as the main objective for its operations in the Sahel. Primary strategic goals of U.S. security force assistance include improving the capabilities of the security forces of the Sahel states and improving their ability to cooperate with one another to secure currently unguarded territory and borders.[42]

The Pan-Sahel Initiative (PSI) was the first significant security force assistance activity that the United States launched in the region after 9/11. It was a Department of State–funded program begun with less than $7 million in 2003 to promote regional antiterrorism cooperation. U.S. Army Special Forces and Marine units rotated through Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and Chad to engage in small-unit training of rapid-reaction companies established to "stem the flow of illicit arms, goods and people across borders and to preclude terrorist organizations from seeking or establishing sanctuaries in the Sahel."[43] As the International Crisis Group reported, "The goals are ambitious but the day-to-day activities are often rather mundane." PSI sessions focused on training units of 130 to 150 soldiers in marksmanship, "communications and teamwork," and first aid, culminating in 2-week field exercises in the desert for each group.[44]

An expansion of U.S. training efforts occurred in June 2005 as part of Exercise Flintlock 2005, which was planned by U.S. European Command to provide additional basic training functions in skills such as marksmanship, land navigation, human rights, medical skills, and small-unit tactics.[45] The exercise marked the beginning of a new phase of U.S. involvement, which was renamed the Trans-Saharan Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP). The partnership is an interagency effort of the State Department, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and DOD that as of 2009 covered programs in

Algeria, Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, and Tunisia. The DOD element, dubbed Operation *Enduring Freedom–Trans-Sahara* (OEF–TS), was initially managed by U.S. European Command and then taken over by U.S. Africa Command in 2008. Under OEF–TS, persistent low-level U.S. security force assistance is supposedly complemented by enhanced political and development aid.

OEF–TS includes many of the same elements of military training as the PSI, with an added emphasis on countering militant ideologies and promoting good governance and institutional development through civil-military operations performed by specialized teams provided by U.S. Special Operations Command.

it is unclear that U.S. assistance to the Sahel security forces has had much of an impact on AQIM and other affiliated militant groups in the region

Military Information Support Teams consist of three- to eight-person groups that support U.S. Embassy–led public diplomacy efforts through media productions, notably radio and newspapers, aimed at countering violent extremism. Civil-Military Support Elements provide basic humanitarian and governance development services, including activities such as MEDCAPs performed in the Philippines, to help bolster the legitimacy of the host nations. U.S. Africa Command documents emphasize all OEF–TS activities as supporting elements of State Department and USAID governance capacity-building and economic development efforts under the overarching TSCTP program.[46]

Building partner capacity in the Sahel countries is particularly difficult because they are so lacking in resources and capabilities that military trainers have little to build on.[47] Key enablers such as reliable transportation remain extremely limited even in the wake of U.S. efforts to provide all-terrain trucks capable of navigating the region's terrain and poor infrastructure. Transportation is particularly crucial given the land area and extensive borders of the Sahel states. The security forces' lack of mobility is one of the main factors preventing them from exerting control over large swaths of territory.

This in turn points to the broader problem of U.S. military efforts to build the capacity of host nation security forces in Africa, specifically the emphasis on training for tactical proficiency without cultivation of support capabilities and institutions necessary to sustain and advance the tactical capabilities. In one sense, this is understandable given the low baseline of Sahel military capacity. As one U.S. trainer commented in late 2008, "This is a long-term effort. This is crawl, walk, run, and right now, we're still in the crawl phase."[48]

There have been small successes for U.S. objectives in the region, notably Malian military attacks on suspected AQIM bases in 2009 and the establishment of a joint military relationship involving Algeria, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger in April 2010.[49] However, the sustainability of tactical-level improvements is highly doubtful unless equal attention is paid to developing institutional and logistical capacity. Notably, assessments of the annual Flintlock exercise have not identified clear, lasting improvements in the security capacity of the states since its inception in 2005.[50]

Perhaps most significantly, it is unclear that U.S. assistance to the Sahel security forces has had much of an impact on AQIM and other affiliated militant groups in the region. The core American goal since the initiation of the PSI has been to prevent the emergence of an al Qaeda–linked terrorist presence in the Sahel, but incidents over the past year such as

the kidnapping and killing of Westerners and attacks on security forces suggest that militant activity has not been deterred by U.S. assistance to this point.[51] Recently, an expansion of attacks in northern Nigeria using remote-detonated bombs has provided further evidence of the resilience of Islamist insurgent forces in the region and their links to al Qaeda affiliates.[52]

The most positive aspect of the Sahel countries has been their willingness to attempt to confront terrorists and militants on their soil. Generally, governments and security forces welcome U.S. security assistance and the benefits that come with it. Though it may not be entirely fair to judge a long-term program only a few years in, there have been few changes to the underlying political dysfunction, economic destitution, corruption, and lack of professionalism that have typically hindered progress.[53] Additionally, U.S. assistance has been periodically interrupted due to the occurrence of coups and other political upheavals (as in Mauritania and Niger). The periodic movement away from democracy by the Sahel states indicates the limits of the U.S. ability through security-focused assistance to effectively cultivate better governance among its partner states that focuses on providing effective services to the people to undercut terrorist or insurgent groups' appeal and recruitment. Some reports suggest that U.S. assistance provides incentives for partner governments in the region to act irresponsibly. By trumping up the al Qaeda threat, partner governments are able to get added American support when their more immediate interest is in quashing more legitimate opposition elements such as minority Tuareg nomads or Sufi Muslim groups.[54]

Most concerning of all, however, is the fear that U.S. assistance may in some cases attract the al Qaeda presence or influence that the United States seeks to avoid. Though likely coincidental, it is worth noting that the emergence of Sahel-based militant groups with more direct ties to al Qaeda came after, not before, the PSI and Flintlock 2005 exercise. As RAND analyst Lianne Kennedy Boudali notes, AQIM propaganda regularly plays up U.S. security force assistance programs as evidence of American occupation of Islamic lands, and local media frequently speculate suspiciously about the purpose of U.S. activities.[55] The U.S. military is concerned about the issue of local perceptions of the legitimacy of the Sahel governments and American assistance efforts and has begun attempting to track public opinion through third-party polling services.[56] Yet some analysis already suggests that the populations of the Sahel do not look favorably on the American role in their countries, believing that the militant Islamist presence in the region is overstated and that the United States is primarily concerned with securing its own economic interests. As the International Crisis Group put it, the people of the Sahel "expect that military interventions are designed not for their benefit, but for the benefit of those who intervene."[57]

Some of these perception problems, which may create more sympathy for militants or antipathy toward the United States, are supposed to be alleviated through State Department–led and USAID-led counter-radicalization efforts, governance development, and economic development initiatives. However, Government Accountability Office audits have revealed an overall lack of strategic coordination to ensure that DOD, State, and USAID programs under the TSCTP are concurrent and mutually reinforcing.[58] Even if the imbalance between civilian and military assistance was corrected, the small-scale indirect approach to building partner capacity in the Sahel is likely to generate some level of suspicion and resentment within local populations, though the full implications of this perception problem are unclear.

U.S. Navy (Michael Larson)

Soldiers show children how to play with yo-yos during humanitarian mission in the Philippines, September 2007

Implications for Policymakers

It is difficult to argue that the indirect approach has achieved more than limited outcomes. Terrorist groups have been degraded and host nation militaries' tactical capabilities have been improved, but more expansive and lasting defeat of militant organizations and governance development in partner states has been elusive. While the cases examined in this article could be considered in their relatively early stages, there are as yet few indications of imminent progress toward the more far-reaching objectives of this strategy.

Yet the indirect approach to building partner capacity continues to hold significant appeal, and its employment in a wide variety of cases, including cases beyond the counterterrorism-focused efforts described here, is only likely to expand over time. Since the use of the indirect approach will probably continue, policymakers should have a clear understanding of its limitations. Three issues in particular stand out when examining the preceding case studies.

First, political strategies to leverage security force assistance to achieve desired outcomes are insufficiently emphasized by U.S. policymakers and implementers of the indirect approach. Influencing the host nation to behave in certain ways conducive to countering terrorist and insurgent forces is a necessary precondition to building partner governance capacity. Security force assistance has been provided in these cases, and likely other cases as well, mainly out of fear of what would happen if the United States did not support these host nations. Relatively little thought has been devoted to seeking quid pro

quo arrangements to ensure that partner governments are truly willing to reform themselves as the United States helps develop their military capabilities. Failure to do so could risk worse outcomes in which American security assistance to regimes with questionable legitimacy and unwillingness to reform drives increasing support for Islamist militancy within populations that the United States seeks to help. Improving integrated security and governance capacity-building and conflict prevention preparations was a high priority for Secretary Gates, who proposed a "shared responsibility, pooled resources" concept to link DOD, State, and USAID programs targeting at-risk countries and regions.[59] The establishment of a pooled-funding pilot program called the Global Security Contingency Fund is meant to serve as a proof of concept for this proposal, but policymakers still need to consider both the short- and long-term consequences if a U.S.-backed partner government did not cooperate on governance reforms or demonstrated a lack of willingness to address the underlying causes of a militant challenge.

Second, rigorous assessments of outcomes from efforts to build partner capacity are lacking, or at least not widely available. This is somewhat understandable given the difficulties involved in analyzing outcomes versus inputs and outputs and the desire to keep these operations out of the headlines. Yet senior policymakers must have a clear understanding of what can reasonably be expected from indirect approach capacity-building efforts and whether they are advancing national security objectives. Combatant commands and units in the field currently conduct after-action reviews and other assessments, including polling, to gauge host nation government legitimacy and popular views in the United States.[60] However, there appears to be no standard method across the U.S. Government for assessing program success. A unified State, USAID, and DOD assessment framework would be most desirable and in keeping with the whole-of-government imperatives of effective capacity-building. Such a framework should focus on holistic outcomes, such as degradation of militant groups and improvement of the host nation's ability and willingness to govern effectively and responsibly. Some might argue that it is still too early to truly determine success or failure in these post-9/11 efforts, but an assessment framework should be useful for detecting and tracking progress (or lack thereof) when it actually occurs.

Finally, while the indirect approach is intended to reduce the need for large-scale U.S. military involvement in counterterrorism and COIN operations in host nations, the course of indirect approach missions in the Philippines and trans-Sahel Africa does not suggest any easy off-ramps to disengagement once initiated. U.S. involvement has tended to surge with a major exercise such as Balikatan 2002 or Flintlock 2005, then plateau somewhat higher than the pre-exercise level of effort. While these are still small-scale security force assistance efforts that are sustainable for an extended period, the overall trend is increased levels of involvement or, more fundamentally, a persistent U.S. presence that never seems to depart. Secretary Gates and other U.S. officials emphasized the importance of long-term commitment to reassure and support partner governments.[61] Without disputing the importance of that type of commitment, it is worth considering possible implications for perceptions of the United States and partner governments and for the future of the U.S. military force structure in a world where U.S. military engagement, even if indirect in nature, continually spreads to new at-risk countries and does not eventually retract. Policymakers should always be cautious about expansions of American involvement that are

linked to open-ended objectives and underdefined outcomes, lest the small-scale indirect approach spiral into the type of large-scale direct action it is supposed to avoid.

The indirect approach, then, carries both promise and peril. As its prominence in American strategy grows, there is much more work to be done to understand the effects of efforts to build the security and governance capacity of partner states and to ensure that these efforts benefit U.S. national security. **PRISM**

Notes

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DOD (Fred W. Baker III)

Haitian child carries meal distributed by Soldiers as part of humanitarian relief after January 2010 earthquake

The Case for Nation-building

Why and How to Fix Failed States

BY PAUL D. MILLER

Nation-building has a bad reputation. The phrase conjures up images of well-meaning but hapless U.S. Soldiers or United Nations (UN) peacekeepers involved in an expensive, complicated, and ultimately futile effort to fix other people's problems. Worse, nation-building is often seen as both dangerous and peripheral to anyone's vital national security interests. Iraq, Somalia, and Haiti are routinely trotted out as proof that such missions are doomed to debacle. In the post-Iraq era of softer power and tightening budgets, it seems prudent to set aside notions that the United States or UN can or should deploy force to remake countries abroad in the liberal world's image.

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Unfortunately, the need to engage in nation-building is inescapable. State failure incubates serious threats to regional and international order, such as insurgent movements (West and Central Africa), organized crime and drug-trafficking networks (Southeast Europe, Central Asia), piracy (East Africa, Southeast Asia), pandemic disease (AIDS), and ecological disaster—to say nothing of the occasional global terrorist organization. Time and time again, history demonstrates that state failure, when left unaddressed, causes demonstrable harm to neighbors, whole regions, and occasionally the international order itself.

the challenges that the international community faces in the 21st century provide an ideal opportunity for a timely reappraisal of nation-building

Happily, the popular image of nation-building is largely founded on a few famous examples of dramatic failure. A closer look at the history and practice of nation-building illustrates that the international community has learned key lessons and improved its ability to foster stability and democracy in states confronted with violence, illegitimacy, poverty, and institutional breakdown. The challenges that the international community faces in the 21st century provide an ideal opportunity for a timely reappraisal of nation-building, its goals, prospects, and uses. As the international community begins to work with the new state of South Sudan; plans for a post-Qadhafi Libya; continues reconstruction efforts in Haiti; oversees peace-building efforts in Côte d'Ivoire and Lebanon; faces persistent weakness and violence in Afghanistan; and monitors signs of weakness in literally dozens of other states, nation-building should remain an important and viable policy option for the UN and Western powers.

Why Build Nations?

After the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, it quickly became received wisdom that failed states are dangers to the world. In truth, few failed states generate the kind of global menace that al Qaeda was, and some scholars, including Aidan Hehir, Anna Simmons, and David Tucker, have since argued that state failure is not a significant cause of transnational terrorist threats.[1] But even if al Qaeda and Afghanistan were highly unusual, it is nonetheless true that weak and collapsed states pose other dangers to their neighbors, whole regions, and occasionally the world. For example, some 20 million people, including 600,000 Americans, died of the Spanish influenza of 1918–1920, a disease that surely spread faster and lasted longer in part because of Europe's weakness and poverty following World War I. The disease killed more people than the war itself. Today, epidemics such as AIDS or a potential bird flu outbreak could kill millions, cripple poor states' health care systems, and destabilize regions as armies and governments lose human capital. Keeping such diseases in check is as much a governance problem as a scientific and medical one.

Some threats are more direct than disease. The Mafia arose in the lawless regions of Sicily in the late 19th century and became a blight of organized crime and gang warfare in 20th-century Italy and America. The illegal opium trade flourished in the weak and ungoverned "Golden Triangle" border area between Laos, Burma, and Vietnam in the 20th century—until Afghanistan's collapse created an even

more inviting environment for global narcotics traffickers in Central Asia in the 1990s. The collapse of the Soviet Union and rise of nonstate armed groups outside the writ of weak post-communist states led to civil unrest, violence, and regional instability from the Balkans to the Caucasus and Central Asia, killing hundreds of thousands of people in the Balkans, reigniting nationalist chauvinism in Russia, and creating a clutch of frozen conflict zones that serve as havens for criminals and smugglers. West Africa collapsed in the 1990s as Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Côte d'Ivoire exported lawlessness and insurgent movements to each other. Central Africa saw one of the most lethal wars in the continent's history from 1997 to 2003 in part because the Democratic Republic of the Congo was unable to uphold basic law and order or protect its borders. And piracy along the east coast of Africa has increased over the last two decades since Somalia's collapse into anarchy.

These threats collectively take a massive human toll in the states directly affected. States also grow poorer. According to Paul Collier, "During civil war countries tend to grow around 2.2 percentage points more slowly than during peace." Per capita incomes fall and production of food, among other goods, declines. Instability causes capital flight: citizens with means shift up to 10 percent of their private wealth abroad. It also causes the flight of human capital: the most educated and skilled citizens tend to be the ones most able to emigrate, leaving the country bereft of the talent pool that it needs for reconstruction. And, of course, people who live in postconflict failed states are less healthy, less educated, have fewer opportunities, and die younger. For example, infant mortality rises by an average of 13 percent during a civil war, an effect that lingers long after war ends.[2]

But failed states also pass costs on to their neighbors, the region, and even the world. Civil war and state failure typically cause neighboring states to increase spending on defense as a precaution, which can trigger a regional arms race while decreasing resources available for social welfare and investment. War itself is infectious. Instability in one country is an ideal condition for marginalized groups from a neighboring country to take refuge and launch their own insurgencies. Refugees from failed states are a considerable economic cost on neighbors, and even more so if they are carrying infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS, as they often are. State failure disrupts cross-border trade in the region, which can be a major economic burden because most countries' largest trading partners are their immediate neighbors. Citizens of failed states buy fewer goods, produce less for the world economy, create no businesses, and invent no products, but have more opportunities to contribute to crime and political violence that crosses borders.[3]

failed states may eventually present a systemic risk to the liberal world order, of which the United States is the principal architect and beneficiary

Failed states are sinkholes in the world. They contribute nothing good and positively detract value from the region, much as a condemned building used by criminals spreads blight and drags down home values throughout a neighborhood. Moreover, failed states may eventually present a systemic risk to the liberal world order, of which the United States is the principal architect and beneficiary. The threats emanating from failed states are likely to spill

U.S. Air Force (Adrian Cadiz)

over international boundaries more frequently because globalization has reduced states' insularity from each other. The 21st century is likely to see a steady increase in cross-border low-intensity conflict, transnational drug- and human-trafficking, piracy, international refugee flows, pandemic disease, environmental disaster, and terrorism. That is why state failure is a national security problem to be taken seriously in Washington.

Provincial Reconstruction Team Zabul member secures area near bridge construction site

In response to these threats, the international community has few good options. On one end of the spectrum, the Western powers could simply ignore the problems, allow anarchy to consume failed states, and pay ever higher costs to isolate themselves and repair any damage after the fact. But this option is shortsighted, ignores the realities of globalization, and is sure to cost more in the long run than is necessary. On the other end of the spectrum, the international community could resurrect

a trusteeship or mandate system under which regional powers assume responsibility for keeping order in their respective neighborhoods. This option, too, is unrealistic because there is no political will for renewed imperialism, by whatever name, among either the great powers or the developing world.

Between these two extremes lies a moderate solution. The least bad alternative is for the international community to address the root causes of state failure and foster the growth of responsible and accountable governance in the places where it is most sorely lacking—in other words, *nation-building*. The international community embraced this option quickly after the Cold War but abruptly grew gun-shy after poor implementation in a few early missions caused policymakers to doubt its feasibility and relevance. But seen in proper perspective, nation-building is not international charity. It is not a superfluous, dispensable exercise in appeasing Western guilt, an expensive tribute to humanitarianism, or an act of unvarnished selflessness and goodwill. Nation-building is a necessary response to the danger of failed states that threaten regional stability. It is a strategic investment in weak states to increase their capacities. It is an effort to target countries whose weakness threatens international order to improve specific abilities, such as their ability to provide public security, defend their borders, produce and sell goods, and suppress illicit activities (including terrorism and organized crime). It is a pragmatic exercise of hard power to protect vital national interests.

the experience in Somalia has been especially influential in shaping scholars' and policymakers' attitudes toward nation-building

Can It Be Done?

But none of this matters if nation-building is impossible. Sometimes the best policy option on paper turns out to be the worst in reality because it simply cannot be done and efforts to implement it waste time and money while the problem gets worse. Other options, even if suboptimal, are better if they can actually be implemented.

Nation-building is hard. The United Nations famously bungled operations in Liberia, Angola, and Somalia in the 1990s. The second UN Angola Verification Mission oversaw a presidential election in 1992, the unfavorable outcome of which was seized upon by Jonas Savimbi's rebel group to renew its decades-long civil war, suggesting that rapid elections in a postconflict environment can exacerbate tensions. The UN Observer Mission in Liberia drove the country's peace process toward an election in 1997, but failed to disarm factions first. Charles Taylor, the most ruthless and well-armed warlord in Liberia, simply terrified the citizenry into electing him. In Somalia, the UN and United States failed to deploy anything that country needed to impose order over fractious warlords and restart the nonfunctioning government. In all three cases, the states in question ended up worse off after, and because of, outsider meddling.

The experience in Somalia has been especially influential in shaping scholars' and policymakers' attitudes toward nation-building. The Battle of Mogadishu in October 1993, the American public's understandable confusion about why U.S. Soldiers were dying in an East African country with which they were not at war, and the Clinton administration's

abrupt pullout from the country cast a long shadow over future international peace-building deployments. In the 18 years since the failure of the UN operation in Somalia, it is routinely cited as evidence that some states are so far gone that outsiders cannot impose peace and democracy on them. For example, Fareed Zakaria, a Harvard-educated political scientist who writes widely on international affairs, recently wrote, "The trouble with trying to fix failed states is that it implicates the United States in a vast nation building effort in countries where the odds of success are low and the risk of unintended consequences is very high. Consider Somalia. [That operation] highlights the complexity of almost every approach to failed states."[4]

But it does not. We might call this the Somalia Fallacy. Despite its dramatic public impact, the mission in Somalia is not a useful historical analogy to generalize about failed states and nation-building. To make a useful generalization, we should start with a typical failed state, or, better yet, several of them. Somalia is not a typical failed state; it is an extreme outlier. It has been nearly the most completely failed state on Earth for almost two decades. Even more, the UN Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) in the early 1990s was not a typical UN intervention; it was a singularly, uniquely inept one marred by an inadequate mandate, poor resources, unclear command and control, and no political will. The nation-building effort in Somalia (undertaken by UNOSOM II, which deployed separately from and with a broader mandate than the prior U.S.–UN famine relief effort) saw the deployment of the most inept UN mission to the world's most failed state. It is unsurprising that what resulted was a famous catastrophe, but observers should not treat it as a blueprint for how all nation-building interventions are doomed to play out.

Nation-building has proven to be a viable and successful option in the past because most interventions do not have to contend with Somalian levels of anarchy, and the United States and UN have also learned to operate

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with a measure of greater sophistication. The failures have been big, public, and humiliating, but in the last two decades, the United States and UN have racked up better outcomes in Namibia, Mozambique, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala, Bosnia, Croatia, Kosovo, Timor Leste, Liberia (the second time around), and Sierra Leone (which came back from the brink of failure). Few of those countries are fully rebuilt, modern, stable liberal democracies. Civil unrest still occasionally flares up. Most are not particularly nice places to live. But the international interventions *changed their trajectories*. None have reverted to large-scale political violence. Their peace agreements have held. They have all held relatively open and competitive elections. Most have seen positive postwar economic growth. A few have shown improvements in the quality and accountability of their governance, according to the World Bank's governance indicators, probably the hardest task of postconflict reconstruction.[5]

The bottom line is that these countries are better off now than they were at the nadir of their respective wars and failures, and they are generally improving, not backsliding. This is a realistic, achievable, and useful standard of success that policymakers can use to determine

if an intervention is worth the cost and effort. Using a sliding scale also enables us to distinguish between utter failures (for example, resumed war in Angola), middling outcomes (Cambodia, which has settled on an undemocratic peace), shallow successes (Nicaragua, which enjoys peace and political freedom but economic stagnation), and outright victory (Sierra Leone, Germany). That makes a real difference in human lives and is typically good enough to secure whatever regional or global interests led to the intervention in the first place.

nation-building is one of the most complex undertakings a state can attempt

Understanding the Problem

Nation-building is one of the most complex undertakings a state can attempt. There is no secret to success. There is no silver bullet or single variable that explains all cases of success and failure—not the rule of law, availability of health care, amount of paved roads, timing of elections, gross domestic product growth rate, and not even the security environment. The UN Mission in Haiti in 1994, for example, ultimately failed to restore political stability not because of violence, insurgency, or civil war, but because of endemic political gridlock and institutional weakness that the UN failed to address.

Successful nation-building requires close attention and responsiveness to local conditions. This will require a reorientation in how we think about state failure. Scholars and policymakers tended in the past to view state failure as an easily defined condition. *State failure*, in this view, is a singular, monolithic phenomenon; states all fail the same way, but to varying degrees. Thus, organizations such as the Fund for Peace measure a range of variables associated with state failure, including demographics, refugee populations, economic decline, security incidents, and so forth, aggregate them into a single score of failure, and rank all countries in the world, most failed to least, in their Failed State Index.[6] In 2011, Somalia topped the Fund for Peace's list, followed by Chad, Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Zimbabwe, and Afghanistan.

The Failed State Index illustrates the problems with this approach to state failure. Somalia and Sudan present polar opposite problems. Somalia's failure is one of too little government; it is literally anarchic. Sudan's failure is one of too much government of the wrong kind; it is tyrannical and genocidal. Afghanistan, meanwhile, is waging a counterinsurgency, while Zimbabwe is collapsing from incompetent kleptocracy. Putting these diverse states together on a single list of "failure" does little to illuminate the vast differences between them or suggest ways of resolving their problems. Instead, it encourages a cookie-cutter approach to nation-building that overlooks the different problems each state faces, and therefore the different solutions required.

It is clear by now that different states fail in different ways. To clarify the different types of state failure, it is helpful to think of statehood as comprising five complementary aspects: security, legitimacy, capacity, prosperity, and humanity. To put it somewhat abstractly, states must be able to exercise coercion; articulate a theory of justice to legitimize their coercion; operate institutions to provide other goods and services; exchange and use goods and services; and orient their activities toward human flourishing. They are mediators

of violence, justice, the social contract, economic exchange, and human community.

State failure can be understood under the same headings. States can fail in any of these five aspects of statehood, suggesting a typology of five types of failed state: anarchic, illegitimate, incompetent, unproductive, and barbaric. Anarchic states lack security as, for example, Iraq did in 2006. Illegitimate states cannot command the loyalty or consent of the population because of some perceived injustice—perhaps including Tunisia and Egypt in early 2011. Incompetent states lack functioning institutions and simply cannot deliver goods and services, such as Haiti. Unproductive states are not simply poor; they have malformed economies because of war, looting, smuggling, and black markets, such as West Africa in the 1990s. Barbaric states murder their own citizens on a large scale, such as Sudan.

These different types of failure imply different strategies of state-building. What Iraq needed in 2006 was different from what Haiti needs today. The international community must be able to study the situation on the ground, understand the type and degree of state failure, and tailor a nation-building strategy accordingly. Such a strategy, according to Georgetown University Professor Lise Howard's study *UN Peacekeeping in Civil Wars*, requires a culture of institutional learning, a bottom-up approach in which missions in the field design themselves as much as headquarters in New York or Washington design them, and more rapid decisionmaking.[7]

Such a strategy was on display in Sierra Leone in 2000. The United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) initially started out with all the weaknesses that brought down the missions in Liberia, Angola, and Somalia, including insufficient resources, a weak mandate, and political naïveté. After insurgents from the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) took several hundred UN peacekeepers hostage, the United Kingdom intervened, transformed the mission from peacekeeping to peace enforcement, dealt the RUF several serious military defeats, and followed up by deploying a long-lasting and robust training mission for the Sierra Leonean security forces. The UN expanded UNAMSIL's size and handed it a more aggressive mandate and the mission was ultimately a success.

The lesson is not that the international community always needs to take sides against an insurgency, or prefer peace enforcement over peacekeeping. That strategy would be inapplicable and irrelevant for the post-earthquake mission in Haiti, for example. The lesson is that the UN and United Kingdom executed a surprising midcourse correction to account for the realities on the ground instead of sticking to a rigid template.

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Institutionalizing Success

There are encouraging signs that the international community has recognized the need to address state failure and take nation-building seriously. But because of the popular suspicion of the concept labeled *nation-building*, policymakers and bureaucrats call it by different names. The Department of State established an Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS) in 2004 and pledged to begin developing

a deployable and expeditionary civilian response corps for contingency operations. The next year, the Department of Defense issued Directive 3000.05, making "stability operations" a core military mission. The White House issued National Security Presidential Directive 44 the same year, updating the Clinton administration's guidance (Presidential Decision Directive 56) on interagency efforts in reconstruction and stabilization missions. In 2006, the U.S. Army issued Field Manuel 3–24, *Counterinsurgency*, the primary objective of which is to "foster the development of effective governance by a legitimate government"—that is, nation-building in wartime.

The United Nations has done its own soul searching, with its own lingo. The Brahimi Report on UN Peace Operations in 2000—written during the crucible of the Sierra Leone mission—concluded that the complex peace operations of the post–Cold War era needed more realistic mandates, better resources, closer integration with UN political operations, and new headquarters capacity.[8] The General Assembly formed the UN Peacebuilding Commission in 2005 to improve international coordination on, and heighten attention to, postconflict peacebuilding efforts. The United Nations designed integrated missions, in which civilians from all of its agencies and departments serve alongside UN peacekeepers—equivalent to U.S. whole-of-government and counterinsurgency deployments. In 2008, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations published a new "Capstone Doctrine" for peace operations.[9]

Germany and Japan stand as irrefutable proof that nation-building can be successful and contribute to vital national security interests

Despite the various labels, these efforts from the United States and UN all refer to roughly the same thing: powerful liberal states deploying financial and (often) military resources to compel weak states to govern more effectively and accountably. These moves collectively give cause to hope that the international community is slowly improving its ability to rebuild failed states after two decades of frustrating efforts with mixed results.

Conclusion: Learning from History

It took the risk of failure in Iraq and Afghanistan to overcome the legacy of Somalia and prompt the United States to take reconstruction and stabilization seriously again. Now distaste for the decade-long efforts in those countries threatens to tar nation-building at the same time that budget constraints are putting new pressure on the government to cut programs that are unpopular or perceived to be needless or futile. But the United States and UN should beware that they do not continue to overreact to the recent past.

In particular, it bears remembering that nation-building was a vital and successful tool of U.S. policy long before the end of the Cold War. Most famously, the United States rebuilt Germany and Japan after World War II. Critics skeptical of nation-building often dismiss these examples as the exceptions that prove the rule. However, to paraphrase Sherlock Holmes, exceptions do not prove rules; they *disprove* them. Germany and Japan stand as irrefutable proof that nation-building can be successful and contribute to vital national security interests. Japan is an especially provocative example. The United States built a democracy in a non-Western

society where there was no heritage of it, fostered prosperity where there was complete devastation, and effected a fundamental shift in the Japanese people's understanding of their relationship to government and the role of armed force.

The nation-building missions in Germany and Japan, and the concomitant Marshall Plan (nation-building on a continental scale), clearly served vital national security goals: enhancing the capacity of key allies was part of the U.S. Cold War strategy and bolstered its strategic position vis-à-vis the Soviet Union. The German and Japanese economic miracles and German rearmament were vital parts of the U.S.-led alliance system that contained the Soviet Union and ultimately led to the defeat of communist totalitarianism. Nation-building was not a luxury indulged in by the victor enamored of its own power and virtue; it was a strategic necessity.

Finally, the postwar efforts illustrate that nation-building can be comparatively cheap. The Marshall Plan cost some $120 billion (in today's dollars), and the military occupations untold billions more. That is a massive sum, but it was spread out over a decade and was smaller than the costs of the other options. American and British policymakers gave serious consideration to the Morgenthau Plan, under which the Allies would have de-industrialized Germany and kept it poor and weak: nation-destroying rather than nation-building. If the Allies had adopted the plan, they would have had to foot the entire bill for Germany's food and defense needs and robbed themselves of trillions of dollars of trade and investment from the future German economy. It would have required the United States to minimize its postwar military demobilization and keep much of its World War II Army in the field, a hugely expensive proposition. Alternately, to avoid these costs, the United States could have abdicated responsibility for Germany and Japan altogether, effectively adopting its post–World War I strategy of isolationism and ceding power and influence to the Soviet Union. That option had its own costs: it was rightly considered an unacceptable risk to U.S. security. Nation-building, though costly, was cheaper than either the Morgenthau Plan or isolationism. In short, nation-building after World War II was a relatively cheap way to contain the Soviet Union, demobilize the unsustainably large wartime Army, and avoid garrisoning Europe for generations.

There are undoubtedly many unique aspects to the missions in Germany and Japan, and they offer no easy template to be uncritically reused today. But they put beyond doubt the question of whether nation-building can be possible, useful, or cost-effective—it emphatically can be all three. The question is how and when to undertake nation-building to best effect.

The United States and the liberal world order do not face a monolithic threat like the Soviet Union, and so far they lack a grand strategy such as containment into which nation-building would fit neatly. But they do face the challenge of growing anarchy and state failure in much of the world, which is as much a threat to security and liberty for the average person in day-to-day life as communism was. Policymakers who expressed concern for Haitians after the earthquake, Darfuris trapped in war, South Sudanese seeking to build a new country, the global ocean-going trade menaced by piracy, or Afghans seeking security should not neglect the tools at their disposal to manage these problems. Policymakers may choose not to intervene in some of these crises; but if they want to retain the option to intervene at all, they need to keep

the tools and budgets to do so in place. As U.S. policymakers review budget and force structure in coming years, they should recognize that nation-building is a pragmatic option that can meet the needs of the hour, and it can do so successfully and cost-effectively. **PRISM**

Notes

[1] Anna Simons and David Tucker, "The Misleading Problem of Failed States: a 'socio-geography' of terrorism in the post 9/11 era," *Third World Quarterly* 28, no. 2 (2007), 387–401; Aidan Hehir, "The Myth of the Failed State and the War on Terror: A Challenge to the Conventional Wisdom," *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 1, no. 3 (2007), 307–332.

[2] See Paul Collier et al., *Breaking the Conflict Trap: Civil War and Development Policy* (Washington, DC: The World Bank and Oxford University Press), chapter 1, available at <http://homepage.mac.com/stazon/apartheid/files/BreakingConflict.pdf>.

[3] Ibid., chapter 2.

[4] Fareed Zakaria, "The Failed-state Conundrum," *The Washington Post*, July 19, 2010, available at <www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/07/18/AR2010071802734.html>.

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[6] The Fund for Peace, Failed State Index 2011, available at <www.fundforpeace.org/global/?q=fsi>.

[7] Lise Howard, *UN Peacekeeping in Civil Wars* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

[8] United Nations General Assembly Security Council, *Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations*, A/55/305-S/2000/809, August 21, 2000, available at <www.un.org/peace/reports/peace_operations/docs/a_55_305.pdf>.

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No Marshall Plan for the Middle East

BY AMITAI ETZIONI

At first blush, the idea that the United States, working with other nations, should initiate, guide, and finance economic development and introduce democratic regimes to the nations of the Middle East—just as it did in post–World War II Germany and Japan—is appealing. From a humanitarian viewpoint, one cannot help but be moved by the idealism of helping millions of people who are currently unemployed and poor—including many children and young people, and others who live under oppressive regimes—to gain the kind of life Americans cherish. From a realpolitik viewpoint, military means will not suffice when it comes to ending the terrorism that threatens the United States and its allies, or halting the insurgencies that destabilize the Middle East.

General James Jones, who served as National Security Advisor to President Barack Obama, summarized the viewpoint held by many other military leaders. He stated that there are three things needed to attain peace: "One is the security pillar, and you've got to have that. But accompanying that, you have to have an economic package that gives people who don't have any hope, hope for a better future. That's the answer to the terrorist threat, really. . . . And the third one is governance and rule of law, and I include corruption and all of those other things."[1] Secretary of Defense Robert Gates agreed. He held that "economic development, institution-building and the rule of law, promoting internal reconciliation, good governance, providing basic services to the people, training and equipping indigenous military and police forces, strategic communications, and more—these, along with security, are essential ingredients for long-term success."[2]

Moreover, the defeated nations were treated differently after the World Wars. Following World War I, the nations that lost were given a raw deal, which is widely believed to be one reason that Fascism rose and in turn led to World War II. After the Second World War, the defeated nations were treated, as General Jones put it, "generously"; they were helped to rebuild their economies and reform their polities. They have since become stable, peaceful nations and allies of the United States.

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One would have to have ice water in his veins, have a heart of stone, and be politically unwise not to wish the same for the Middle East. Indeed, several major public voices have called for such a Marshall Plan for the region. General Jones explained, "We learned that lesson after World War II—you know we rebuilt Europe, we rebuilt Japan. That was an example of an enlightened view of things. The Marshall Plan, I am told, wasn't very popular in this country, but we went ahead and did it."[3] Secretary of State Hillary Clinton believes that "as the Arab Spring unfolds across the Middle East and North Africa, some principles of the [Marshall] plan apply again, especially in Egypt and Tunisia. As [Secretary of State George] Marshall did in 1947, we must understand that the roots of the revolution and the problems that it sought to address are not just political but profoundly economic as well."[4] Moreover, two professors at Columbia Business School, Glenn Hubbard (Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisors under George W. Bush) and Bill Duggan, argued that a Middle East Marshall Plan would "limit the spread of Islamic extremism" in the region.[5] Senator John Kerry argued that "we are again in desperate need of a Marshall Plan for the Middle East."[6] Senator John McCain also expressed support for such a plan.[7]

there is no way to bring anything remotely resembling the Marshall Plan to the Middle East

A Bridge Too Far

Regrettably, there is no way to bring anything remotely resembling the Marshall Plan to the Middle East, and trying to launch one is likely to have some undesirable side effects. Before the reasons for this dire thesis are discussed, one should note that even though it is not possible for the West to transform the economies and polities of the Middle East, or help it to transform itself in desired ways in the foreseeable future, this does not mean that terrorism and insurgency can be dealt with only by military means. Rather, it means that the nonmilitary means will have to be rather different from those that were used at the end of World War II.

Different Sociologies. Many conditions that contributed to the success of the Marshall Plan (which was applied to Germany, Italy, and other select European nations) and a similar approach to post–World War II Japan are missing in the Middle East. Arguably, the most important difference concerns *security*. The nations reconstructed after World War II had surrendered after defeat and fully submitted to the occupation, had been neutral during the war, or were on the U.S. side and were at peace at home to begin with (such as the United Kingdom, France, and Turkey). That is, development occurred only after hostilities completely ceased and a high level of domestic security was established. There were no terrorists, insurgencies, car bombs, or rocket attacks. Therefore, the forces that took over the management of these nations could fully focus their resources on rebuilding. Security needs were minimal compared to those in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Indeed, given the experience in Iraq and Afghanistan, few, if any, even consider the proposition that the West will occupy more lands in the Middle East and manage their transformation. Secretary Gates made this clear when he testified that "there will be no American boots on the ground in Libya. Deposing the Qadhafi

U.S. Air Force (Kevin Wallace)

Medical supplies are airdropped for retrieval by personnel near Forward Operating Base Todd, Afghanistan

regime, as welcome as that eventuality would be, is not part of the military mission."[8] Gates reaffirmed that the United States "will provide the capabilities that others cannot provide either in kind or in scale," but "the removal of Colonel Qadhafi will likely be achieved over time through political and economic measures and by his own people."[9] In other words, while the German and Japanese reconstructions were mostly hands-on projects, those now considered amount to long-distance social engineering with the West providing funds and advice, but with the execution largely done by locals. That is, no boots on the ground—and no managers.

While transforming regimes in the Middle East are quite eager to receive financial aid and economic resources from the West, they oppose the strings attached to these funds. For instance, the Pakistani government, and especially the powerful and influential military, greatly resented the conditions for building the civil society that are part of the 2009 Kerry-Lugar Bill, which provides $7.5 billion in aid over 5 years.[10] This resistance is one major reason why the funds have not been largely dispersed. In post-Mubarak Egypt, the government complained about Western interference when the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) "published ads in Egyptian newspapers asking for grant proposals on a $100 million program to support 'job creation, economic development and poverty alleviation' and a $65 million program for 'democratic development,' including elections, civic activism and human rights."[11] The Egyptian newspaper *al Akhbar* argued that USAID "dealt with Egypt as a humiliated country."[12] Fayza Aboul Naga, the minister for planning and international cooperation, stated, "I am not sure at this stage we still need somebody to tell us what is or is not good for us—or worse, to force it on us."[13] U.S. assistance in Egypt is often seen as an infringement

on sovereignty as expressed by Hafiz Salama, an influential Muslim cleric, when he stated, "We tell America and its allies lurking in Egypt: end your evil interference in Egypt's internal affairs, interference that we condemn as a conspiracy against the future of Egypt."[14] Others argue that Western models of development are not appropriate for their countries and that they should follow the Chinese or some other model.

cultures can change, but only slowly, and the changes involved cannot be rushed by outsiders

Furthermore, Germany and Japan were *strong nation-states* before World War II in the sense that citizens heavily identified with the nation and showed their willingness to make major sacrifices for the "fatherland." They continued to act so during the reconstruction period. The first loyalty of many citizens of Middle Eastern nations, which are tribal societies cobbled together by Western countries, is to their ethnic or confessional group. They tend to look at the nation as a source of spoils for their tribe and fight for their share rather than make sacrifices for the national whole. Deep ethnic and confessional hostilities, such as those between the Shia and Sunnis, the Pashtun and Tajik, the Hazara and Kochi, and various tribes in other nations, either gridlock the national polities (for example, Iraq and Afghanistan), lead to large-scale violence (Yemen, Bahrain, and Sudan), result in massive oppression and armed conflict (Libya and Syria), or hinder economic development.

Cultural Differences. Max Weber established the importance of culture (in the sense of shared normative values) when he demonstrated that Protestants were more imbued than Catholics with the values that lead to hard work and high levels of saving, both essential for the rise of modern capitalist economies. For decades, development in Catholic countries (such as those in southern Europe and Latin America) lagged behind the Protestant Anglo-Saxon nations and those in northwest Europe. Similar differences have been recorded between Quebec and other provinces of Canada. These differences declined only after Catholics became more like Protestants.[15]

Weber also pointed to the difference between Confucian and Muslim values,[16] thus, in effect, predicting the striking difference between the high rates of development of the South Asian "tigers"—China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, and South Korea—and the low rates of Muslim states, especially those that adhere more strictly to sharia than others. The thesis is *not* that Muslim states cannot develop because of innate characteristics of the people, but because these cultures stress other values, especially traditional religious values and communal and tribal bonds. These cultures can change, but, as the record shows, only slowly, and the changes involved cannot be rushed by outsiders.

Preconditions. One also must take into account that Germany and Japan were developed nations before World War II with strong industrial bases, infrastructure, educated populations, and support for science and technology, corporations, business, and commerce. Hence, they had mainly to be reconstructed. In contrast, a large number of Middle Eastern states that lack many if not all of these assets, institutions, and traditions cannot be reconstructed because they were not constructed in the first place. This is most obvious in Afghanistan,

Yemen, Sudan, and Libya. It is also a major issue in nations that have drawn on one commodity—oil—to keep their economies going, but have not developed the bases for modern economies, especially Saudi Arabia and Bahrain. Other nations, such as Tunisia, Pakistan, Morocco, Syria, and Egypt, have better prepared populations and resources but still score poorly on all of these grounds compared to Germany and Japan.

Given that Western powers are unlikely to occupy and manage transformation in the Middle East, the help they can give basically amounts to some type of foreign aid—that is, working with the existing institutions while trying to encourage reform.

Germany and Japan had competent government personnel and relatively low levels of corruption. In many nations in the Middle East, corruption is endemic, pervasive, and difficult to scale back to tolerable levels. A 2008 study by the *Economist*, for instance, found that a few of the main reasons that Afghanistan's development is proceeding so poorly are widespread corruption, cronyism and tribalism, lack of accountability, and gross mismanagement.[17] In 2010, it was discovered that more than $3 billion in cash had been flown out of Kabul over the course of 3 years. The amount is particularly startling because Afghanistan's gross domestic product was only $13.5 billion in 2009, and more declared cash flies out of Kabul each year than the government collects in tax and customs revenue nationwide. The large sum is believed to have mostly come from stolen foreign assistance.[18] Thus, one must take into account that a significant proportion of whatever resources are made available to Middle Eastern nations could be siphoned off to private overseas bank accounts or allocated on irrelevant bases to cronies and supporters, and that a good part of the funds could be wasted and unaccounted for.[19] Steve Knack of the World Bank showed that "huge aid revenues may even spur further bureaucratization and worsen corruption."[20] Others found that mismanagement, sheer incompetence, and weak government were almost as debilitating.

One way to highlight this point is to examine the corruption perception ranking Transparency International has issued annually since 1995.[21] Transparency International stresses that because of the ways the rankings are constructed, they cannot be used for quantitative social science analysis. However, given that these rankings parallel information from other sources, they do provide a preliminary way of assessing changes. Thus, most of the nations that had the lowest rankings in 1995 continue to rank low some 15 years later—for instance, New Zealand and Denmark have ranked among the four least corrupt countries in all these years. Likewise, many countries that ranked high maintain their troubled status, such as Nigeria and Venezuela. Indeed, few countries have improved their scores more than a few points in the half-generation that has passed since the rankings began.

Not all waste and corruption is local. Large portions of the aid budgeted for Afghanistan (and others) are handed over to nongovernmental organizations subject to little accountability. Or worse, this aid is spent on Western contractors and corporations for high-fee consultants. (American law requires that 100 percent of food for American foreign aid be purchased from American farmers, and that U.S. freight carriers ship 75 percent of it.)[22]

Champions of reconstruction ignore the bitter lessons of foreign aid in general. An extensive 2006 report on the scores of billions

UN (David Ohana)

Libyan refugees line up for food at transit camp near Libya-Tunisia border

of dollars the World Bank invested since the mid-1990s in economic development shows that despite the bank's best efforts, the "achievement of sustained increases in per capita income, essential for poverty reduction, continues to elude a considerable number of countries."[23] Out of 25 recipient countries covered by the report, more than half (14) had the same or worsening rates of per capita income from the mid-1990s to the early 2000s.[24] Moreover, the nations that received most of the aid (especially in Africa) developed least, while the nations that received little aid grew fast (especially China, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan). Other nations found foreign aid a "poisoned gift" because it promoted dependency on foreigners, undermined indigenous endeavors, and disproportionately benefited those gifted at proposal writing and courting foundation and foreign aid representatives rather than local entrepreneurs and businessmen.[25]

the United States currently spends less than 1 percent of its budget on foreign aid, and not all of it is dedicated to economic development

The Marshall Plan entailed much larger outlays than have been dedicated in recent decades to foreign aid that seeks to help economic development (not to be conflated with military aid). In 1948, the first year of the Marshall Plan, aid to the 16 European countries involved totaled 13 percent of the U.S. budget.[26] In comparison, the United States currently spends less than 1 percent of its budget on foreign aid, and not all of it is dedicated to economic development.[27] Some of these appropriations are so small that they seem to indicate that the West is supportive rather than trying to make a serious difference. However, as long as these appropriations are framed and perceived as transforming, they will not generate the public relations—now often called public diplomacy—that advocates hope for.

Moreover, the United States and its allies are entering a protracted period of budget retrenchments in which many domestic programs will be scaled back—including aid for the unemployed and poor, and for education and health care—as well as military outlays. It is a context in which the kinds of funds a Marshall Plan would require are unlikely to be available. Amounts recently dedicated to help the new regimes in Egypt and Tunisia are telling: the United States has pledged a mere $1 billion in debt relief and $1 billion in loan guarantees for Egypt, and the Group of 8 pledged a total of $20 billion in aid for both Egypt and Tunisia. However, a timeframe for delivering these funds was not set "and the Group of 8 countries have in the past made commitments that they did not ultimately fulfill."[28] If the aid package is delivered, it is unclear how big an effect it will have on an Egyptian economy losing $1 billion each month in the tourism sector (a 40 percent loss).[29]

Suggestions have been made that the West could provide only part of a massive aid package and that rich Middle Eastern nations, especially Saudi Arabia, could provide large-scale funds. Indeed, oil-producing nations may contribute to the costs involved. However, these nations are basically opposed to the new regimes, which threaten their own; moreover, they face economic and social challenges of their own, which result in lower revenues and increased outlays at home. Multilateral help is richer than a unilateral approach; however, it is unlikely to suffice.

What Can Be Done?

Scale Ambitions and Rhetoric to Reality. The repeated suggestions that the West ought to launch a Marshall Plan for the Middle East—which is widely understood to mean that the West could turn the nations involved into stable democratic regimes and Western-style economies "just as we did in Germany and Japan," and in relatively short order—have backfired. These promises raise expectations that cannot be met and lead to disappointment in the new regimes and in the West. In 2011, only months after the autocrats in Tunisia and Egypt were forced to quit, millions were already disappointed because they still did not have jobs. As already indicated, the precept that the West will provide what the transformation requires delays the point at which local populations realize that they will have to make major efforts, including changing their work, consumption, and governing habits. Instead, the West should stress that most of the transformation will have to be done by the people who seek it and who will benefit from it, and that they will have to find ways to proceed that are suitable to their conditions. The West should be ready to help, if asked, but this help should be by necessity and limited, and conditioned on locals taking the lead and carrying most of the load.

Focus Should Be on Security and Not Regime Change. Western interventions to stop genocides, discourage nations from invading others, and peacekeeping operations—while far from universally successful—have achieved their goals much more often than attempts to usher in new political and economic regimes. These achievements have been made with much lower levels of Western and local loss of human life and economic outlays. To see the point, compare the Western intervention in Kosovo, the 1991 pushback of Saddam's forces in Kuwait, the 1989 intervention in Panama to oust military dictator General Manuel Noriega to Vietnam, the occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq, and the 2011 intervention in Libya.

Local authorities are best advised to focus on restoring basic security. The reverse argument, that development is essential for security and hence must precede it, is erroneous because without basic security, development cannot take place. If oil pipelines laid during the day are blown up at night, oil will not flow far. If electricity stations are constructed at great costs but not secured, they are merely another place where resources are wasted. If professionals fear terrorists, they will leave the country to work elsewhere, and so on.[30]

Increase Trade, Decrease Aid. Dissatisfaction with the lack of progress made by foreign aid has led several leading economists and world leaders to conclude that aid may not be the most effective tool for promoting development. Proponents of "trade over aid" point to the drawbacks of aid (corruption and mismanagement) and argue that aid can create a culture of dependency in recipient countries. Rwanda's president, Paul Kagame, argues, "As long as poor nations are focused on receiving aid they will not work to improve their economies."[31] Critics often compare the effect of aid on developing nations' economies to the "resource curse" experienced by countries that discover oil or mineral wealth. The influx of funds eliminates the need for governments to be accountable to either private lenders or voters.[32] Analysts also point out that the infusion of cash can have a negative impact on a country's exchange rate and can actually "inflict an economic loss even when there is no counterpart reverse transfer of resources."[33] According to Ugandan president Yoweri Museveni, "Aid is a recipe for permanent poverty."[34]

The alternative to problematic foreign aid is trade, in the form of reducing barriers and tariffs as well as eliminating agricultural subsidies in wealthy countries and encouraging local entrepreneurs. Trade proponents argue that "developing economies are shackled by an array of internally imposed trade barriers, tariffs and regulations that hamper business."[35] Dambisa Moyo, the author of *Dead Aid*, an influential book on the subject, argues that removing these impediments and increasing trade will improve governance in developing nations; governments that wish to borrow money must demonstrate prudence and accountability.[36] Timothy Cox and Alec van Gelder of the International Policy Network, a nonprofit think tank, cite the economic growth of business-friendly Asian nations such as Singapore and China as evidence that "trade is the surest known route out of poverty." And President Kagame credits Rwanda's improved trade with an 11 percent increase in growth in 2008 (in the face of the global recession).[37] Evidence indicates that trade improvements would have much greater public support in the West than increases in aid. A 2004 survey in France, Germany, Great Britain, and the United States found that 64 percent of all respondents (and a majority in all countries) believe that trade was better for developing countries than aid.[38]

a 2004 survey found that 64 percent of all respondents believe that trade was better for developing countries than aid

Focus Aid. Whatever foreign aid can be granted is best delivered directly to those involved in the projects to be aided rather than channeled through the government. Projects that have a high multiplier effect are to be preferred over those that have a low multiplier effect, those that are labor-intensive and not capital-intensive over those that have the opposite profile, and those that use little energy or renewable energy over those that have the opposite profile. In each area, strong preference should be accorded to the completion of a small number of projects over starting a large number. (This is the opposite of the way development has been approached in Afghanistan and Iraq.) As a rule, old elements should be left in place and fixed or reformed gradually rather than replaced. This holds true for equipment and for institutions and their staffs. For instance, tribal chiefs (in Afghanistan) and members of the governing party in public service (the Ba'ath in Iraq) should have been allowed to continue their leadership roles as the United States did at the end of World War II by leaving the emperor in place in Japan.

Advocate That Humanitarian Aid Is Justified. Large-scale foreign aid, the kind of amounts that a new Marshall Plan would entail for the Middle East, cannot be provided given the austere regimes in the West. However, if there are massive numbers of refugees (on a larger scale than those who escaped Libya to Tunisia or Syria to Turkey in 2011) or other forms of massive human suffering as a result of the regime transformations, one can make a case on moral grounds that the West should grant the kind of aid it provided after the 2010 earthquake in Haiti and 2004 tsunami in Southeast Asia. However, one should realize that such funds aim to alleviate immediate suffering; the reconstruction that follows will have to be carried out largely by the local population. **PRISM**

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U.S. Air Force (Jeremy T. Lock)

Soldier examines patient during medical civil action project in Djibouti

Sub-Saharan African Military and Development Activities

BY BIRAME DIOP

For the last two decades, African states have been facing more internal threats than external ones. In fact, the African continent is now dealing with ethnic-based conflicts, poverty, health issues, hunger, and, most recently, radicalization and violent extremism.

In summary, security challenges throughout Africa have evolved in nature and are a lot more complex. In the health domain, for example, Africa has been decimated by multiple epidemics and pandemics, notably tuberculosis, malaria, and HIV/AIDS. For HIV/AIDS, sub-Saharan Africa

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alone is home to more than 22.5 million people infected with the disease, which is two-thirds of the total for the entire planet. Not only is the rate of infection high, but the quality of treatment has been woefully low. In 2009, 1.3 million Africans died from AIDS, while another 1.8 million became infected. Even though the rate of infection has been steadily declining in recent years, the situation remains dire, and its impact is felt throughout all sectors of African life, from education and agriculture to the general economic well-being of the African states.

Well publicized as the AIDS pandemic has been, it is not, of course, the only health threat facing the continent. High patient-to-doctor ratios, poor facilities, and lack of access to medicine are some of the most significant health concerns, even though new problems are arising here and there.

Perhaps the most troubling health threat is the prevalence of counterfeit drug distribution. Throughout West Africa, recent estimates indicate that as much as 40 percent of the prescription medicine for sale is counterfeit.

people are abducted, often from vulnerable places of war or other hardship, and forced into labor or sexual enslavement

Food security is also a major challenge. Shortages are commonplace in many areas, and malnutrition runs rampant. Currently, East Africa is suffering from a drought that is arguably the worst in 60 years. The United Nations (UN) estimates that 10 to 12 million people are affected and could lose their lives if swift and bold actions are not taken.

The continent is also facing a range of cross-border criminality issues. Drugs, arms, and human trafficking are increasingly significant problems. West Africa in particular has become a hub in international drug smuggling. In 2008, the UN released a report explaining how every country in the region is being affected by a highly lucrative cocaine industry. Recent estimates suggest that $2 billion worth of cocaine is being trafficked from South America to Europe through West Africa every year. This is a startling figure when compared with the gross domestic product (GDP) of countries within the region. Guinea-Bissau, one of the countries most deeply affected by drug trafficking, has a GDP of just $304 million.[1] The UN notes that the problem is so severe that it poses the number one risk to reconstruction in countries such as Sierra Leone because of the corruption invited by such a lucrative trade.[2]

Sierra Leone has also become a central player in a growing arms trade on the continent, along with the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, Somalia, Sudan, and others. Estimates place the value of the arms trade in Africa at $1 billion annually and include everything from handguns and assault rifles to rocket-propelled grenades and even antitank and anti-air missiles. In some countries, AK–47 automatic assault rifles are available for only $6. This trade fuels conflict in many places throughout the continent and has contributed to violence on a dramatic scale. In South Africa, for example, small arms have become the leading cause of unnatural deaths in the country.[3] An additional facet of this problem is the increasing rate of arms trafficking that originates on the continent. Some have argued that Eastern European arms such as the AK–47 no longer constitute the bulk of trafficking. They point instead to a growing arms production industry on the continent in countries such as Egypt, Nigeria, and South Africa.[4]

Unfortunately, cross-border trafficking in Africa has not been limited to commodities such as drugs, fake medicines, and weapons, but increasingly involves the smuggling and enslavement of human beings. These people are abducted, often from vulnerable places of war or other hardship, and forced into labor or sexual enslavement.[5] While at least 130,000 people in sub-Saharan Africa alone have been captured and exploited in this manner, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime argues that few countries on the continent have begun to adopt measures to address the problem.[6]

The increase in various forms of trafficking in Africa points to a larger and more endemic problem. Organized crime in general, and terrorism in particular, has become a serious matter. The Mombasa region of Kenya and neighboring Somalia have long struggled with connections to Middle East terrorist organizations such as al Qaeda. However, this problem has now spread to other regions of the continent. Nigeria, for instance, has seen a recent increase in attacks from the radical group Boko Haram, which has devastated the security in much of the country. The radical group has also claimed responsibility for the attack on a UN office in Abuja that killed more than 20 people in August 2011. Mauritania, Mali, Niger, and Chad are also facing terrorist activities with the presence of al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb.

This list of new challenges facing the continent is unfortunately far from exhaustive. Africa is facing several other security concerns such as high rates of infant mortality, urban violence related to youth unemployment and overpopulation, desert advancement, political divergences, and corruption.

African states need to find ways to confront these serious threats directly and more efficiently, but also to mobilize resources, including militaries, to fight underdevelopment. Failing to do so could worsen the security situation of the continent for the next several years or even decades due to the fact that the majority of African states, as well as their public and private sectors, have not been able to create the conditions for sustainable development.

State, Public, and Private Sectors Cannot Solve the Problems Independently

The lives of millions of Africans are being threatened daily by security challenges. Unfortunately, African states and the sectors that have typically been charged with addressing these challenges are not working together. Whether due to operational failures or resource limitations, these parties have simply not been able to solve the challenges independently, and the gap between the needs and what the states and sectors are able to provide is too wide for the situation to greatly improve in the near future.

After more than 50 years of independence, many African states are still relatively weak. In fact, the majority are largely dependent on foreign aid, with a large percentage of their budgets emanating from the international community. African states are indeed struggling with limited resources while their challenges are exponentially increasing. The World Bank's most recent publication of *Africa Development Indicators* highlighted the increasingly abstract nature of issues facing the continent. Using the phrase *quiet corruption*, the World Bank explored a range of issues facing African development that are less overt than well-publicized incidences of so-called big-time corruption; nonetheless, all of these issues are severely undermining the continent's development potential.

The World Bank defines this *quiet corruption* as occurring "when public servants fail to deliver services or inputs that have been paid for by the government." The bank highlights a number of examples from a wide range of areas within the public sector. The *Africa Development Indicators* report explains that in several African countries, between 15 and 25 percent of salaried school teachers are not showing up for work. This also holds true for doctor absenteeism from primary care facilities. The bank further notes that a high percentage of the fertilizer available to farms is diluted of the nutrients that it is intended to supply. This can have severe consequences on a region that already faces perennial food shortages.

all sectors of African society need to work collaboratively to begin solving these problems

In addition to these shortcomings of states and their administrations, the African private sector is simply too stunted to fill the gap needed to provide the services and employment. Though lack of education continues to be a major problem, students who are able to complete a high school education or achieve higher degrees are often unable to find employment. The continent is thus stuck in a serious catch-22. The private sector, for example, needs more educated people so it can grow and develop, but cannot provide these people with jobs until after it gains strength. Unfortunately, it is not gaining strength in many African countries due to lack of state assistance as well as insufficient and decreasing foreign direct investment (FDI). In fact, FDI in Africa represents no more than 10 percent of the entire FDI in underdeveloped countries and decreased by 9 percent in 2010.

This conundrum highlights the nature of many of the problems now facing Africa. The problems and solutions are often too intricately connected for the situation to improve without outside assistance. Furthermore, many of these challenges have a compounding effect: they worsen over time as they go unaddressed. Thus, rather than improving, the situation is likely to worsen and place more strain on the sectors that are already unable to keep up. There exists a gap between the needs of the population and the resources that states and public and private sectors are able to provide.

The most important response to this situation is to improve states' capacities and invest in the public and private sectors in order to build capacity to fulfill societal roles in the future. In the meantime, however, filling the gap that currently exists requires a response that uses all available resources. All sectors of African society need to work collaboratively to begin solving these problems; it is simply not responsible to allow any available resources to go unused while people are suffering.

During times of peace, African militaries have a great many resources available to them that can be used to help address many of the challenges already outlined. Among other things, they have planes for delivering the food, medicine, and doctors needed to fight health problems, as well as manpower and expertise to assist in building infrastructure. When available, these resources must be used to contribute to the positive development of the continent and to save lives. In certain countries such as South Sudan and Zimbabwe, the situation in the public and private sectors is so delicate that for several years to come, the military will remain the only functioning

organization capable of dealing with certain national challenges.

While it is clear that militaries in sub-Saharan Africa have a role to play to improve the situation, many African observers are not in favor of the inclusion of military personnel in development activities and would prefer that they intervene only in emergency situations. The reasons these observers invoke are many.

Perceived Risks of Mobilizing the Military

Despite the reality that the public and private sectors are struggling and often failing to provide required services, some of the resources available to the military to assist in this situation are often unused because, at least in part, academics and members of civil society have warned against augmenting the military role especially in domestic matters. They argue that to do so exposes the civilian population, state, and possibly even the continent to a variety of risks.

First, they argue that the military is meant to address traditional security challenges to state sovereignty. Expanding their role to deal with more abstract issues, especially those within domestic politics, is simply not what the military is intended for. Doing so detracts from the military's main operational goal of protecting the state.

Second, and perhaps more prominently, scholars and members of African civil society argue that allowing the military to play a role in a broader range on nontraditional tasks can lead to the "militarization" of society. Due to the relative strength of the military when compared with African public and private sectors, it can quickly become a dominating force when it enters these other domains. Politicians looking for quick solutions to the grievances of their constituents could keep mobilizing the military as an easy answer rather than investing time and resources in the other sectors. Overreliance on the military can lead to the withering of the public and private sectors rather than helping them to gain the strength to eventually be the sustainable solution.

Third, this reliance on the military can lead to its intrusion into state politics. As the military gains power within the domestic sphere with politicians—and as populations increasingly depend on it to provide needed services—it can manipulate this dependence in order to serve its own interests. Civilians and their elected leaders run the risk of losing control of the military, in whole or in part.

Unfortunately, fear of these risks does not rest in the theoretical realm. Instead, it is well grounded in the history of the African continent. Even a brief look at the history of many of the militaries in Africa reveals the potential consequences of a powerful and uncontrollable military.

Since independence movements began in 1956, coups have been a constant problem throughout Africa. In less than 50 years, African countries saw an astonishing 80 successful coups, to say nothing of nearly 250 additional coup attempts or plots.[7] This trend has continued throughout the start of the 21st century, with an additional six successful coups in the first 8 years of the new millennium.[8] Recent events in Burkina Faso and Guinea further highlight the continuing instability of some of Africa's security sectors.

While the highest numbers of coups have been in Francophone West Africa, the problem has not been confined to any one region. Most countries of the continent have been victims of coups. Indeed, a full 30 sub-Saharan African countries were victims of successful coups by 2001, and another 11 experienced unsuccessful attempts.

Somali woman hands malnourished child to African Union Mission in Somalia medical officer for care

UN (Stuart Price)

The effects of these successful and attempted coups reach beyond the physical damage and loss of life that often accompanies them. The destabilizing effect of a coup impairs a country's economic development as domestic infrastructure is disturbed and international actors become hesitant to invest. A coup or coup attempt often impairs a country for many years following the cessation of violence.

Of course, coups are far from being the only problem caused by some African security sectors. Human rights abuses by many militaries have been well documented. Many of these forces have been implicated in pillaging, rape, mutilation, and other forms of torture as well as in murder and genocide. Dictatorial regimes in the Central African Republic, Chad, Ethiopia, Liberia, Nigeria South Africa, Uganda, and Zaire have used their militaries to undertake all kinds of atrocities against their people. The hesitation of many to see the role of the military expanded in any fashion is understandable. On the other hand, perhaps it is more helpful to conceive the assistance of the military in nontraditional, development-type activities as a change in rather than an expansion of the military's role. By creating programs from this perspective, changing the practices of the military and its relationship with the civilian population can be an integral part of project design. Given the benefits (outlined below), it is simply too critical not to use the resources available to the military to alleviate suffering on the continent and move African countries toward sustainable development.

Mobilizing the Military

Countries such as the United States, even though they recognize that the military is not the most efficient organization to undertake certain categories of activity, plan to call upon their

militaries when agencies are not capable of gathering necessary resources. For instance, Department of Defense Directive 3000.05, dated November 2005, states that the U.S. military is ultimately responsible to prosecute missions when agencies are not able to do so.

Regarding food security, corruption, and health issues, the role for the military may not be immediately evident. Ideally, addressing these challenges means empowering public and private entities that are already tasked with solving these problems. Unfortunately, for a variety of reasons, the sectors that are supposed to address these concerns have been unable to adequately do so. This might be due to the quiet corruption noted by the World Bank, or it might simply be the result of insufficient resources or lack of expertise and will. Whatever the reason, it is clear that additional measures must be taken to address the gap between what is currently being done and what needs to be done for African states to stabilize and prosper.

Mobilizing the military to become involved in this new range of societal challenges is not meant to replace or circumvent other sectors. On the contrary, using the resources already available to the military can alleviate pressure from other entities while they reform and develop new strategies and capacities. For reform of these sectors to take place in a realistic and effective manner, careful planning over time is needed. The military can lighten the strain placed on these other groups during this period.

In terms of health care, African countries nearly uniformly suffer from inadequate health facilities and an insufficient number of doctors. The military in many countries possesses the capacities necessary to at least begin addressing this problem. In many countries, important efforts have been made recently, but up until now, most of this capacity often remains inadequately used during times of peace. Failing to use these resources means that illnesses go untreated, and people lose their lives.

Apart from health challenges, Africa is facing serious youth unemployment. Figures often highlight the fact that 70 percent of the continent's population is under the age of 25. Unfortunately, the same figures underline the fact that these young Africans represent no more than 25 percent of the active population.

Youth idleness is far from being the only potential risk of unrest throughout the continent but undoubtedly represents an important factor that can contribute, under certain circumstances, to instability and insecurity. The military, while being the major employer of the public sector in many African states, is limited in terms of job provision. Nonetheless, it can participate in the civic education of the youth many observers consider the most vulnerable group in African societies.

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Africa, like the other continents, is experiencing frequent natural disasters due to climate change, such as flooding, coastal erosion, desert advancement, and so forth. Typically well organized, relatively easy to mobilize, and disciplined, militaries can play a crucial role in states' efforts to tackle these issues efficiently. Militaries can also be mobilized to fight the increasing number of wildfires across the

continent as well as the alarming deforestation witnessed lately.

Drought is currently devastating people throughout eastern Africa. More than 10 million people are affected by what has become perhaps the worst drought in more than 60 years. Rather than waiting for the international community to send assistance—while lives are lost—militaries across the region and perhaps even the continent as a whole could have been mobilized to begin relieving the strain caused by the food shortage.[9]

Finally, African countries are badly lacking sound infrastructures. Most of the continent's infrastructure, if it even existed, has been destroyed by years of conflict. African militaries could help states in their efforts to build or rehabilitate infrastructures.

In reality, mobilizing the military in this manner and in these different domains benefits civilian populations, the sectors that generally provide these services, and the military itself. It allows the military and its resources to remain more consistently active while allowing the traditional public and private sectors to reform in a more controlled environment instead of constantly operating under crisis or emergency conditions.

These benefits can be found in a consistent list of other areas as well. This list, even though not extensive, reveals the importance of utilizing the resources of the military to help address the challenges now facing the continent. However, given the risks noted above, it is clear that careful planning will be critical if military mobilization is to be done in a way that realizes these benefits, instead of tragically falling victim to the risks.

Creating Safeguards

If militaries are to be mobilized to assist in addressing the challenges now facing much of Africa, then clear expectations need to be established and safeguards need to be put into place. Furthermore, especially in countries where serious violations of human rights have been perpetrated by the military, reconciliation must take place and trust must be built. Trust can only be built if the military communicates effectively and regularly with the population. Even during crisis periods, the military ought to behave in a respectful, responsible, and professional way in order to avoid deliberate violations of human rights. The needs and interests of all relevant stakeholders must be taken into consideration when creating these safeguards, ensuring that the military serves to supplement rather than replace the sectors traditionally charged with responding to these challenges.

In pursuing this mobilization goal, the essential element that can help ensure success is maintaining civilian oversight of the military and its projects. Doing so begins with clearly defining the military's new role as temporary and supplemental to the public and private sectors. Projects should be designed in such a way that it is always clear that the military is not taking over or dominating but rather is assisting the other sectors and alleviating the pressure being placed on them. Having a clearly defined timetable for a military's assistance will help demonstrate the temporary nature of its work, so other sectors do not become overly reliant on it.

Realizing this oversight and creating the environment for these expectations require the development of a legal framework for implementation. The circumstances in which the military can be mobilized to deal with nontraditional security concerns need to be clearly outlined in the states' national security policies and in law. In some cases, it might even make sense to cement these conditions within the

framework of the state constitution in order to broadcast the expectations of both the military and general population.

Creating these safeguards is not entirely a novel concept. Efforts have been made over the past 20 years by those in charge of security sector reform to improve military practices. Thus, even if reforms have been more focused than the proposed initiatives, they have enjoyed varying degrees of success. Lessons can be learned to help shape the necessary framework that ensures the military is mobilized in a manner that is beneficial to the state and its population.

In addition to the lessons learned from security sector reform processes, there are recent examples in Africa that highlight the potential for military mobilization in a supplementary fashion. These examples are of particular importance because they demonstrate that this proposition is not merely a theoretical possibility, but a reality that has already seen some success. In Kenya, for example, the military and civil society have collaborated on environmental issues in a program that produced the concept of the "environmental soldier." This program clearly participated in strengthening the national and international image of Wangari Maathai, an environmental and political activist. Maathai later became the first African woman to win the Nobel Peace Prize for her work. In Guinea, now that the new democratically elected government is in place, the military has been called on to help fix damaged bridges and roads throughout the country. In Burkina Faso, South Africa, and Botswana, the military has worked collaboratively on civic education programs, and in Senegal, there are many examples of how the military has been successfully mobilized in a complementary way.

While it is beyond the scope of this article to examine each of these cases in depth, it is helpful to look at the Senegalese experience to illustrate the possibilities of limited and controlled mobilization of African militaries to deal with nontraditional challenges.

Senegal's Armée-Nation

In Senegal, the military has been successfully mobilized to assist the country in a wide range of activities, paying particular attention to issues directly related to development. The list of areas in which the military has helped is long: health, infrastructure development, agriculture, education, border management, and environmental protection, among others.

The projects the Senegalese military participates in are selected specifically for their ability to help the general population. The military provides immediate and tangible assistance to the people and participates in projects with a longer term focus such as helping in infrastructure construction and disease prevention programs. Up to 80 percent of the curative activities undertaken by the military health services are for civilian populations. The Senegalese military, along with the services of the ministry of environment and conservation, is actively participating in the realization of the country's portion of the 7,000-kilometer great green wall that African states are committed to build to stop desert advancement.

lessons can be learned to help shape the necessary framework that ensures the military is mobilized in a manner that is beneficial to the state and its population

In addition to the benefits of these programs for the Senegalese civilian population,

the military itself and the state as a whole receive indirect benefits from these nontraditional activities. In part by participating in such projects, the military enjoys a better reputation within Senegal than most African militaries have in their respective countries. This increased trust helps the military remain connected with the general population and receive support, and thus be better informed of security concerns. The state, for its part, greatly benefits from the work the military does in building cross-sector relationships. For example, with the border management commission run by the military but composed of members from all sectors of the society, Senegal has been able to promote peaceful relations at certain parts of its borders with neighboring countries and thus needs to deploy fewer security forces to these regions, therefore saving a great deal of resources.

the United States and most European countries, as well as emerging powers such as China, Russia, and Brazil, are facing acute difficulties that might prevent them from supporting Africa

In addition to the above benefits, some scholars consider these nontraditional activities undertaken by the Senegalese military as a key reason for the country's stability. West Africa has been one of the most unstable regions in the world with many coups and human rights abuses. Senegal, however, has been an exception in the region, enjoying stability and peaceful political transitions since independence in 1960. Many argue that the country's first president, Léopold Sédar Senghor, was a major factor for stability. This success is beginning to gain international attention with other countries all over Africa looking to Senegal for an example of how to improve their militaries.

If the reasons for Senegal's successful experience are many and diverse, the one most invoked is the creation and implementation of the concept Armée-Nation. In fact, the meeting between President Senghor and the country's second chief of defense staff, General Jean Alfred Diallo, determined the Senegalese experience. President Senghor was known as a peaceful leader with a clear vision for the country's future, and General Diallo, a former officer in the French army corps of engineers, was known as a builder. Together, they have helped develop the concept Armée-Nation that has been, since the early years of independence, the backbone of the military's participation in development activities. The Armée-Nation is well known and appreciated by the civilian population and widely studied in the military.

Of course, while this example has been largely successful and offers hope for using the military in nontraditional activities, there is still room for improvement. Most significantly, Senegal could work more closely on the establishment of the formal legal framework suggested earlier and on clearer planning, programming, and coordinating processes. In this regard, the creation in the late 1990s of a civil-military committee was an important initiative that needs to be reconsidered.

To continue to involve the military in development activities while avoiding the militarization of society, leaders of civil society, the military, executive, judiciary, and legislature need to work together on creating the right conditions for the military's projects, notably an efficient communication strategy, a good financing mechanism, and measures that guarantee discretion. That is important not only for Senegal, but also for other countries that seek

to emulate the Senegalese experience and in which the military does not have such a strong history of good practices.

Conclusion

Since the end of the Cold War, the security situation in Africa has evolved, and new nontraditional security challenges have emerged. In reality, the African continent is currently dealing with poverty, health issues, political-based crises, ethnic-based conflicts, food shortages, natural disasters, and radicalization. African states in general, and specifically their public administrations and private sectors, have not been able to cope with these complex security concerns. This situation is not likely to end soon given the fact that the world is facing serious economic crises that are having a negative impact on the continent.

The United States and most European countries, as well as emerging powers such as China, Russia, and Brazil, are facing acute difficulties that might prevent them from supporting Africa. The continent should therefore mobilize all of its available resources to confront these new challenges. The military also needs to be mobilized to deal with these nontraditional security concerns by contributing its resources whenever possible.

Of course, doing so is not without challenges, particularly on a continent that has experienced so many negative events as a result of the military. By carefully planning and putting the necessary safeguards in place, however, military assistance is largely possible and beneficial to society. Furthermore, using the military could help improve the relationship between the military and civilians and ultimately bolster greater cooperation among the various sectors of African society. Several countries have successfully involved their militaries in meeting the new challenges. Among them, the most noticeable are Botswana, Burkina Faso, Kenya, Senegal, and South Africa.

Senegal, though not a perfect example, is often cited as one of the most successful cases in sub-Saharan Africa. The country has been able to keep its military professional and useful to Senegalese society. Many observers of the African security sector consider strong Senegalese civilian and military leadership in the early days of independence as the major factor. To continue its success, Senegal needs to work on a formal legal framework and focus on better planning, programming, and coordination mechanisms.

The Senegalese experience, and its concept Armée-Nation, cannot be exported everywhere in Africa, but it can undoubtedly inspire many African countries that are interested in involving their militaries in development activities. **PRISM**

Notes

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[3] Matt Schroeder and Guy Lamb, "The Illicit Arms Trade in Africa: A Global Enterprise," *African Analyst* 3, no. 1 (2006), 69–78.

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[5] UN Office on Drugs and Crime, "Human Trafficking and Eastern Africa."

[6] Ibid.

[7] Patrick J. McGowan, "African Military coups d'état, 1956–2001: Frequency, Trends and Distribution," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 41, no. 3 (2003), 339–370.

[8] David Zounmenou, "Coups d'état in Africa between 1958 and 2008," adapted from Issaka K. Souaré, *Civil Wars and Coups d'Etat in West Africa: An Attempt to Understand the Roots and Prescribe Possible Solutions* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2006).

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Enduring Interests and Partnerships

Military-to-Military Relationships in the Arab Spring

BY KENNETH F. McKENZIE, JR., AND ELIZABETH C. PACKARD

During the past decade, the most visible military activities in the U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM) area of responsibility (AOR) have been decidedly kinetic, showcased primarily through operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. This year marks important transitions in both of these campaigns as Afghan National Security Forces begin to take the lead on security operations and the United States shifts to a more traditional security relationship with Baghdad. Building partner capacity in Afghan and Iraqi forces—one of USCENTCOM's key *non*kinetic activities—is a central component to success in both of these missions.

Another major series of events in 2011, however, has elevated the importance of military-to-military (mil-to-mil) engagements beyond mere partner-nation capacity-building: the Arab Spring. As the dynamics in the Middle East continue to evolve in response to popular calls for reform, mil-to-mil engagements have been, and will remain, critical to supporting and advancing U.S. relationships and strategic interests in the region.

As this article illustrates, mil-to-mil engagements are integral to the general purpose and activities of U.S. combatant commands (COCOMs) and are particularly crucial for USCENTCOM in light of recent events in the AOR. Mil-to-mil engagements serve as vital "connective tissue" in our relationships with partners and allies as the United States seeks to respond effectively to Arab Spring reform movements while continuing to ensure regional security and stability.

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Mil-to-Mil Engagements and COCOMs

The purpose of the six geographic COCOMs is to coordinate and direct the role of the Armed Forces in executing national-level policy guidance. COCOM theater campaign plans, which provide U.S. forces with detailed objectives, flow from more expansive theater strategies.

Theater strategies, in turn, stem from the National Security Strategy and various department-specific documents that originate from it. The Guidance for the Employment of the Force outlines the parameters in which COCOMs plan, prioritize, and operate. Additionally, COCOMs align their activities with the Quadrennial Defense Review, which assesses the threat environment facing the United States and organizes national assets accordingly.

on all mil-to-mil engagements, our efforts are firmly nested within the policy paths laid out by the Department of State and its role as lead administrator of U.S. security cooperation programs

When necessary, COCOMs execute kinetic operations in accordance with national-level guidance. However, a major portion of our efforts concentrates on a wide range of mil-to-mil engagements intended to strengthen relationships with regional allies and to maintain a posture that supports mutual security interests, as well as to help partner militaries build their capacities to face both conventional and asymmetric threats.

The activities that fall under the mantle of mil-to-mil engagement range from exchanges with key leaders, port visits, and multilateral plans and exercises to security assistance. This includes both event-based activities, such as partnering with Pakistan's military to provide humanitarian assistance and disaster relief following the 2010 floods, and longer term efforts such as International Military Education and Training (IMET), Foreign Military Financing (FMF), and Foreign Military Sales.[1] In all mil-to-mil engagements, our efforts are firmly nested within the policy paths laid out by the Department of State and its role as lead administrator of U.S. security cooperation programs.

Conducting mil-to-mil engagements produces both tangible and intangible benefits for all COCOMs, including a deeper understanding of the regions in which they operate. As Admiral James Stavridis, Commander of U.S. European Command, notes, "Understanding the history of Europe helps us see our allies' world view and why they approach problems and situations in the manner they do. Without a sense of this view, we are like moviegoers arriving late to a film and wondering what is going on and why major characters are reacting so strongly."[2]

This need for understanding how allies and partners—as well as adversaries—view the world, history, and their place in it is particularly strong in the USCENTCOM AOR and is reinforced by both current operations and U.S. military engagements in the region. We operate in a region where the concept of history is markedly more circular and fluid than the often rigidly linear Western way of filtering events. William Faulkner's famous observation that "The past isn't dead—it isn't even past" offers an apt paradigm for understanding the view of history in our AOR. The breadth and depth of USCENTCOM's mil-to-mil engagements, some of which date back only a few years and some of which are decades old, are serving as an important foundation for understanding and reacting to the unfolding Arab Spring.

USS *Carl Vinson* (foreground) makes scheduled port visit to Joint Base Pearl Harbor–Hickam after 6-month deployment to USCENTCOM and Western Pacific

U.S. Navy (Rosa A. Arzola)

Building Mil-to-Mil Relationships in the USCENTCOM AOR

The complexity of the USCENTCOM AOR is reflected in our immense and diverse mission set. The mil-to-mil engagements that we conduct are based on both well-established security cooperation channels and some of the newer authorities granted by Congress that allow the command to more nimbly respond to the pace of changes in the region. Our overall engagement agenda as it pertains to the reform movements in the region is guided by President Barack Obama's May 2011 speech about events in the Middle East and North Africa[3] and the pillars established by the Department of State earlier this year:

- support for peaceful democratic change
- strong support for economic stabilization and modernization
- pursuit of comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace
- huge and enduring U.S. stake in regional security
    - in strengthening ties to Gulf Cooperation Council states
    - in fighting terrorism
    - in preventing Iran from developing nuclear weapons and setting off a catastrophic regional arms race
    - in not losing sight of Iraq's own crucial democratic transition and reintegration into the Arab world.[4]

Although the Arab Spring began in Tunisia, which falls in the U.S. Africa Command AOR, political and economic protests spread quickly to Tunisia's neighbors, including one of USCENTCOM's most prominent regional partners, Egypt. The discussions between U.S. and Egyptian military officials draw upon a long and robust history of mil-to-mil engagements that illustrate numerous avenues of cooperation, and have been integral to our ability to remain informed and able to communicate as events in the region take place.[5]

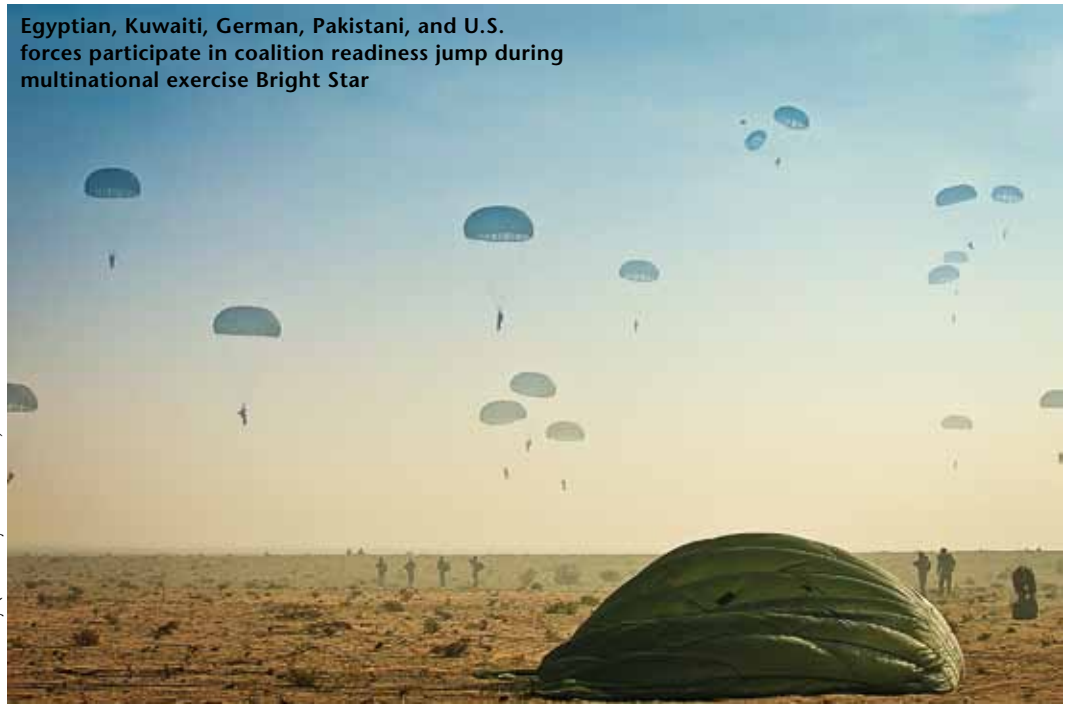
Benefits of FMF, for example—for the United States as well as recipient nations—are numerous. According to the State Department, FMF "furthers U.S. interests around the world by ensuring that Coalition partners and friendly foreign governments are equipped and trained to work toward common security goals and share burdens in joint missions." Furthermore, FMF "promotes U.S. national security by contributing to regional and global stability, strengthening military support for democratically elected governments, and containing transnational threats." Additionally, "increased military capabilities establish and strengthen multilateral coalitions with the United States, and enable friends and allies to be increasingly interoperable with the U.S., regional, and international military forces."[6]

military training programs enable foreign officers to interact with their U.S. counterparts, live in our communities, become familiar with American culture, and form lasting personal and professional relationships

All of these elements are reflected in the FMF relationship with Egypt. Since 1982, in conjunction with the Camp David Accords, the United States has provided $1.3 billion in annual FMF to Egypt. Through FMF channels, USCENTCOM has worked to greatly modernize Egypt's weapons systems through programs such as the M1A1 Abrams battle tank joint production. On the training side, we have also maintained solid cooperation with Egypt, along with many other partners and allies in the region, through the IMET program. IMET enables the Department of Defense (DOD) to host foreign officers in U.S. military schools where the curriculum focuses not only on operational concepts, but also on U.S. doctrinal and philosophical frameworks such as the ethical use of force and respect for human rights. Military training programs further enable foreign officers to interact with their U.S. counterparts, live in our communities, become familiar with American culture, and form lasting personal and professional relationships.[7]

The relationships developed between officers, and often between families, endure well beyond just the time spent at military colleges and installations. In times of crisis or uncertainty, these relationships provide mutual points of access and lines of communication, in addition to shared understandings and experience. Ambassador Jeffrey Feltman, Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs, summed this up to Congress, saying that "our assistance to Egypt was invaluable in maintaining our relationships with Egypt's military and civil society during the recent events there."[8]

The IMET program has strengthened USCENTCOM's relationships in its AOR with many regional partners beyond Egypt. Since 9/11, 169 senior military graduates have trained in U.S. senior Service schools. Additionally, 234 intermediate military graduates in our AOR have trained in U.S. command and staff colleges, 752 military graduates trained in U.S. advanced equivalent officer courses, and 746 military graduates trained in



Egyptian, Kuwaiti, German, Pakistani, and U.S. forces participate in coalition readiness jump during multinational exercise Bright Star

U.S. Army (Lindsey M. Frazier)

U.S. basic officer courses. IMET is a strategic asset to the United States, its partners, and their mutual interests.

The benefits of mil-to-mil training and equipping efforts are further augmented by bilateral and multilateral exercises. The Bright Star exercise, for example, dates back to 1980. Originally a bilateral exercise involving the United States and Egypt, Bright Star expanded into a multilateral effort in 1995 with the addition of participating troops and observers from numerous regional, neighboring, and Western countries. This has allowed us to enhance relationships and understandings with those nations as well—relationships that have proven to be enduring and invaluable throughout the subsequent regional turmoil. In Bright Star's most recent iteration in 2009–2010, 10 nations, including many valued regional partners, contributed personnel.

Our relationships with partner nations are also fundamental to building their capacity to protect mutual security interests as events proceed and potential regional instability looms large. For example, as part of our Regional Security Architecture efforts, we work with many partners in the Gulf to advance their capacity to defend their territorial waters, counter piracy, and protect critical maritime infrastructure and littoral assets.

Our many years of engagements and relationship-building have also been crucial in counterterrorism efforts. These activities are centered on the "global train and equip" authorities from the 2006 National Defense Authorization Act, also commonly referred to as "1206" authorities.[9] While these authorities are tied to DOD, we work hand in hand with the State Department to implement them, which has enabled us to build partner capacity and mil-to-mil relationships in countries such as Yemen and Lebanon.

The warm welcome shown earlier this year to General James Mattis, USCENTCOM Commander, along with Admiral Eric Olson, then Commander of U.S. Special Operations Command, in Kuwait in commemoration of the 20th anniversary of Operation *Desert Storm*'s successful conclusion is a superb illustration of the quality and depth of our regional relationships. In many areas of Kuwait, American flags were waved alongside Kuwaiti flags, providing visible demonstration of the friendship and common commitment to security between our two nations and with our regional allies as a whole.[10]

Maintaining Mil-to-Mil Relationships During the Arab Spring

President Obama, in his May 2011 speech about events in the Middle East and North Africa, remarked that "it will be years before this story reaches its end. Along the way, there will be good days and there will be bad days. In some places, change will be swift; in others, gradual. And as we've already seen, calls for change may give way, in some cases, to fierce contests for power."[11] It is precisely this uncertainty about the events that lay ahead that makes maintaining effective mil-to-mil engagements key to achieving our national strategic objectives for three primary and interrelated reasons.

Mil-to-mil engagements serve as a steadying influence and signal of commitment. While mil-to-mil engagements exist to support and facilitate political relationships, the contours of the respective interactions can often be quite different. Whereas diplomatic interaction often focuses on areas of negotiation and dispute resolutions, mil-to-mil–based joint exercises and training missions center strictly on areas of mutual concern. Common cause is thus the hallmark of mil-to-mil engagements, allowing for the formation of personal and professional relationships between officers—and, by extension, between nations. As a result, when political differences emerge, as they have and inevitably will continue to during the Arab Spring and other influential events, relationships established through mil-to-mil engagements can serve as stabilizing reminders of shared enduring interests.

As noted by former U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, "Convincing other countries and leaders to be partners of the United States, often at great political and physical risk, ultimately depends on proving that the United States is capable of being a reliable partner over time."[12] Given attempts by some malign actors in the Middle East to influence the outcome of the Arab Spring, America's credibility among its partners and allies is essential. Mil-to-mil engagements can help establish and augment U.S. credibility due to their long-term and broad-scope structure, and U.S. and foreign officers who interact through such engagements maintain contact as they concurrently rise through the ranks. The resulting relationships help prevent security vacuums in the region and promote a reliable element of stability for regional populaces.

New pressures in the region open renewed possibilities for cooperation. At the heart of the Arab Spring is a call from the affected populations for more representative and responsive governments. Reform movements are putting historic pressure on regional leaders to consider a broader definition of security, one where an atmosphere that allows these changes to flourish is central. In the political realm, for example, the people must be able to express their will free of meddling from countries such as Iran trying to exploit differences between various groups and religious confessions. Economic development, as well, will be integral to building and sustaining political reforms, and this requires, among other conditions, open lines of shipping and commerce. These challenges

have always been hallmarks of our cooperative efforts in the region; their importance is heightened in light of current events.

Partnership on these fronts does not mean that we will refrain from encouraging internal reform from the armed services we work with where it is necessary. We have been engaging in these conversations since long before popular protest movements in the region began and will continue to do so as they progress.[13] As the understanding of responsive governance as a precondition for stability takes root in the region, these reforms take on added urgency.

Making up for lost time in relationship-building is extremely difficult. Our history of mil-to-mil engagements with Pakistan highlights the perils of whole-cloth reductions of these types of exchanges. In accordance with the Pressler Amendment, enacted in 1985 and barring U.S. economic or military assistance to Islamabad unless the U.S. President could certify that Pakistan did not have nuclear weapons, mil-to-mil exchanges between our two nations were essentially cut off between 1989 and 2001.

The result, as General Mattis has noted, is a generation of "broken contacts."[14] While some senior Pakistani officials received U.S. professional military education (PME) in the formative years of their military careers, similar opportunities were not availed to the current corps of lieutenants, captains, majors, and lieutenant colonels. Though we are still able to find areas of partnership, the relationship has been negatively affected by this gap in engagements as we continue to work through the spectrum of difficult topics facing our two nations.

On the other hand, contacts between U.S. and Egyptian military officials during the earliest stages of the protest movements in Egypt, for example, illustrate the impact of long-standing exchanges and relationship-building. Conversations and visits between senior U.S. military officials, including Secretary Gates, former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Michael Mullen, and General Mattis, were an important linkage between the United States and the new caretaker government in the form of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces. Describing his March trip to Egypt, Secretary Gates underscored that it was "an opportunity to reaffirm America's unwavering commitment to our bilateral relationship and to the Egyptian people" as well as an "opportunity to advance our defense partnership and to provide continuing economic and political support as Egypt goes through its period of transition," both to key political leaders such as Prime Minister Essam Sharaf and to Field Marshal Hussein Tantawi.[15]

Conclusion

No single type of mil-to-mil engagement will be sufficient to maintain the robust and enduring relationships among the United States and partner nations that are always necessary but are particularly vital during this time of great change. USCENTCOM will continue to draw upon the full range of engagement options, from working with our partners at the State Department to carry out FMF, IMET, and other PME-related programs to conducting judiciously chosen and crafted joint exercises and meeting with regional leaders to understand their perspectives first hand. The U.S. diplomatic goals for the region are longstanding, but the dynamics through which we are trying to achieve them are more complex than ever.

The unique cultures, histories, and circumstances of the countries in the region make predicting individual outcomes both ill-advised and impossible. To properly respond to the dynamics of the Arab Spring, we must understand them. Listening to and learning from our

friends and allies in the region are integral parts of this strategy. Relationships facilitated through mil-to-mil engagements provide a vital channel of communications that allows for these types of open and honest exchanges. **PRISM**

Notes

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[9] Public Law 109–163, "National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2006," January 6, 2006, 3456–3458, available at <www.dod.gov/dodgc/olc/docs/PL109-163.pdf>. The legislation states that "The President may direct the Secretary of Defense to conduct or support a program to build the capacity of a foreign country's national military forces in order for that country to—(1) conduct counterterrorist operations; or (2) participate in or support military and stability operations in which the United States Armed Forces are a participant." In addition, it notes that authorized activities "may include the provision of equipment, supplies, and training" and that it must promote "(A) observance of and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; and (B) respect for legitimate civilian authority within that country." It further outlines joint program formulation between the Department of Defense and Department of State, as well as procedures for congressional notification and limitations on the program.

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Unconventional Challenges and Nontraditional Roles for Armed Forces

The Case for Rwanda

BY FRANK K. RUSAGARA

The circumstances of the 1994 Rwandan genocide and its aftermath presented hitherto unconventional challenges to the African nation. The strategies that Rwanda adopted to cope necessitated, among others, nontraditional roles by the military that continue to inform national development. The aftermath of the genocide entailed more than 1 million people dead and an entire population either displaced internally or having fled as refugees. It also entailed a divided society with a collapsed socioeconomic infrastructure. Meanwhile, even as the perpetrators of genocide were defeated, they relocated in the neighboring countries with entire state institutions, including the military, from where they reorganized and attempted an armed return to Rwanda to resume where they stopped with the genocide.

The absence of national institutions was exacerbated by an international community, whose failure to prevent or stop the genocide made them cynical about Rwanda's chance to survive as

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a nation. Add to this the relentless efforts by those who had supported the genocidal regime to assist the remnants of the latter to regroup and recapture state power in order to complete the genocide.[1]

the military, as an instrument of violence that is monopolized by the state, has a higher social responsibility in facilitating social cohesion

With a translocated government or state machinery in the former Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of the Congo [DRC]) to contend with, Rwanda had to embark on building a completely new military institution. This was necessary essentially because the military institution in the previous regime had been characterized by divisiveness and discrimination that had led to it being a sectarian "Hutunized" force that would spearhead execution of the genocide.

Toward Security Sector Transformation

The new broad-based government under the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) conviction was that the military, as an instrument of violence that is monopolized by the state, has a higher social responsibility in facilitating social cohesion. This role could be done in not only the protection of social values from external aggression, but also the enhancement of these values through the prevention of internal destabilization.

Samuel Huntington captures the role of the army succinctly when he notes that "the skill of the physician is diagnosis and treatment, his responsibility is the health of his client. The skill of the officer is the management of violence; his responsibility is the military security of his client."[2] This presupposes an officer who understands the collective national interests as opposed to subjective and sectarian interests.

Here, the model used by precolonial Rwandan society, and later applied by what would become the Rwandan Defense Force (RDF), is illustrative. The classic military organization was rooted in society. Thus, there was a symbiotic relationship with the military produced and nurtured by society, and the military in turn storing, propagating, and defending society's values. In this sense, the tangible elements of the gravity of power (that is, the military) must be in harmony with the intangible elements: the government and people's will to that government.[3]

As the shield of the nation (*Ingabo z' u Rwanda*), the military protected all in pursuit of national interests. Notably, the survival of the state was ingrained in its ability to manage instruments of violence at one level, and, on the other, their development for the general good of the society. This, in principle relevant even today, should lead to the nurturing and development of a national leadership at the political and military levels. Such leadership must seek to evolve and invest in the development of the necessary institutional frameworks that must consistently renegotiate the leadership's relevance with the aspirations of the society. It is in this context that Rwanda, under the RPF, found its defining mission to integrate and reintegrate its people, beginning with the military through the concept of *Ingando*, as we shall see below.

The strategy was to move away from violent chaos to providing a semblance of normalcy and embarking on a multifaceted campaign to build national reconciliation and unity. The most common explanation is that security sector reform is seen largely as an externally

generated and driven concept. Closely related to this is the near absence of local ownership of externally supported reform processes. These arguments have gained ground recently.[4] In this manner, the transition toward peace and security for all may be said to have been a move toward security sector transformation—meaning the processes are locally owned and help develop professional and effective security structures that allow citizens to live safely.

As the single most defining moment in recent Rwandan history, the genocide has informed government policies and shaped political and military thinking. Any consideration or appraisal of the military in Rwanda must therefore inevitably bear context of the genocide. In the aftermath of violent conflict and military interventions, international organizations or coalitions of countries increasingly engage in postconflict reconstruction, and one part of the postconflict agenda is security sector reform[5]—but Rwanda had not only to transform and reconstruct, but also to build a completely new security system.

A security system is essentially broad, going well beyond the armed forces and police to include the civil authorities responsible for oversight and control (for example, parliament, the executive, and the defense ministry), police and gendarmerie, civil society, human rights organizations, and the press.

It is worth noting that a working security system does not guarantee peace. In states where a semblance of peace prevails, the principal actors are the executive and administration, which includes the armed forces and security services. Within the executive in most African countries, the president is designated commander in chief of the armed forces. There are usually ministers responsible for defense, policing, intelligence, and justice, although sometimes the president may take on these roles or they may be combined, as happened under Rwanda's Juvénal Habyarimana's regime. Habyarimana was the president (commander in chief), chief of general staff, and minister of defense during his tenure (1973–1994).

The relationship between components in the security sector may seem simple, but they are complex in practice and doubly complex in many African environments where weak administrations are dominated by powerful politics of personality and cultural tradition, and where the informal dominates the formal. A simple distinction between the formulation of broad policy direction by the executive and ministry, the interpretation and elaboration of policy by a secretariat, and implementation of policy by the armed forces and security services (including parliamentary and civil society oversight) often does not hold in Africa because much revolves around powerful personalities.

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National experiences of the role of the security sector in Africa vary considerably between countries, shaped by the particularities of national politics and geography. The link between security sector transformation on the one hand, and the attainment of political stability and development on the other, is at best a contingent relationship conditioned by a host of political, economic, social, and institutional factors utterly unique to the country concerned.

Building Coherence in Immediate Postconflict Rwanda

Rwanda had to devise its own uncompromising modus operandi in its national reconstruction with peace-building interventions laying the foundation. The Tswalu Protocol articulates the principles and guidelines for peace-building missions and identifies 10 measures for improving the effectiveness of peace-building interventions.[6] The Tswalu Protocol is multinational in nature. What is nontraditional and peculiar about Rwanda is that the development of these peace-building methods was nationally led in an effort to achieve operational coherence. Some of the measures are examined below.

Establishing Coherence. In Rwanda, there was neither victor nor vanquished. By the very act of genocide, all Rwandans lost. It was up to the country's leadership to turn this around and make a win-win situation for all in order to establish operational coherence at all levels of national life. This remains no mean challenge as the country continues to take stock of its tragedy while trying to heal its body politic and usher in peace and security that will ensure continued development. Edward Azar asserted that "peace is development," and trying to resolve conflict without addressing the question of underdevelopment is futile.[7]

peace-building cannot be assembled elsewhere; it must be a homegrown process

Lead Nations. The Rwandan nation took the lead, and the challenge was to manage and regulate the "swarm" of peace-building partners in the form of international and local nongovernmental organizations, agencies, and so forth. Rwanda was uncompromising on its role as lead nation to the extent that in 1995–1996, the government had to ask the second United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR II) to wind up and "leave sooner than later." UNAMIR II was only perpetuating dependency on the international community while undermining the government's legitimacy by insisting people remain in displaced persons camps.

Building Capacity. Given the near-failed state of Rwanda, the first action was to ensure security by integrating and forming a coherent national defense force. From the ex-combatants and demobilized soldiers, a new police force was formed to take over the national policing duties from the military. The ex-combatants also went on to form the local defense units in their respective areas of origin. Rwanda's security was therefore locally owned. The policy of integrating the military and militia into a coherent force served as a role model for the greater society that had been polarized and divided. With security in place, it was easier to start on building capacity in all the other sectors of the nation.

Economic Assessment and Aid Focus and Priorities. As observed, Rwanda was socioeconomically on its knees with the cumulative decline in gross domestic product having passed the 60 percent mark by 1994. Despite this, immediately after the genocide, aid was not forthcoming from the international community until the end of 1996, when donors under the Geneva Conference for Rwanda pledged more than U.S. $600 million that would be managed under a trust fund by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Unfortunately, UNDP wanted to take over the planning function from the

Rwandan Defense Force soldiers await instructions on firing line during marksmanship skills training

U.S. Air Force (Elizabeth Rissmiller)

government by determining development priorities, which came with conditions to access the funds. Additionally, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) returned from the Congo in 1996–1997 with a hefty balance on its relief account (U.S. $1.2 billion) that by far exceeded the national budget (U.S. $500 million) of Rwanda. These UN agencies undermined the legitimacy of the government by having more resources than the national treasury, which they flouted. At one point, cabinet ministers lined up at the UNHCR office seeking funds for their ministerial projects without going through the national treasury. This compromised national priorities in economic development.

Information and Messaging. Rwanda has used a strategic messaging campaign as an active participant and partner in peace-building efforts in Africa. Rwanda is currently involved in almost all regional peace initiatives, including the East African Standby Force. The country has participated in peacekeeping in Sudan—in Darfur with the UN and African Union peacekeeping effort—the African Union–UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur, and in Southern Sudan with the UN peacekeeping initiative. Rwanda has also participated in peacekeeping in Comoros as well as in Liberia and Haiti.

Campaign Plan. Unrelenting engagement with fellow Africans and the international community for sustainable peace and improved development remains at the core of Rwanda's foreign policy agenda. Peace-building cannot be assembled elsewhere; it must be a homegrown process. Local ownership is paramount because locals must take full responsibility as they are the primary stakeholders. Rwanda's military and social integration process has shown that peace-building is a

positive-sum game—there are neither spoilers nor losers. Everybody is a winning stakeholder in the postconflict scenario.

One must build local capacity especially in security and defense in order to usher in peace and development. The capacity built should give us courage to say "no" to what is wrong and defend what is right in the eyes of a paternalistic and patronizing international community.

Misperception of the reality marked the RPF departure from its hope in international intervention and opted for a locally owned peace-building process because the international community, through the UNHCR and UNDP, deliberately created camps and invited Rwandan refugees to Zaire and Burundi, where they had set them up.

The U.S. humanitarian intervention, however, served to confuse the victims of the genocide with the perpetrators and their hostages so that when Tipper Gore, the wife of then U.S. Vice President Al Gore, visited the Goma refugee camps, she erroneously remarked, "I have seen genocide in its face"—not realizing that among the refugees were the perpetrators of the genocide.

Also, the Operation *Turquoise* zone, established by the French government with the tacit support of UN agencies, had been declared a no-go area for the new Government of National Unity. At the same time, the UN threatened to desert Rwanda again so that the country could fail and then realize its need to return to the UN fold. All of it amounted to blackmail and frustration of the nascent peace-building efforts of Rwanda's government.[8]

Military Integration as a Peace-building Strategy

The Rwandan military had to play the nontraditional role of taking the lead in peace-building and providing a unifying example to the rest of the society through the concept of Ingando. This would ensure lasting peace through full integration of the ex-military and militia into the new national army. In this sense, the military led the way and provided the example of the effectiveness of peace-building that could be replicated elsewhere.

Basically there are three models of peace-building. The first is the consent model, which is based on comprehensive, negotiated settlement of conflict between two parties conducted under third party supervision. Government forces may absorb guerrilla forces or merge the two warring factions to form a single national force. It is important to note that peace-building is usually conducted after cessation of hostilities, though the security situation may remain fragile.

The second model is complete demobilization, where the government decides to downsize its military through the normal channels of peace-building but does not include former enemy combatants in its forces. Examples include the 1991 Ethiopia demobilization of the former government forces under the Derg after the defeat of Mengistu Haile Mariam.

The third is the coercive model of peace-building, which involves forced disarmament of insurgents and is usually carried out by external intervention under a UN mandate. An example of this is the failed forced disarmament of Somali warring factions in 1993.

The Rwandan Model of Peace-building

Rwanda's model of peace-building is based on consent, where ex-combatants are fully integrated in the spirit of the 1993 Arusha Peace Agreement between the RPF and government of Rwanda. Protocol III of

the Agreement made possible integration of the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA) into the *Forces Armées Rwandaises* (FAR).

Unlike in the classic consent model, RDF integration was a *continuous* process—that is, before, during, and after cessation of hostilities. The Rwanda model was effected through the traditional concept of Ingando. The concept draws its theoretical basis from the constructivist school of thought, which stresses the importance of the socially constructed nature of ethnic groups, drawing on Benedict Anderson's concept of "imagined communities."[9] Proponents point to Rwanda as an example of a social construct or an imagined community since the Tutsi and Hutu distinction was codified by the Belgian Colonial Power in the 1930s on the basis of cattle ownership, physical measurements, and church records. Identity cards were issued on this basis, and these documents played a key role in the genocide of 1994.

Ingando in Kinyarwanda (a dialect of the Rwanda-Rundi language) means a military encampment or assembly area where troops traditionally received their final briefing while readying for a military expedition abroad. These briefings included reorganization of the troops and allotment of missions and tasks. In such gatherings, individuals were reminded to subject their interests to the national ideal and give Rwanda their all. This meant that whatever differences one might have had, the national interests always prevailed since the nation of Rwanda is bigger than any one individual and it ensured prosperity for all. That was the idea behind the institution of Ingando.

The objectives of Ingando are to:

- help the participants (students, grassroot leaders, opinion leaders, teachers, released prisoners, and so forth) overcome mutual fear and suspicion as well as the temptation for revenge
- talk about the history of the conflict
- heal the wounds of hatred
- accept responsibility for any harm done to each other
- demystify negative perceptions of each other
- take collective ownership of the tragedy that resulted from the conflict
- agree on what the future promises for them.

Ingando employs the concept of problem-solving workshops (PSWs) as a participatory conflict management strategy. These workshops are designed as the best method through which a protracted conflict such as Rwanda's may find sustainable resolution. PSWs encourage the parties to analyze the conflict, its causes, the parties' attitudes toward each other, and the postconflict relationship. As John Burton states, the Ingandos as PSWs "are innovative in guiding the translation of discovered shared values into political structures and institutions that will promote their fulfillment."[10]

The first step in Ingando is to help ex-combatants and the RDF unburden themselves emotionally. This can be achieved by allowing them to talk about the conflict and its history. What the parties feel about the conflict and about each other are important barriers that must first be removed. If the parties are not able to talk about the conflict and their feelings about it, they will never be able to talk about mutual solutions and the future. The command's challenge is to ensure an atmosphere in which the

parties get to know each other and respect each other's dignity at all times.

The second step is joint military redeployment of the former adversaries. This deployment provides further opportunity for the participants to continue learning about the conflict and further facilitate bonding between the troops through demystification of any differences and misperceptions they may harbor. An example of joint deployment is the war in the DRC in 1998–2002, after about 39,200 were integrated into the RPA. After their tour of duty in the DRC, or while on leave, the break enabled the ex-combatants to return to their communities. While on leave, they influenced their communities with their full integration.

participation in Ingando recognizes the dignity and humanity of the participants as equal Rwandans

In the third step, the RDF continuously facilitates exploratory dialogue through the office of the Civil-Military Coordination Office (J5) at RDF Headquarters. Participants are encouraged to analyze their conflict as a *mutual* problem. This process includes analyzing why the conflict began; why each party reacted the way it did; and how to come to terms with mutual losses and responsibilities. The J5 ensures that no blame is apportioned. This stage can be emotional, but it is crucial. In the end, this ensures a win-win solution.[11]

The fourth stage occurs when the integrated ex-combatants meet and reevaluate the process. In their testimonies, they may admit to being convinced there is a way out mutually, to have developed doubts about the process, or to have received contradictory reactions from their constituencies about the process.

During the November 2006 International Peace-building Course at the Rwanda Military Academy in Nyakinama, Major General Paul Rwarakabije (ex-commander of the Democratic Liberation Forces of Rwanda), who is now integrated in the RDF and a commissioner in the Rwanda Demobilization and Reintegration Commission, provided an example of successful integration. His testimony was fostered on the conviction that there is always a way out of a conflict—but as long as the psychological barriers persist, the parties are locked into rigid assumptions and postures rooted in history.

Participation in Ingando recognizes the dignity and humanity of the participants as equal Rwandans. Irrespective of their roles in the Rwandan conflict, the Ingando forms the starting point to conflict resolution. Political compromises that can reconcile previously antagonistic ethnic group interests, thereby ending violence, work for civil existence.

Ingandos were initially meant for integrating ex-combatants into the national army and society during and after the Rwandan liberation war. This entailed mixing the ex-FAR and RPA officers and soldiers and gave them an opportunity to talk about the Rwandan conflict. This integration continues. Between 1995 and 1997, a total of 10,500 ex-FAR officers and soldiers were integrated in the RPA, and between 1998 and 2002, a total of 39,200 ex-FAR and militia were integrated in the RPA.

The immediate security dividend from the Rwanda peace-building in 1997 was the transformation of the counterinsurgency strategy into a political and social effort that would break the back of the ex-FAR and militia insurgents operating in and out of the country. The soldiers got integrated and became stakeholders

as responsible citizens and breadwinners for their families.

The peace-building payoffs include promoting stability and initial reconciliation between conflicting parties. In the case of the RDF, the ex-combatants moved from being tools of violence to economic assets—that is, war resources were channeled into socioeconomic ones. The integrated ex-combatants allow for human capital development in their skills and talents, thus providing suitable conditions for societal reconciliation by becoming valuable stakeholders. Peace-building also becomes a facilitator for military professionalism, which enhances effectiveness and healthy civil-military relations and societal reconciliation.

A New Rwanda Through the RDF

Collective responsibility was the cornerstone of the Rwandan Patriotic Army's philosophy. In a 1996 interview, Paul Kagame explained his strategy for taking command:

> *In all my capacities—in the RPF, in the government, in the army—my primary responsibility is to help develop people who can take responsibility indiscriminately. . . . [I]n the RPF we have tried to encourage collective responsibility. I'm not saying there aren't power struggles. But things were deliberately organized in such a way that one can play a very prominent role—be very useful, lead people, be respected, and so on—but at the end of the day, there is an emphasis on collective responsibility, on discussion.*[12]

Discussion was central to RPA success. RPA officers were strictly held accountable for the overall performance of their units. They were expected to know their people and, more importantly, to care about them. In return, RPA soldiers were expected to trust their officers and provide them with an unwavering commitment to victory. The practical result of this fraternity was RPA's well-developed practice of consensus-based decisionmaking. Through formalized, open discussions that usually took place at dawn, RPA officers at all levels of command entertained the opinions and experiences of soldiers across all ranks before making important decisions.[13] This institutional exchange fostered an extraordinary ethos of responsibility in the RPA and promoted a close and powerful bond between officers and their men.

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The RPA also invested in the skill and intelligence of the many recruits who joined the ranks during the early days of the war. With many of these recruits coming from the global Rwandan diaspora, the RPA rapidly enjoyed an unusually high average standard of education and cultural expertise. With nearly all soldiers educated at the primary level, 50 percent at secondary, and upward of 20 percent receiving university-level instruction, the RPA represented what was described as "probably the best educated guerrilla force the world had ever seen."[14]

Understanding that the divisive impact of the genocide and the independent manner in which the RPA secured victory would quickly erode legitimacy, the RPA quickly adopted a plan to integrate members of the ex-FAR. Following the principle of consensus that had

brought the RPA so many successes on the battlefield, a reeducation and training program commenced in the fall of 1994 at the Gako integration center south of Kigali.[15]

At this camp, ex-FAR officers who had been vetted against participation in the genocide were paired with an RPA counterpart and exposed to the positive aspects that had brought the RPA so much success. One ex-FAR officer described the integration process as fairly simple due to the fact that everyone involved shared a common history, language (Kinyarwanda), and nationality. He regretted that the Habyarimana government had used divisive politics and acknowledged that the FAR had suffered on the battlefield due to the understanding that soldiers were treated as an expendable resource by the former government. In contrast, the officer—now a lieutenant colonel in the RDF—outlined the strength of the RDF as an organization that values its people above all else.

Ingandos entailed refocusing the individual from a manipulated tool of negative forces into an *imfura y' i Rwanda* (from a genocidaire to an agent of social change and development)

The military, as a national institution, not only guaranteed internal security, but also guarded against external aggression because the military was part and parcel of the society that produced it. The military acted as the cohesive force in the community. Toward this end, society's values, customs, and taboos were enshrined and codified into *Imigenzo n'imizilirizo* (dos and don'ts), which in military terms were actualized in how one conducted himself or herself in times of war and peace. Ingandos entailed refocusing the individual from a manipulated tool of negative forces into an *imfura y' i Rwanda* (from a genocidaire to an agent of social change and development), actualizing the ideals of a patriotic Rwandan. With this transformation, the RPA has been able to mediate the various conflicts that characterized the deconstruction of pre-genocide Rwanda.

Eventually, more than 15,000 of an estimated 40,000 former RDF soldiers were integrated into the RPA. The newly integrated RPA would cement its solidarity and comradeship under fire in the coming Congo wars between 1996 and 2002, and use its shared experiences to demystify perceived animosities among the society as a whole. The conflict also provided the army with an opportunity to unite the efforts of RPA veterans with newly integrated ex-FAR soldiers. The Congo wars provided a conducive environment for further bonding among the integrated forces, serving a common cause for Rwanda. Such an environment also reinforced their sense of patriotism and nationalism. Moreover, the conflict represented active politicization and socialization that enhanced RPA bonding through practicing the theories from Ingando.

As the Rwandan state moved ahead with serious attempts to stabilize society and develop its economy, the RPA began an enthusiastic effort to formalize its practices, specialize its force, and devote its resources toward protecting the fragile peace. Officers who understood the unifying force that Rwanda's military had played in its past knew that the RPA had to reinvent itself as an example of progress and social change. Their vision resulted in a plan to institutionalize the RPA as an instrument for social

Children fleeing fighting in Rwanda rest in camp run by UN Assistance Mission in Rwanda

UN (John Isaac)

reconstruction, cohesion, and conflict management. In a significant demonstration of that effort, the RPA formally changed its name to the RDF in June 2002.

Understanding that success depended on a more professional and mature force, the RDF actively sought opportunities to improve the professional competency of its officers and operational units. RDF officers began regularly attending professional military colleges in Kenya, Zambia, South Africa, Europe, and the United States. In addition, the Kenyan army played a major role in developing RDF operational capacity by providing formal instruction on advanced military tactics, techniques, and procedures.

From Nation-building to Regional Stability Through Peacekeeping

By 2004, the RDF was becoming widely recognized as one of Africa's more capable forces. That same year, the RDF was the first military in the world to answer the African Union's call requesting a small peacekeeping force in Sudan. The unit was to be capable of protecting UN military observers monitoring a fragile ceasefire between government forces and various rebel groups in the Darfur region of Sudan. Landing in Al Fashir that August, the initial 150 RDF soldiers became the first conventional peacekeeping forces deployed to the region. Although they received training and support for their mission from various sources, the key element that eventually brought them success was an ethos developed by an ancient warrior tradition, and honed by years of struggle. Since the first momentous deployment in 2004, the RDF consistently demonstrated expertise in peace support operations and assumed an increasingly significant role in the success of the now combined African Union and UN mission in Sudan.

From their initial deployment, RDF soldiers carried through on the promises made by President Kagame, who noted that the RDF mandate would include the use of necessary force: "Our forces will not stand by and watch innocent civilians being hacked to death like the case was here in 1994."[16]

RDF actions quickly measured up to the president's comments in 2005 when rebels, attempting to seize 28 civilian supply trucks from a convoy under Rwandan guard, were treated to a costly gun battle that resulted in numerous rebel casualties and the loss of two RDF soldiers.[17]

The RDF treated peacekeeping operations the same as any other warfighting endeavor. The RDF soldiers deployed to Darfur prepared to kill and, more importantly, die in support of their mission. Judged against recent history, this frame of mind is unique among peacekeepers, and it underscores the tremendous influence that heritage has played in defining the RDF and what it stands for. The commanders of these forces understand all too well the social and spiritual consequences of failed peacekeeping efforts in their own country. RDF soldiers do not propose that their mere presence can avert crisis and bloodshed, but they are determined not to allow self-preservation or callous inaction determine the outcome of events under their control.

with an exceptional history, Rwanda's military consciousness has been forged in intense instability

Another critical element to RDF peacekeeping success is the empowering role that the RDF philosophy of consensus has played in the often nebulous and frenzied peacekeeping environment. As mentioned, RDF decision-making is a consensus process that considers the experience and opinion of soldiers from every rank. Although RDF officers are responsible for selecting the final course of action for any given mission, the institutionalized consensus process generates a high degree of empowerment and situational awareness across the entire unit responsible for the mission. With this inclusive planning and collective mission ownership, the RDF has consistently deployed peacekeeping units capable of initiating decisive and appropriate action at the lowest levels of command—the same skill that scholars suggest holds the key to peacekeeping success. One such scholar writes, "Whether they are peacekeeping, peace-enforcement, or counterinsurgency operations, because of the chaos that characterized these environments, small unit leadership becomes particularly important. . . . [S]enior leadership, therefore, must empower small unit leaders with significantly broader decision-making power than if they were acting in a conventional war type environment."[18]

With an exceptional history including warrior kingdoms, ethnic division, social destruction, civil war, and genocide, Rwanda's military consciousness has been forged in intense instability. The product of this turbulent evolution is an organizational ethos that forsakes hope for action and chance for skill. Drawing from those ancient values, the founding members of the RDF disciplined and empowered their soldiers to eliminate the elements of social destruction lingering from Rwanda's colonial past, and restore their homeland for all Rwandans.

Even in the short period since the genocide capped the fractured colonial stage of Rwanda's history, the RDF has managed to reestablish the

military as a national institution. Though the wounds of ethnic conflict are far from healed, the exemplary progress of the RDF has greatly assisted in restoring the military as a key source of unified Rwandan pride. In its rightful, historical place, the RDF truly represents a resilient guardian of Rwandan unity.

Conclusion

The Rwanda government's determination to take the lead in postgenocide reconstruction had to start with security. Because the military was an instrument of violence, monopolized by the state, the government had to use the military for higher social responsibility in facilitating social cohesion. This role could be done not only in the protection of social values from external aggression, but also in the enhancement of these values through the prevention of internal destabilization, both in the country and regionally. Rwandan youth have since transformed and ceased to be objects and subjects of the state as they were during the genocide. The ex-militia and guerrilla army have been integrated to form the RDF, which has since gained international recognition in peace support operations globally. In fact, Rwanda contributes one of the largest contingents to the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations globally with about 4,000 military, police, and civilian personnel in Sudan, Haiti, and elsewhere. **PRISM**

Notes

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Courtesy of U.S. Army

Afghan worker surveys dam project in Badghis Province that will employ local residents and provide stable water source

War Comes to Bala Morghab

A Tragedy of Policy and Action in Three Acts

BY JOHN BESSLER

I need not here touch upon the well-known and far-reaching results of the holding of Duffer's Drift . . . and the ensuing victory gained by our side. It is now, of course, public knowledge that this was the turning point in the war, though we, the humble instruments, did not know what vital results hung upon our action.

—Lieutenant Backsight Forethought[1]

As challenging as conventional war is, how much more so is the ongoing operation in Afghanistan? The need for concurrent stability operations, including counterinsurgency and capacity-building, adds layer upon layer of complexity to warfighting. As if the terrain

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and insurgents are not difficult enough, the policies that generate missions are often questionable and poorly grounded in the realities on the ground. What might seem a grand idea in the Presidential Palace and to Kabul-based planners can rapidly bog down in the realities of coalition warfare and the day-to-day friction associated with surviving and building capacity in a small province at the end of the policy and supply chain. And so, if the reader seeks a glimpse of what the majority of military operations might look like in the next 20 years, this view from Badghis Province proves a worthy example. This small operation, recounted here as a three-act play, may prove to have been one of the potential turning points in the war. The story of Badghis reacquaints the military professional of all the tribulations and friction of coalition warfare at the tactical and operational levels, gap between policy and operations, contradictions of winning hearts and minds, and challenges of day-to-day survival at an outpost of foreign policy. However, if Badghis is a story of friction and chance, it is also a story of military ingenuity and perseverance, as well as the Afghan people's struggle for human security. No doubt there are dozens of places like it in Afghanistan, and, as that experienced by Lieutenant Backsight Forethought in *The Defence of Duffer's Drift*, one from which we can learn.

Setting the Stage

This story takes place in Badghis Province's Bala Morghab district in 2008–2009. Badghis is located in the farthest northwestern region of Afghanistan, and is about as far as one can get from the day-to-day news coverage of the Western press. It is 3 hard days' drive from Kandahar and 4 from Kabul. The province consists of seven districts, one of which is Bala Morghab, which abuts Turkmenistan. Most of the province is mountainous and comparatively temperate; winters are characterized by heavy snows, averaging 2 meters annually, with much rain and fog. Badghis has the highest concentration of Pashto speakers in the Northwest, transplanted there in the last century by the last Afghan king. The provincial capital of Qala-I-Naw was noted in 2008 for its fairly reliable electricity, some 2 kilometers of asphalt road, teacher's academy, hospital, and airport. There was less violence in Badghis in comparison to many other provinces, but it was far from a quiet place.

Badghis is one of the poorest and most rural of provinces in Afghanistan, and prior to 2006, few Westerners ventured there. From Kabul, it was viewed as a quiet and agrarian sector. After the fall of the Taliban in 2001, Afghanistan's provisional government installed provincial governors around the country. Badghis had the misfortune of becoming the home of Governor Gul Mohammad Arefi. Unfortunately for Badghis's inhabitants, Arefi, and to a greater extent his successor Mohammad Ashraf Naseri, served as an aloof and condescending landlord, perceived as attempting to leverage the coalition and the United States for any and all perks he could garner. Naseri was indicted on corruption charges at least twice while in office. Both men were widely viewed as self-serving, disconnected from the province, and even more so from the outlying districts. In particular, Naseri spent far more time in Kabul "on business" than he did in his province. As far as it can be ascertained, in 2 years he never once traveled to Bala Morghab district.

Poor provincial governance aside, Bala Morghab's connections to the provincial and national apparatus have been tenuous for at least one hundred years. The Pashtun majority in Bala Morghab is a recent phenomenon. They live on land that, prior to their transplanting by the last Afghan king, belonged to local Tajiks and

Aimaqs. The Pashtuns have now been entrenched for more than a century, but they retain a latent fear that Tajik authorities will one day reclaim the Morghab River Valley and displace them. The valley's residents still view the Tajik-dominated provincial government with wariness and mistrust. The Tajiks's assimilation into the Communist Party during the Soviet occupation further fuels this mistrust. Any action taken by the provincial government is viewed along these schisms, and obtaining Pashtun "buy-in" to *any* effort launched by the provincial government is always necessary.[2]

In the fall of 2006, Spain contributed a Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) to the provincial capital of Qala-I-Naw as part of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) expanded mission, with the aim of fostering development and reconstruction throughout the seven districts.[3] The Spanish, as every other member of the coalition, operated with national caveats that constrained certain actions and activities. Moreover, the Spanish army's small size dictated that it rotate the PRT on a 4-month basis. The Spanish government mandated that the PRT focus efforts within a 50-kilometer radius of the provincial capital. As one can imagine, the impact and reach of the PRT was minimized, given the province's great size (20,000 square kilometers) and number of inhabitants (500,000). Qala-I-Naw (which has a largely Tajik population) reaped the benefits from Spanish presence with a new hospital, teacher's school, and some asphalted roads. However, the PRT had little impact beyond the capital and less inclination to venture out. The Spanish PRT had no presence whatsoever in the frontier districts such as Bala Morghab during 2007–2008.

In 2007, the Afghanistan Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) within the Ministry of Interior (MoI) convened a District Development Assembly consisting of representatives from across the country. The assembly's purpose was to make government development interventions more visible and responsive to the needs and priorities of communities at district level.[4] One of the focuses of this effort was the district of Bala Morghab. Representatives from Bala Morghab's 100,000 inhabitants and 133 villages identified poverty, poor economic conditions, and lack of opportunity and jobs as their main problems. The agriculture and livestock sectors suffered from several concurrent years of drought, and what little transportation network existed was destroyed by the Soviet invasion in 1979. Lack of fuel and electricity accelerated ongoing deforestation—even prized pistachio forests were cut down to provide for heat and cooking. Finally, health care was lacking. Many villagers in remote areas had to travel several days to find medical support in one of the four inadequate basic health clinics. However, what was most telling in the assessment was the lack of community concerns about security. Insecurity, foreign fighters, and war were not among the complaints. These observations support an earlier 2005 Badghis survey in which only 1 in 214 negative incidents reported in the entire province was categorized as "insecurity."[5]

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Up until 2008, there was little Western concern with, or intrusion into, Bala Morghab district, and even less connection between this "Pashtun pocket" and provincial and national Afghan authorities. The Spanish PRT remained committed to its development projects in and around the relative safety of the

provincial capital, and few Westerners—and fewer Afghans—paid any attention to this quiet backwater district. Compared with the more violent South and East, ISAF's Western Region was quiet and, as a result, last in priority for just about everything, from supplies and replacements to medical evacuation helicopters and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs). Such was the scene in 2008, when ISAF brought the war back to Badghis through the police reform program known as Focused District Development (FDD).

ACT I: A Troubling Start

Focused District Development refers to the ISAF police training program for Afghans. The program began in late 2007 and systematically sought to address security sector reform in Afghanistan by focusing on key districts throughout the country.[6] A primary feature of this program conceived by the Combined Security Transition Command–Afghanistan (CSTC–A)—endorsed by ISAF and adopted as policy by the Afghan government—was that the primary responsibility for determining priority districts lay squarely with the Afghan government. A concept paper written by CSTC–A planners in early 2007[7] described the idea as a whole-of-government approach[8] to improve quality of life across the board. While civil security was being developed through police reform, training district prosecutors, educating district council members in governance, building infrastructure projects, and developing the economy would be undertaken in concert with each other. In this way, success in one sector (such as civil security) could be reinforced by concomitant success in others.

The police reform portion of FDD begins with a joint Afghan MoI–U.S. police mentor team reviewing the law enforcement needs within a particular district, taking special note of deficiencies in force numbers, quality, and leadership. Based on this appraisal, an Afghan MoI team then recruits new Afghan National Police (ANP) members from that district, sends them to a regional training center for 8 weeks, and then reinserts them after graduation. The relatively well-trained Afghan National Civil Order Police provides the security and civil control during the 2 months that the local recruits are in school. Following graduation, the trained ANP members return home equipped with new uniforms, weapons, and police vehicles—and hopefully a sense of professional ethics and responsibility.

The district selection process was supposed to be a joint recommendation from the provincial governor and ISAF regional commander, approved at the national level, based on availability of support, potential of creating stability, and a holistic assessment of the probability of success. In 2008–2009, however, the selection process hinged on simply whether a U.S. Police Mentor Team was available, how agitated or peaceful the district appeared, and a subjective assessment of the quality of the district police chief. What was definitely not a factor in deciding which district to select for FDD was the availability of development, governance, and essential service resources for a whole-of-government approach. Unfortunately, the main drivers for implementation soon became civilian political agendas and military expediency. As a consequence, rather than completing a jigsaw puzzle of a whole-of-government approach, the CSTC–A plan appeared more like a single puzzle piece of military effort surrounded by emptiness. But the military is great at implementation and the CSTC–A planners went into overdrive to execute their portion—that which focused purely on the police training/reform process. Largely left out were the Afghan national level

ministerial programs that should have been involved in such an approach.

Bala Morghab was selected to be among the first FDD districts. In spring 2008, the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) dispatched an unannounced force to assess road conditions as a prelude to the later police reform process. Antigovernment forces operating along the frontier, to this point unforeseen, attacked this force and bloodied the nose of the ANSF. While hardly a major action, ISAF Regional Command–West (RC–W) immediately requested the postponement of the FDD, deducing correctly that the district was not nearly as quiet as previously thought. However, as in all things military, politics held ultimate sway. Not only had President Hamid Karzai promised Minister of Interior Ahmad Moqbel Zarar that he would execute FDD in Badghis before parliamentary elections in September, but he specifically chose Badghis because of its relative tranquility (it would be "an easy win"), and thereby a manifestation of success and a ploy to garner votes from the "Pashtun Pocket." Inopportunely, no one thought to inform the people of Bala Morghab what was happening and to seek their insights and support.

So—appropriate or not, informed or not—FDD in Bala Morghab got under way. Regional ANSF and ISAF forces proceeded with military planning to move into the district beginning in June of 2008. Despite the Kabul-directed policy and subsequent military operation to enable it, ISAF headquarters gave scant consideration toward any sort of media or information campaign nor sought to energize a whole-of-government effort to coincide with the military operation. No evidence exists that anyone gave much thought to the other stability operations lines of effort at all.[9]

Beyond the obvious political agenda of Bala Morghab's FDD selection was a second, more strategic motivation: the ultimate completion of the Ring Road. In Badghis Province, the famous Ring Road was a potholed dirt path passable only to four-wheel-drive vehicles, motorcycles, donkeys, and foot traffic. A modern asphalted road would open up the Northwest, allowing the export of produce and textiles, as well as allowing education, goods, and services to flow in.

The district center of Bala Morghab sits in the middle of this future corridor, astride the Morghab River. A bridge dating from the 1950s routes the road directly into the town's bazaar. Comprised of 8 to 10 sections of steel pipe laid side by side across decaying concrete abutments and topped with sheet metal, the bridge sorely needed replacement. The coalition assessed the bridge at a 14-ton capacity, but even the Afghan police and locals ran vehicles across it one at a time for safety reasons. Part of the ISAF agenda for this FDD round was to use the increased security to bring a new temporary bridge to the town, which would allow the old bridge to be refurbished to Ring Road standards.

It was fundamentally a good idea. Unfortunately, no one had involved Bala Morghab. It turned out that what the elders and villagers really wanted was to have their mosque completed. Started years before with funds from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), work on the mosque had ceased 2 years previously with increased threats and violence against the workers.[10] An opportunity existed, but no one from Kabul engaged with the elders to see what they wanted and no one consulted with the District Development Committee, MRRD, Spanish PRT, or U.S. Department of State or USAID representatives embedded with the PRT. Come hell or high water, ISAF was bringing a bridge—and little more.

By July 2008, the RC–W staff, Italian observers, mentors, and Operational Mentor and Liaison Team (OMLT), U.S. Army Embedded

Training Teams (ETTs), and U.S. hired contractors had guided the assigned Afghan National Army (ANA) corps headquarters and one brigade through a cursory planning exercise and rehearsal for the planned movement to Bala Morghab district. However, no one worked the details of the plan to identify, much less mitigate, the whole mélange of friction points: the long, difficult, and nonsecurable route; lack of route-clearing equipment; lack of a coordinated communications network; and many other impediments to success. From a professional military viewpoint, there was an appalling lack of attention to detail. Recognizing this, newly assigned U.S. mentors insisted on a more thorough planning effort, this time including the one-star Italian headquarters; ANA, ANP, and Border Police leadership; and even attempting to bring ISAF-Kabul into the effort. Ultimately, however, the only energy expended on Bala Morghab was that of the mentors and local Afghan army and police leadership. Consequently, the plan was simple to the extreme: move a brigade of ANA with their U.S., Spanish, and Italian mentors up the single Ring Road route into the Morghab Valley, occupy key terrain in the valley, and conduct FDD.

properly led and motivated, Afghan soldiers are terrific fighters

Meanwhile, the Afghan forces planned and rehearsed. Properly led and motivated, Afghan soldiers are terrific fighters. What the Western Zone Afghans were not so good at was logistical planning. While they could prove themselves surprisingly capable of planning and executing complex brigade operations if properly motivated, their support planning and execution was typically abysmal, and they could not be expected to remain in the field for more than a few days. Operations not closely supervised by mentors tended to run out of steam because of food, water, and fuel issues after about 36 hours. Unfortunately, due to the isolated nature of Bala Morghab, distance from the Afghan army home garrison (200 kilometers), and length of time to train the new police (8 weeks), the operation required a persistent presence of at least two battalions of ANA in the field for nearly 60 days.

Chatter about enemy activity along the route and in the Morghab Valley increased exponentially as D-Day approached. As the day neared, the Italian brigadier general responsible for ISAF operations in the West consented to commit his Spanish explosive ordnance disposal contingent to protect convoy movements. The Spanish bomb dogs and robots, in theory, would expedite the advance by searching for and clearing anticipated improvised explosive devices (IEDs) along the route, particularly in places where mud-walled compounds on each side of the road restricted movement and limited maneuver room. However, the Spanish team only added to the friction. A late-discovered Spanish government caveat required 1 full day of vehicle maintenance for every full day of operating. The entire attack plan nearly fell apart as the PRT mentors frantically searched for a resolution to this dilemma. The 3-day unopposed march would take nearly a week if the Spaniards were integrated into the convoy movement. As it turned out, during the tactical road march phase from the garrison in Herat to Qala-I-Naw, two platoons' worth of Spanish vehicles broke down and had to be recovered, further complicating matters and throwing the fragile timeline even more into disarray.[11]

On August 8, 2008, the movement into the Morghab Valley started from Qala-I-Naw. The movement remained uncontested until the road made a sharp 180-degree hairpin turn adjacent

to the tactically important village of Akazai. In this turn, constrained by mud walls on one side and steep hills on the other, a fight erupted with exploding IEDs covered by ambushing anti-government forces. From here, the combat spread into the cornfields that run south into the Morghab Valley.

Insurgents contested the final 20 kilometers of the march with IEDs, small arms, and rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs), firing from the cornfields and from behind the mud walls lining the roadway. The column had no choice but to run the gauntlet since the adjacent hills were too steep for vehicles to climb. As ANA forces and their U.S. mentors dismounted to clear the cornfields, often the attackers would drop their weapons several rows behind them, pick up farm tools, and then claim to be just farmers in the field. It was not until well after dark that the column closed into the designated forward operating base, a cotton factory compound. The casualties after the movement amounted to two ANA and one U.S. killed and a dozen ANA and several U.S. wounded.

Throughout the night, sporadic small arms and RPG fires from the surrounding cornfields struck the cotton factory. The compound had walls on only three sides and head-high corn grew alongside, making for a thoroughly sleepless night. Clearing operations over the next several weeks pushed the perimeter back several hundred meters, but the insurgents fiercely resisted it. During these engagements, the ANA and their U.S. mentors did the heavy lifting, while ISAF provided perimeter security and controlled close air support to the extent to which their rules of engagement would allow, but they did not participate in offensive operations.[12]

The overall ISAF strategy at the time was "shape, clear, hold, and build." Of these, the activity of shaping holds primacy in these types of operations. *Shaping* requires a manipulation of the environment to achieve effects that allow the clear, hold, and build phases to succeed. In a counterinsurgency environment, shaping includes a molding of attitudes and opinions of locals and key leaders, as well as the more tangible kinetic effects and development projects.[13] Part of the *shape* for Bala Morghab should have included strategic communications prior to arrival. Military planners assumed (wrongly) that Afghan national- and provincial-level officials had coordinated with district leaders, when in fact there had been no contact whatsoever. As soon as the dust settled, the ANA commander called a meeting with district leadership. No one from the Afghan civil government even offered to participate. The provincial governor had flown to Kabul for another lengthy stay just as the attack was beginning and had left no one in charge. Consequently, it was left to the local U.S. and ISAF commanders to engage with our local "hosts" to discern their concerns and needs. It was the coalition—not the Afghan government—that was now forced to assume the leading political role.

The failure of Kabul planners to create an environment for success became glaringly obvious at the first shura, when the senior villager opened the meeting with "We didn't know that the Russians were coming back"; so much for efforts aimed at shaping attitudes and expectations before arrival. Thus far, the only effects the locals could ascertain were firefights and fired haystacks, wounded and killed livestock by stray rounds, and tan and green Ford Rangers and sand-colored up-armored Humvees flattening the irrigation ditches and driving over crops.[14] Small wonder there was no flag-waving with the coalition's arrival.

Further complicating matters, FDD planning required the construction of a headquarters for the district police, police mentor team, and

ANSF, and from which coalition forces could live, plan, and operate. In rural districts, these headquarters normally took shape initially as a combat outpost and later transformed into a new police district headquarters. The ruins of an old cotton factory served this function at the outset. Unfortunately, even this was ill-planned. Initially, U.S. mentors secured a right of entry from Kabul's Interior Ministry—the Afghan equivalent of eminent domain—but within 48 hours of arrival in the valley, ISAF received word that the right of entry had not been properly coordinated within the labyrinthine Afghan ministry system and was invalid. The "fraudulent" seizure of the cotton factory generated at first dozens, then literally hundreds of land claims for compensation by the valley's farmers for crop damage, irrigation rights, and land use. Capitalizing on the opportunity, the locals not once referred to it as a "government land grab"—in every single shura and meeting over the next 10 months, the activities were referred to as a "coalition" or "ISAF" operation, and not an Afghan government operation. The ill-contrived and poorly coordinated efforts in Kabul, which so negatively affected the shape phase added to the burden on ANA and mentors' shoulders as they wrestled with other issues beyond their control.

ACT II: Coalition Friction

The Afghan brigade and their mentors spent August and September 2008 in the Morghab Valley in foxholes. When the brigade headquarters and two of the three battalions pulled out in mid-September, it was certainly not because the "clear" phase was concluded or security had vastly improved, but because more pressing strategic missions needed to be met—voter registration and highway security. For security in the valley, the brigade left two understrength companies of ANA infantry (about 150 soldiers) in place for the winter of 2008–2009. Along with 24 U.S. partnering ETT troops and about 60 ISAF troops, they confronted a growing challenge—mere survival.

Building a Forward Operating Base (FOB) is never easy, but doing so is far more taxing when in an economy-of-force operation. U.S. forces remained short of everything: building material, barrier and construction material, and power generation equipment. Not only were supplies in short supply, but those which were available were difficult to transport. Everything was made harder by having to rely on the single, unimproved, easily interdicted route. More than 100 kilometers long, the route could not be patrolled or even regularly monitored by air. To expedite resupply, lighter supplies were airdropped or flown in by helicopter, if available. Airdrops from Bagram included everything from HESCO barriers to water and fuel. Troops often grappled 55-gallon fuel drums across the drop zone in 110-degree heat or through shin-deep mud, when the single small Bobcat bucket loader which supported the FOB was not available.

However, many supplies had to be hauled in by truck: generators, portable toilets, tents, plywood, fuel bladders, fuel, and gravel. Local U.S. logisticians tried to support the local economy by contracting local truckers and laborers. Recognizing the road as the Achilles' heel of the operation, the regional insurgent base easily thwarted the coalition in a most nonkinetic fashion—they simply contacted the contractors, drivers, and workers and threatened them and their families. In a few cases, trucks were hijacked or burned and drivers were roughed up, or in two cases killed. Military operations were required to bring any substantial shipments into the area.

The single route proved extraordinarily challenging. Every movement required good weather, robust security forces, and 2 days to

travel from Qala-I-Naw, the last reasonably secure waypoint on the journey. Every trip along the path was a combat operation requiring bounding overwatch, route clearance, and deliberate IED-awareness and counterambush techniques. Tough enough for seasoned U.S. or coalition soldiers, it was much more so for the scarcely trained ANSF forces, who took losses on virtually every single convoy. Those items that were too large to go by air either waited for an assembled combat column to go by ground, or simply did not go at all.

Nonetheless, the new FOB emerged over a period of months through the brute physical efforts and force of will of the soldiers. The 360-degree protective walls gave the coalition some breathing room, but the troops washed their clothes in buckets until February and got their first real shower in December—a full 5 months after operations had commenced.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) side of the FOB improved slightly more rapidly than the U.S. side. Keen on improving the poor living conditions for their troops, RC–W bent over backward to make the Alliance side livable—often at the expense of the U.S. priorities, routinely bumping U.S. priority-1 loads for 20-kilogram wheels of parmesan cheese and weightlifting sets. The prevailing attitude of RC–W leadership at the time was one of "they're our helos, so we have the final say on what the loads are." Unfortunately, at RC–W headquarters, there was no central air planning cell to coordinate, vet, or establish priorities among the U.S., Italian, and Spanish needs. National sympathies, unencumbered by guilt, a sense of teamwork, or tactical acumen, unfortunately too often dictated what moved north, and in what priority.

The FDD process also involved providing the newly minted ANP with equipment. This included brand-new Ford Ranger pickup trucks. In early October 2008, the 13 trucks, with the lettering still bright white on the doors, gave a sense of a new beginning to the Bala Morghab police as they completed their 8 weeks of training. After graduation, the trucks were loaded aboard flatbed trucks as part of a combat column of ANA vehicles, which would escort them into the valley. However, once the column arrived in Qala-I-Naw, the Italian headquarters issued an order forbidding any OMLT members from continuing north. The order was directed at all NATO personnel, citing the worsening security situation and anticipated road closure due to winter weather.[15] Even though this order violated a CSTC–A directive stating that all ANA forces would have mentor presence at all times during operations, the order held. Having no mentors meant no coalition eyes or ears to observe, support, or assist any ANA operations. No coalition oversight preordained no redundant communications, no overwatch or ready reserve of firepower, and no way to ascertain the credibility of ANA radio reports.

Knowing that the Italians' edict against further support would not curb the ANA's desire to deliver the vehicles before winter weather, and understanding ANA enthusiasm far outweighed their capabilities, the mentors lobbied in vain to force the RC–W commander to provide NATO ground and air support and to provide coverage to the ANA column. When the NATO mentors pulled out, the ANA escorting the ANP Rangers stalled in Qala-I-Naw. After 4 weeks of resupply, reorganizing, and waiting in the vain hope that RC–W would relent, ANA leadership ordered the column to move. U.S. forebodings materialized on Thanksgiving Day 2008, when the front of the unmentored ANA column came under heavy fire, and the ANA forces totally disintegrated—only 10 kilometers from the FOB. Insurgents disabled the lead

vehicle in a chokepoint, successfully destroyed another several hundred meters behind the lead, and then swarmed the trapped column in between as the ANA fought back, ran off, or were captured or killed.

The Italians, who had at least monitored the ANA radio network from Herat (200 kilometers away), realized the ANA soldiers were in trouble. They scrambled two attack helicopters, which confirmed the worst—the column had been broken in half and stopped. In the front section, several ANA vehicles were on fire, and ANA bodies were strewn in clumps. Too late to influence the ambush, the Italian attack helicopters conducted a few strafing runs on the confirmed enemy and provided some breathing space for consolidation and reorganization by the ANA. Stragglers from the front of the convoy successfully reached the FOB, and extrication of the column's rear half was achieved. The ANA experienced 17 killed, 20 wounded, and 24 captured. Of the 13 new ANP Ford Rangers, only 2 made it into the FOB—7 were captured by antigovernment forces, and the last 4 were sent back to Qala-I-Naw where they languished until the following spring.

district elders rejected every proposed site along the river as infeasible for the simple reason that the new bridge would empower whichever landowner on whose property it lay

ACT III: A Bridge and Policy to Nowhere

Throughout the summer and into late autumn, RC–W remained under tremendous Afghan political (and NATO) pressure to deliver on their original promise of a bridge, in spite of the community's insistent preference for completion of the mosque. ISAF had conceived of the gift of a new bridge as a potential boon to the local economy and as a way to guarantee a military-strength bridge across the river. Conceived without regard for local desires and concerns, it naïvely presumed local gratitude.[16] The plan called for ISAF to divert traffic across a temporary bridge to be erected nearby while upgrading the old bridge over a period of 2 years. When completed, the reconstructed old bridge would accommodate heavier commercial and military traffic and support the eventual completion of the Ring Road. The entire drama surrounding this project soon became symbolic of the futility of the half-measures by which ISAF and Kabul had approached the entire Bala Morghab operation.

Just like the failure to properly shape the area of operations, the debate over simply *where* to site the temporary bridge became a subject of intense local debate and drama. The old bridge exited right into the bazaar area, on public property. Since this was public property, no single landowner had primacy over the commercial traffic—all benefited equally. While ISAF and RC–W planners understood the engineering concerns of where a temporary bridge needed to be placed, they completely ignored the important cadastral (land ownership) issues associated with the project. Blind to how this "gift" disrupted the power base in the district, ISAF never considered the consequences of the shift of implied power and status to the landowner on whose property the temporary bridge would go. For the district elders, it was the single most important consideration. Unsurprisingly in hindsight, district elders rejected every proposed site along the river as infeasible for the simple reason that the new bridge would empower whichever landowner on whose property it lay. ISAF

engineers simply wanted to lay a bridge, but in the end, the cadastral issues and local politics proved far more contentious than river speed and depth, bank grade, and soil composition.

The entire bridge project rapidly became a morbid joke among the professionals working for the coalition staffs in RC–W, ANSF, provincial government, and U.S. mentors as discussions dragged on. As there had been no shaping done, no feeling out the elders, no discernment of their real wants and needs, and no promotion of needs and advantages of a bridge over the long term, political hubris and arrogance ruled most of the Kabul government's decisions associated with the bridge's final location. As a result, the hard feelings and unresolved issues—over land tenure, the "right" of ISAF and the government to use land and property illegally acquired, and even the occupation of Bala Morghab—remain today, and ISAF owns the consequences.

Eventually an agreement received acceptance from all parties. Since the bridge was "temporary," a 2-year arrangement was made to place the new bridge where ISAF engineers believed that it would fit. However, antigovernment forces still owned the elders' sympathies. Without popular support for the ANA and the coalition, antigovernment forces would (and did) own the valley and approach road, and nothing in the way of bridge supplies would come without antigovernment forces exacting a price. But what was to be done? ISAF had committed to building a bridge, and had to get the bridge abutments poured and cured before bad weather killed any chance of completing the bridge before winter. ISAF became expedient rather than strategic in their thinking.

Concerns over ensuring that the abutments would be poured to standard also surfaced. October was well under way and engineers calculated that it would take 20 days for the concrete to cure in good weather, which ended the first of November. Quality control personnel from the Afghan government, ISAF, or other sources were not available for sustained observation of the contractor. It was commonly believed either that the contractor was connected to the insurgents directly, had paid them off in order to proceed, or that ISAF had brokered a deal with intermediaries in order for him to work unmolested. Regardless, he completed his work about a week ahead of the scheduled bridge delivery. As feared, the abutments proved substandard and in no way were they ready for the floodwaters of spring; at first flood in late March, as predicted, the bridge became unusable as floodwaters threatened its collapse. Back in October, however, when it mattered, ISAF was more concerned about winter weather thwarting their promised bridge delivery date than the risk of a substandard bridge; at that time it was "full steam ahead" with little to no concern for either the bridge's quality or—far more important—the lasting consequences of failure.

One more tragedy beset the ISAF bridge effort. Movement of the steel spans for the bridge required several contracted, all-wheel-drive, heavy-duty flatbed trucks. Bridge pieces were hastily loaded in Kabul as ISAF scrambled to get them overland to Bala Morghab before the autumn rains turned the road into a morass. However, once the Kabul contractors driving the bridge reached the Badghis border, they refused to go any farther. It was well known among the contractors that they were on what was truly the last 100 kilometers of bad road, and while ISAF was willing to pay truckers five times the going rate, they could not get any regular trucking companies to accept. Desperate to get the bridge moved, and with the ever-accommodating Bala Morghab elders acting as intermediaries, ISAF

Afghan National Civil Order Police member turns in weapon for maintenance during marksmanship training

NATO Training Mission–Afghanistan (Julian Carroll)

began negotiating with "local contractors" to move the bridge. A provision came back from the Bala Morghab interlocutors, which was stunning in both its simplicity and its implications: "If ISAF moves the bridge, or if a single ISAF vehicle escorts the bridge, the road will be mined and we will blow up the bridge. However, if ISAF does not escort the bridge convoy, then we will allow it to pass, but only if we bring it in ourselves."

Caught between their adversary's demands and their own inability to act or revise an increasingly meaningless political promise, ISAF relinquished. Less than 96 hours later, amid a cloud of announcing dust and hoopla, the bridge convoy arrived, unscathed and ahead of schedule in the Bala Morghab bazaar. ISAF UAVs watched the "successful" convoy across the long frontier road. However, what the UAV could not see were the smiles on the Bala Morghab elders' faces as they lurched into the bazaar and delivered the bridge, intact and on time, with no "help" from ISAF whatsoever. All the credibility, credit, implied power, and message ISAF so wantonly pursued went to the insurgents that day for pulling the delivery off—and there was not one person in the valley, or in ISAF, who did not know it.

The official opening ceremony for the temporary bridge took place just 4 days after the disastrous Thanksgiving Day ANP convoy attack. Attended by the provincial governor, chief of staff of the Afghan army, ISAF commander, new provincial governor, and every ANSF general officer in the West, the ceremony was a somber and mechanistic affair for all but the insurgents and elders. The shot-up Afghan police trucks parked against the wall of the cotton factory and the political and strategic ramifications of 24 ANA soldiers still held as prisoners were heavy on everyone's mind. As for the bridge itself, we already know its fate.

The Curtain Call

At every curtain call, actors come back to the stage for special recognition. Yet as in most tragedies in plays and real life, the true value of the curtain call is to consider the roles each played and the greater lessons each of the roles teaches about moving forward in life. The tragedy that was Bala Morghab offers professional lessons regarding how a strategy of shape, clear, hold, and build must be pursued. With some reflection, we can learn lessons that will prepare us for the future.

Half-measures in a Whole-of-Government Context Will Fail. There have been multiple competing layers of complexity, friction, misunderstanding, and stressors associated with the entire episode at Bala Morghab. The misunderstanding and poor implementation of policy at the highest levels, failure to properly shape the environment prior to operations, and failure to execute a comprehensive, whole-of-government plan led to a bifurcated, unsynchronized muddle on the ground. The surprise arrival of the FDD, FOB construction issues, and the entire bridge saga are only symptoms of the greater failures. There was no one in the national or provincial government who knew the district and village leadership—or seemed to be concerned about what they thought. Government agencies did not work together at any level and did not take ownership for that portion of the enterprise that logically fell under their purview. None of the projects was locally requested, desired, or properly coordinated even though all the projects involved local land tenure/land rights and required local support. While it is true that at the end of the day the FOB and bridge were in place and FDD did "happen," it is also true to state that all three projects were characterized more by ignorance and brute force than whole-of-government efforts. Operations were poorly executed and often incongruent with each other—there was no way to achieve synergy among them. Quite literally, the whole was less than the sum of the parts.

Shaping Has Primacy. Shape, clear, hold, and build is a sound concept, but the most important critical aspect of this strategy in a counterinsurgency environment is *shaping*. Shaping is much more than simply softening up a target; it is the foundation on which all else builds. A campaign begins with knowing, understanding, and motivating the people who are about to be affected. Shaping starts long before an operation begins to ensure ownership of a plan by the legitimate government and local population affected. It is the shaping that smoothes the path for operations and makes it difficult for the adversary to menace, disrupt, or inhibit progress on the agreed-upon activities and projects.

Unity of Purpose. Patience, compromise, understanding, and negotiating skills are at least as important, and probably more so, to the coalition leader's repertoire as is combat savvy, tactical and operational intuition, and the ability to read the battle. *Unity of purpose* is the term best suited to describe the goal and how a leader must attempt to shape any operation where disparate actors, motivations, national caveats, and coalition logistical challenges abound. Unity of purpose provides a common aim-point toward which different contributing factors can guide their actions between calls back to their national headquarters.

Local Ownership. There is a social fabric inherent to all stability operations, and this lies mostly in the local networks that build resiliency and structure into societies. It applies to what is and what can be. Local ownership goes beyond simply understanding the history, motivations, and agendas of villagers. These must be interpreted into meaningful constructs for understanding what people do and can embrace as their own. The cadastral

issues in Bala Morghab remain unresolved to this day. To a largely agrarian society (as most of the Third World is), land is often all that people—the "decisive terrain" in counterinsurgency—have for their livelihoods and that of their progeny; therefore, it is the single most important motivator among them. ISAF's ignorance of the cadastral issues—acquisition of land for the FOB, where to put the bridge, military and police checkpoints—reflected no awareness of a prime motivation of support or opposition as well as missed opportunities for early collaboration and better local solutions. Without proper insight of what motivated the decisive terrain, the coalition sought to solve the problem (as they perceived it) the only way they knew how—by pouring more troops and treasure into more combat actions to "bring increased security."

Continuity of Governance. The national government of Afghanistan sought to work through "the problem of Badghis" without a proper basis of understanding the local conditions. Not having village and district leadership connected to and integrated with the provincial and national governments meant that policies and operational plans were formed in a vacuum, neither based in local knowledge nor locally supported. Kabul fed FDD from the top-down: policy/strategy decisions (flavored with agendas, nepotism, and politics) were forced on the locals. Not to engage with local leaders well in advance of policy implementation is a recipe for failure. Activists opposing government initiatives can easily propagandize and influence locals against government actions, through coercion, terror, or misinformation. A lack of trustworthy government agents who work with and through community leaders at the village level enables those opposing the government to hold sway. By contrast, the insurgents worked from the bottom-up, influencing the decisions of the elders in a variety of ways.

not to engage with local leaders well in advance of policy implementation is a recipe for failure

Sympathies Are a Force Multiplier. Brute force and ignorance—the tongue-in-cheek characterization of the old Soviet bloc style of warfare—does not work in a 21st-century counterinsurgency environment. Not until the true terrain—the population—is sympathetic to the government's plans can real progress be made. Only to the degree to which the government provides acceptable rule and well-being to the village populace will any military operation enjoy success. The attitudes and inclinations of the inhabitants of the 133 villages in the Morghab Valley were a "force multiplier."[17] The degree to which the people were sympathetic and supportive of one side multiplied the positive effects of actions on that side and marginalized good or magnified the bad of the other. Where the people trust ISAF, ISAF is in charge. Where the people trust the insurgents, the insurgents are in charge.[18] Elders often stated, "We can control our sons, but only when the Taliban aren't around." The fact that the sons were used by insurgents either as fighters or as leverage against local leaders reflects the pervasive influence the insurgents had in the district.

To this day, it is unclear how many true insurgents are in the district, and how many of those were actually hard core as compared to co-opted, opportunist, or partially loyal. It is likely that only a hard-core cadre was in the region in 2008–2009, controlling the populace in much the same way as in classic insurgencies.[19] The coalition in the Afghanistan experiment will

continue to pour treasure and talent into these efforts. Nevertheless, until the Afghan government can address the needs of the average citizen in a way that marginalizes the current powerbrokers, and until the coalition understands how to influence the decisive terrain in the valley, there will be little progress. Unfortunately, the whole-of-government concept never made it off of the paper and into practice, at least not in 2008 or 2009. As a result, then, shape, clear, hold, and build could not work as envisioned. Rather than pulling on the multiple needs with a strong braided rope, the government offered a few strands pulling in different directions, on different problems, for different purposes. Military planners, on the other hand, charged on with implementing FDD, little realizing that their single strand of police training/reform meant little without the braided strength of all the other needed efforts. As a result, even well-intentioned efforts were expended piecemeal and ultimately consumed in the larger tragedy of Bala Morghab district and Afghanistan. **PRISM**

Notes

[1] E.D. Swinton (later Major General Sir Ernest Swinton), "The Defence of Duffer's Drift," *Infantry Journal*, April 1905, available at <www.cgsc.edu/carl/resources/csi/swinton/swinton.asp>.

[2] See International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), Stability Operations Integration Cell (SOIC), "Murghab District, Badghis District Narrative Assessment, 5 May 2010," available at <http://publicintelligence.net/ufouo-stability-operations-information-center-soic-murghab-district-assessment/>.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Most facts throughout this section derive from the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, "Summary of District Development Plan for Bala Morghab District," November 2007, available at <www.mrrd.gov.af/>.

[5] Provincial Development Plan, Badghis Provincial Profile, 8.

[6] *Security sector reform* is the set of policies, plans, programs, and activities that a government undertakes to improve the way it provides safety, security, and justice. It further aims to provide an effective and legitimate public service that is transparent, accountable to civil authority, and responsive to the needs of the public. It may include integrated activities to support defense and armed forces reform; civilian management and oversight; justice, police, corrections, and intelligence reform; national security planning and strategy support; border management; disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration; and concurrent reduction of armed violence. See Field Manual (FM) 3–07, *Stability Operations* (Washington, DC: Headquarters Department of the Army, October 2008), 6-1, available at <www.usacae.army.mil/cac2/Repository/FM307/FM3-07.pdf>.

[7] Unclassified Combined Security Transition Command–Afghanistan J5 Concept Paper, "Enhancing the Capabilities of the Afghan National Police: A Focused District Development Strategy," October 6, 2007.

[8] A *whole-of-government approach* is an approach that integrates the collaborative efforts of the departments and agencies of the U.S. Government to achieve unity of effort toward a shared goal. See FM 3–07.

[9] See FM 3–07 for a discussion on stability operations lines of effort.

[10] As of spring 2010, the U.S. forces partnering with the Afghan National Police in Bala Morghab promised Commander's Emergency Response Program funds to start work again on the mosque. See ISAF SOIC.

[11] Route clearance packages (RCPs) are prized items in Afghanistan, where so many routes are unpaved and therefore easily interdicted with improvised explosive devices (IEDs). This Spanish contingent was in no way characterized as an RCP, but it was capable of detection and remote detonation of any discovered ordnance

wired as an IED or not. It was all that Regional Command–West (RC–W) had at the time, and operations elsewhere in theater precluded any RCP from being transferred temporarily to RC–W. As recently as October 2010, the Italian army remains interested in acquiring a more robust route clearance capability.

[12] Close air support, with a mixed ISAF–U.S. force, was at this time an entire tragi-comedy—a debacle—unto itself. ISAF, operating under its rules of engagement (ROE), has far more restrictive guidelines (self-defense only) than U.S. forces, which operated at that time under Operation *Enduring Freedom* ROEs. This created enormous friction when U.S. forces were in close combat with Afghan National Army forces against enemy forces and requesting close air support, which was (in RC–W) exclusively controlled by the ISAF tactical air controller. More than once, bombs would not drop because the controller himself did not believe he had the authority based on "self-defense," while Embedded Training Team members were in serious danger of being overrun.

[13] In the shape phase of the strategy, the United States and its allies and partners conduct reconnaissance to identify the key leaders, key infrastructure, tribal dynamics, and tribal relationship with the Afghan government, as well as the economic status of a given area. Clearly, the Afghan government and ISAF failed to realize or implement this. See Anthony H. Cordesman, "'Shape, Clear, Hold, and Build': The Uncertain Metrics of the Afghan War" (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, December 2009), available at <http://csis.org/publication/shape-clear-hold-and-build-uncertain-metrics-afghan-war>.

[14] See ISAF SOIC regarding villagers' perceptions of ISAF behavior as recently as spring 2010.

[15] This RC–W decision had more to do with the impending change of command for the commander. He was under an enormous amount of pressure from the Italian Ministry of Defense to minimize risk to Italian troops as they prepared to rotate out of theater at the end of the month.

[16] An email recollection of events from my predecessor, reflecting on decisions in late 2007, illustrates the lack of coordination or consideration of a comprehensive, integrated plan to support this district: "The Bridge was actually pushed by many constituents, me included. In fact, the [U.S. mentor headquarters] may have been the primary driver initially, since nobody else in that [area of operation] pushed for anything. Our main consideration in pushing for this project was to establish infrastructure that would allow support to [Bala Morghab] from both RC–W and RC–[North]. At that time we believed it made sense to repair or replace the [Bala Morghab] bridge in order that military traffic have a safe route across the Morghab River from the west."

[17] A *force multiplier* is a capability that, when added to and employed by a combat force, significantly increases the combat potential of that force and thus enhances the probability of successful mission accomplishment. See Joint Publication 1–02, *DOD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Washington, DC: The Joint Staff, November 8, 2010), available at <www.dtic.mil/doctrine/dod_dictionary>.

[18] ISAF SOIC.

[19] For a superb deeper look at this, I strongly recommend Jeffrey Race's *War Comes to Long An* (University of California Press, 1972). Although a treatise on the Communist Party's work to overthrow the province in the run-up to Saigon's eventual fall, how the Party (substitute the words "antigovernment foe" for "Party," if you like) viewed the mechanics of insurgency is enlightening.

Iraq

A Case Study in Building Civil-Military Capacity, 2007–2010

BY BRADFORD BAYLOR, JEANNE BURINGTON, BRADFORD DAVIS, AND RUSSELL GOEHRING

The United States is currently facing a wide range of complex threats that require a combination of unique resources and responses beyond those that a single U.S. Government department or agency can provide. Despite the wealth of capabilities and expertise spread throughout the government, its departments and agencies generally do not plan and execute together to achieve the best effect. Lessons from multiple U.S. operations point to this core deficiency, described as "the inability to apply and focus the full resources and capabilities of the [United States] in a concerted and coherent way."[1] The combined differences in organizational structure, mandates, authorities, culture, and overall purpose provide collective challenges that can cause missed opportunities and disjointed efforts in operations that have an adverse impact on the Nation's security and interests.[2]

Operations in Iraq from 2003 through 2006 illustrate this problem. While relationships between senior military and civilian leaders generally improved over time, the different U.S. departments and agencies struggled to bring their respective strengths and resources to bear on the counterinsurgency (COIN) challenges faced in Iraq. The historical competition for leadership between the Department of State and Department of Defense (DOD), as well as the inefficiencies, operational gaps, duplications, and conflicting efforts, were challenges. By late 2006, the coalition's chance of success in Iraq appeared bleak. Violence against the coalition and different sectarian groups was spiraling out of control, and Iraq seemed on the brink of—or perhaps already engaged in—civil war.

Introduction

This case study examines the challenges faced by the United States in Iraq from 2007 to 2010 and the ways in which various departments and agencies (primarily DOD and State) learned to work as

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civil-military teams, progressing from a military lead to a partnership to a civilian lead. This study begins with the 2007 change in U.S. strategy and leadership and discusses how, during COIN operations, Multi-National Force–Iraq (MNF–I) headquarters and U.S. Embassy Baghdad laid the groundwork to unify civil-military efforts. The study then looks at the forces on the ground: how they further expanded civil-military partnerships and achieved increased unity of effort. While there were many factors that complicated this mission, success was predicated on MNF–I (later U.S. Forces–Iraq [USF–I]) and civilian-military organizations becoming adaptive learning teams with leaders who drove change.

Laying the Groundwork to Unify Civil-Military Efforts

On January 10, 2007, President George W. Bush announced a new strategy for Iraq aimed at reducing sectarian violence and providing security for the Iraqi population.[3] In support of this, President Bush dedicated additional resources, including military forces and Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs). The decision was also made to change U.S. senior leadership in Iraq, replacing Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad with Ambassador Ryan Crocker, and General George Casey with General David Petraeus.

Both Ambassador Crocker and General Petraeus recognized that an integrated, comprehensive approach was required in Iraq. This civil-military integration was not simply a suggestion; both senior leaders served as forcing functions to ensure that this integration occurred. Ambassador Crocker stated, "Iraq is so complex, the challenge is so large, and the stakes are so great, that this effort obviously cannot be a military effort alone. It cannot be a State Department effort alone. You've got to bring everybody in."[4] Furthermore, General Petraeus stated, "There has to be absolute unity of purpose, unity of effort, even if there cannot be and will not be unity of command. And we did set out to achieve that from the very first phone call that we had together . . . and then in all the subsequent efforts."[5]

In 2007, the vision to integrate civilian and military efforts into a comprehensive approach was communicated and implemented throughout Iraq. The agreed-upon imperative was the need to secure the population as a foundation for progress across all lines of operation. Security provided the basis for increased confidence, which facilitated reconciliation, enhanced communication between the people and government, increased training and mentoring at provincial and local levels, accelerated reconstruction progress, improved attractiveness for foreign investment, encouraged the return of displaced persons (including professionals who had fled the violence), and accelerated the growth and training of the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF). While a measure of security was a necessary foundation for progress in capacity-building and economic development, improvements in governance and the economy supported the sustainment of security gains.

Senior leaders implemented the COIN strategy by disseminating guidance and philosophy to lower levels. It was not enough to have a new strategy understood by a few in the Embassy and MNF–I headquarters—the strategy had to be understood and implemented by the military and civilian personnel who were on the ground, translating that strategy into operations and tactics. Guidance was disseminated to civilian and military staffs and organizations in several ways. One way was through interactive sessions, such as the daily battlefield update assessments and periodic Campaign Assessment Synchronization Board meetings. Although these briefings were both present prior to 2007, General Petraeus modified them from PowerPoint marathons to sessions that

used fewer slides and included interactive discussions on important issues.[6] This change allowed a "cross-pollination" of ideas, as well as facilitated dissemination of guidance for all civil-military efforts. Under General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker, these sessions became more of a joint MNF–I and Embassy effort. Moreover, for initiatives where the military and other agencies were involved, these would be briefed by both a civilian and a military representative.[7]

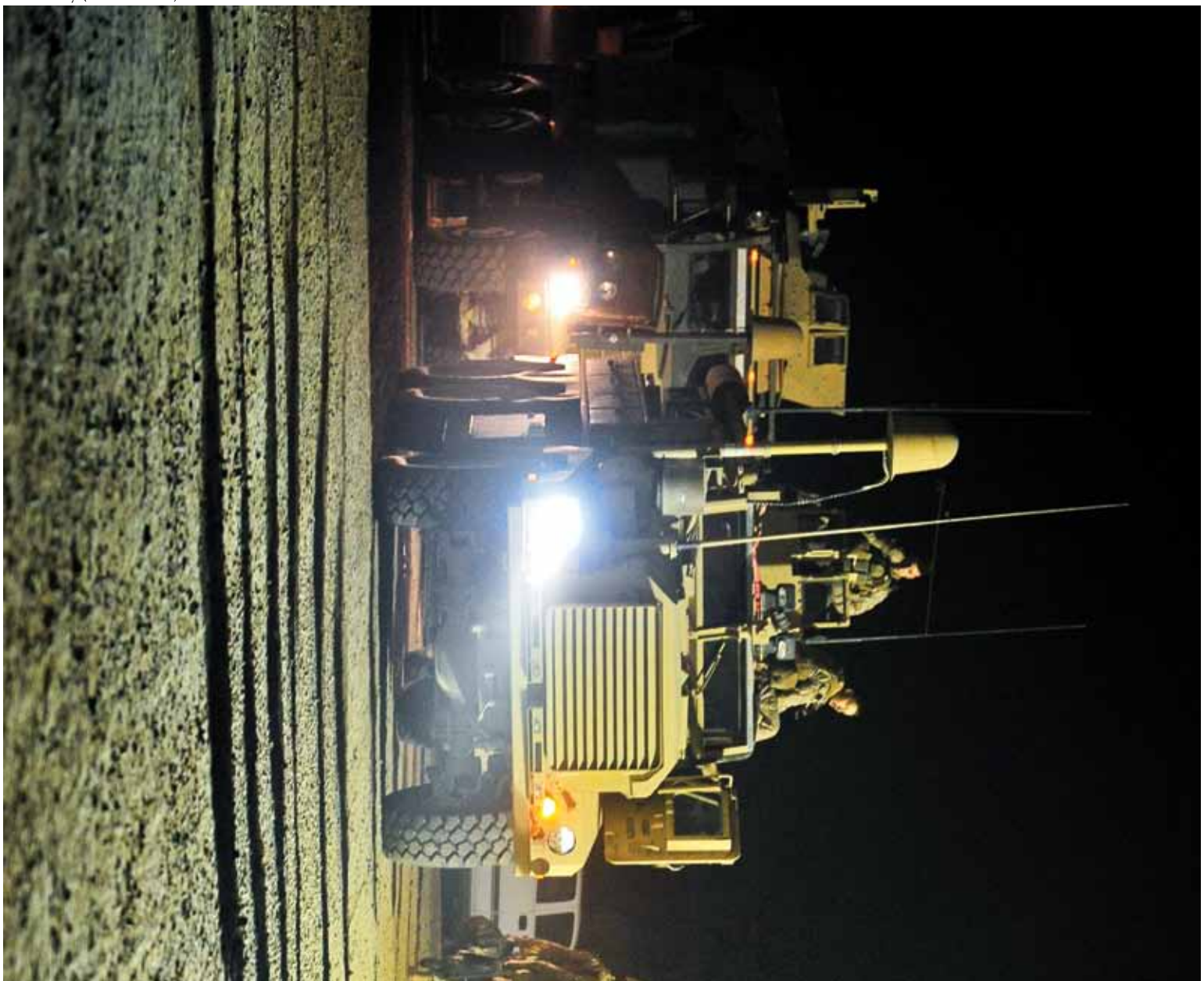
In 2007, the Embassy reorganized to better coordinate and align the economic initiatives of the various U.S. departments and agencies. Prior, the different departments and agencies all reported *individually* to the Deputy Chief of Mission, which sometimes led to a less than coordinated effort. As a result of a review by the Department of State Undersecretary for Management, economic efforts were "clustered" under the Coordinator for Economic Transition in Iraq (CETI) with the appointment of Ambassador Charles Ries in July 2007.[8] Ambassador Crocker gave CETI authority over nine U.S. economic agencies at the Embassy[9] with oversight for the distribution of assistance resources from the civilian budgets appropriated through the Foreign Assistance Act (such as Economic Support Funds). CETI's priority was to bring coherence to the U.S. economic strategy in Iraq across the different funding streams, assistance activities, policy engagements, and ministerial capacity-building. CETI facilitated coordination between agencies and aligned the civilian agencies' efforts with the military efforts. Ambassador Ries was charged with "ensuring that civilian assistance implemented by PRTs or by USAID [U.S. Agency for International Development] was consistent with the military programming under CERP [Commander's Emergency Response Program], and that military and civilian personnel benefited from each other's information." On the policy side, Ambassador Ries also helped troubleshoot, working to resolve problems that the military had with civilian agencies in the Iraqi government.[10]

From 2007 through 2008, MNF–I implemented short-term development programs designed to provide immediate economic and governance impact until more sustainable programs could take root. As security improved, MNF–I efforts became more targeted toward longer term, sustainable economic development. MNF–I attempted to tie its projects and resources to larger capacity-building or provincial development strategies, working with the Embassy to enable the development of the government of Iraq, increasing legitimacy in the eyes of the population. As the situation stabilized even further and the capacity of the Iraqi government grew, MNF–I forces intentionally started to withdraw their resources and "wean" the Iraqis from support, thereby allowing the development of the Iraqis' own capabilities.

security provided the basis for increased confidence, which facilitated reconciliation and accelerated the growth and training of the Iraqi Security Forces

During the summer and fall of 2008, as demand for governance and civil services continued to grow, Multi-National Corps–Iraq (MNC–I) formed the civil capacity Joint Planning Team to develop the MNC–I civil capacity strategy. This team worked with the Embassy's Office of Provincial Affairs (OPA) and USAID to develop the strategy. The objectives were integrated with those of the Department of State and its PRTs, stating that State would be the supported agency for civil

U.S. Army (Liesl Marelli)



Marines load vehicles in preparation for redeployment after year at Camp Ramadi, Iraq

capacity development in Iraq and that coalition force capacity-building efforts would focus on cementing the security gains made to date.[11]

In conjunction with its initial planning for Operations Order 09–01, MNC–I formed the Civil Capacity Synchronization Board to integrate all civil capacity-building efforts. Regular attendees at this board included U.S. departments and agencies, MNF–I, OPA, and international organizations such as the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq.[12]

integration of Iraqi army commanders, local Iraqi leaders, and Western and Arabic media enhanced the realism and complexity of the training environment

Further enhancing coordination, the relationship between OPA and MNC–I was formalized through a Unified Common Plan. This plan delineated the support MNC–I would provide OPA as "lead US government agency for civil capacity development in Iraq," providing a "civil capacity common operating picture, shared expectations, synchronized guidance, and prioritized US resources."[13] It further enabled the Multi-National Division and PRT civil capacity efforts by defining how each would develop related plans at its respective level.[14]

Senior leadership led by example, presenting a united front to external audiences whenever possible.[15] Ambassador Crocker and General Petraeus[16] met jointly with the U.S. National Security Council, U.S. Congress and its delegations, and the media.[17] They also met with Iraqi leadership, including a weekly meeting with Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki and weekly dinners with various other senior Iraqi leaders.[18] These combined meetings promoted the two senior leaders as partners, helped them to be fully informed of each other's efforts, and avoided the exploitation of potential seams between them. Subordinate leaders followed their example by making joint appearances and public statements, enabling a coordinated position that included both political and security considerations.[19]

At the presentation of the Distinguished Service Award to both Ambassador Crocker and General Petraeus in October 2008, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice summarized the civil-military partnership forged in Iraq:

> *Of course, as both Ambassador Crocker and General Petraeus would be the first to say, they've achieved nothing alone and everything together. Indeed, the seamless bond that these men have formed is emblematic of the unity of effort that has defined our entire civil-military partnership in Iraq during these two years. Aside from working out of offices that are no more than 30 feet away from one another, the partnership between Ambassador Crocker and General Petraeus will be studied as a model of counterinsurgency for decades to come. These two leaders have set the tone at the top of Baghdad.*[20]

Expanding Civil-Military Unity of Effort on the Ground

In 2009, the USF–I *Guidelines for Achieving Sustainable Stability* directed U.S. forces to synchronize their efforts with interagency partners to strengthen Iraqi political, economic, diplomatic, and rule of law institutions while avoiding temporary "quick fixes" that could undermine long-term institutional viability.[21] While strategies, orders, key staff organizations, and processes were developed to support this at MNF–I and Embassy levels, the forces on the ground faced many challenges

in further expanding this civil-military unity of effort.

U.S. forces preparing to rotate into Iraq for their third or fourth tour found it challenging to adapt their mindsets to the vastly changed conditions of 2009 and beyond. There were two elements to this mindset change. The first involved the skill sets and understanding required for stability versus COIN operations. The second change was probably the hardest—U.S. forces were transitioning from "being in the lead" during COIN to "being in support" of civil entities during stability operations. This necessitated changes by unit commanders and military training commands to physically and mentally prepare forces for the new environment. The changing training requirements, maintained and distributed by the Center for Army Lessons Learned, were integrated into home station, joint and Service, and in-theater training programs, enabling leaders and units to tailor training to achieve the requisite changes in mindset.

Home station training gave commanders the opportunity and flexibility to tailor their predeployment training program based on unit needs and specific areas of operation. Commanders also leveraged nontraditional training partners to assist. Local university, city resources, border patrol, and the Foreign Service Institute were used to educate staffs in understanding the breadth and complexity of civil-military operations. As a brigade commander noted:

> *Knowing that we were going to Maysan Province with a large chunk of the Iranian border, it was very easy for us to understand we were looking at border enforcement. There are lots of border patrol agents that have rotated into and out of Iraq. So it was easy for us to go to them and say, "Design for me a three-week program. I can . . . train the leadership to understand the ins and outs of border operations. . . ." We also sent the collective leadership of the brigade and the battalions to the city of Austin, Texas to a civil capacity seminar for about three days, working essential services.*[22]

Joint and Service training centers adapted training to sustain foundational warfighting skills while integrating civil-military operations. The Combat Training Centers (CTCs) placed an emphasis on remaining current and integrating lessons learned into rotational force training. This was achieved through extensive dialogue with deployed units, routine video teleconferences with senior commanders, deployment of teams to Iraq to observe the dynamic operating environment first hand, and use of observer trainers with recent combat experience. Integration of role players, to include Iraqi army commanders, local Iraqi leaders, and Western and Arabic media, further enhanced the realism and complexity of the training environment. These efforts enabled the CTCs to shape training and scenarios to closely reflect the current operating environment. As one brigade commander noted, "What we did at the NTC [National Training Center]—we're doing 90 percent of it here [in Iraq]. The training base fully supported what we needed to do here. They were exceptionally adaptable in designing the rotation to train on what we needed."[23]

In-theater training focused on understanding commander's intent, civil-military team-building, and updating situational awareness. The in-theater training by the COIN and Stability Operations Center (COINSOC) provided units with regionally focused training, to include dialects and cultural nuances, as well as functional training on topics such as rule of law. Significantly, the COINSOC experience served

as a civil-military team-building event between the Advise and Assist Brigades (AABs) and their respective PRTs and Stability Transition Teams, providing a forum for standard operating procedure development and the sharing of best practices and lessons learned. Finally, the forum provided an opportunity to receive guidance directly from senior leaders at both USF–I and the Embassy, promoting a better understanding of the commander's intent and greater potential for unity of effort. Commenting on the usefulness of the COINSOC experience, a PRT lead stated, "I think the key area for success for us was going to the COIN Center at COINSOC, and just getting to know the AAB commander and his guys before they got here. I had my governance chief . . . and myself at the COIN Academy. . . . We got things straight right away. . . . We just had to get to know each other, and that is why COINSOC was crucial."[24]

Finally, it is important to point out that it was not only in the military organizations where mindsets changed. Ambassador Peter Bodde, assistant chief of mission, U.S. Embassy Baghdad, opined in late August 2010 how changes in both civil and military organizations produced a unity of effort and results that were the best he had ever seen:

> *But now, we're in a different phase, a transition phase and we're coming to a whole new mindset. I think, certainly on the DOD side, the leadership that's been here the last year, all of our interlocutors, they came here knowing that their job was to transition, to come up with the Joint Campaign Plan, to come up with their part of the Strategic Framework Agreement and how that's implemented. We're doing the same. But this is new stuff in government. It's sort of a brave new world. I think what makes it work is we all have a level of professionalism and competence, and respect for each other. It's probably the best I've ever seen between a military, certainly a DOD and State operation. It's how it should be, but it's nice to see that. I give total credit for that to the leadership who just insisted this will happen and will be maintained. Not that we always agree. If we always agreed then we probably would not be doing enough work.*[25]

USF–I embedded some of its personnel at the Embassy to reinforce planning capacity where it was critically needed. While USF–I and U.S. divisions worked with the Embassy's OPA, divisions and brigades worked with PRTs, planning together, developing coherent and achievable goals, and synchronizing short- and long-term civil capacity development. The OPA deputy considered the support provided by the military as vital to success:

> [Planning] *is not an organic skill set for us* [diplomats]. *But the military brings it out here and it is superb, fantastic. In fact, they did such a good job here* [at OPA] *and we were so proud of that work. . . .* [I]*t was such a huge force enabler that we sat down with* [Embassy] *management and identified other problems* [where we needed planning help]. *We asked for more of these* [planners]. *And they* [USF–I] *said, "Sure, we'll put them on loan to you guys. . . ." I don't know what we would have done without them.*[26]

U.S. forces expanded the reach and reinforced the capacity of the PRTs to enable the development of Iraqi institutions. The civil-military team of division-brigade-PRT helped the Iraqi provincial governments, local governments, and ISF connect with the population

to better understand local issues and concerns. Major General Terry Wolff, commanding general of U.S. Division–Center, amplified, "We call this the 'connective tissue effort' where it is a . . . trinity, where you got the governor, military, and people, and we are in the center. And, we and the PRT are trying to connect all these pieces together, but ultimately we want our linkage to fade out; we want them to connect to each other and they are starting to do that now."[27]

These "connective tissue" building efforts were catalysts for creating a demand for good governance from within the population. Crucial efforts included facilitating and building relationships between the Iraqis themselves (government officials, ISF, and the people) and having Iraqis work within their own framework and processes. As one State Department official noted:

> [We are] *creating a demand in the population for good governance. That demand from the population, if we get this right, will be a continuing influence that years of future Iraqi governments, both local and national, is going to have to contend with. So what they are doing is creating an expectation in the people of Iraq for what a government does. And long after we are gone, if we can get this right, governments of Iraq are going to have to satisfy that demand.*[28]

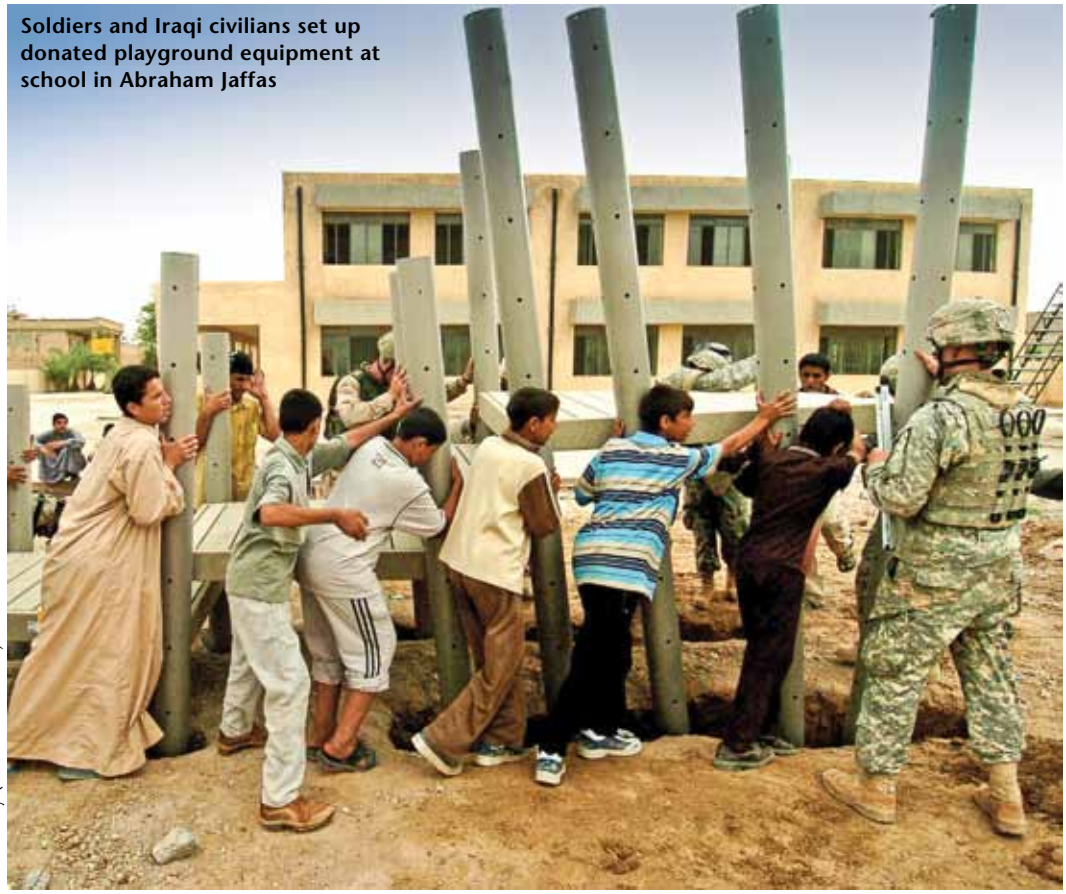
Brigades and PRTs helped increase the capacity of Iraqi provincial governance, enabling enhanced public services and economic opportunities for the population. The use of demonstration projects, such as greenhouses, center pivot and drip irrigation, and grain silos, achieved high return on investment in terms of civil capacity development. In addition, there were numerous examples of division- and brigade-specific expertise (engineering, legal, medical) used to reinforce PRT capacity and enhance civil capacity-building efforts.[29] All of these ventures allowed Iraqis to see for themselves the advantages that certain concepts and technologies could bring to bear.

U.S. forces' support of the Embassy and PRTs strengthened American influence with Iraqi officials. The AABs provided regular, secure transport for PRTs, which enabled frequent civilian engagements with the local and provincial leaders, helping build trust, relationships, and connective tissue.

Moreover, AAB expertise and resources were used to complement PRT governance, economic, and rule of law efforts, enhancing influence with the Iraqis. As one PRT lead noted:

> *The way we are doing the tasks now, they can't be solely done by civilians. Every movement, every project, every initiative that I do comes from the intellectual concrete of the brigade. . . . We have* [the military] *in our governance suite downtown. So their next-door neighbor is the governor himself. If he needs something, he walks into the* [PRT] *governance section. . . . That's where the coordination needs to happen, not between the PRT and* [Brigade Combat Team], *but between the* [Iraqi government] *and* [U.S. Government]. *By merging all of the* [PRT and military] *functions to the greatest extent possible, we focused all our coordination.*[30]

The use of CERP funds became more focused on supporting civil capacity development. The divide narrowed between using these funds to sustain security gains versus the civilian development community focus on longer term, large-scale projects involving improvements to national Iraqi infrastructure. The Embassy and USF–I, as well as the PRTs



Soldiers and Iraqi civilians set up donated playground equipment at school in Abraham Jaffas

U.S. Navy (Michael Larson)

and brigades, achieved a balance between these two competing priorities. As security improved, forces were able to be more discriminating with CERP by funding projects tied to a long-term development strategy.

U.S. forces also aligned their efforts with interagency, international, and nongovernmental organizations for long-term sustainment and development. With the Embassy in the lead, USF–I supported and reinforced planning, execution, and assessment efforts. The Joint Campaign Plan (U.S. Embassy and USF–I) and Unified Common Plans (PRT and brigade or division) were the guiding documents used, all of which greatly facilitated a whole-of-government approach and unity of effort among all interagency organizations involved. In support of the United Nations, USF–I provided critical logistics, security, and movement of United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq personnel, enabling its humanitarian, reconstruction, development, human rights, and political assistance missions.

Conclusion

While conducting COIN operations during the period 2007–2008, the United States laid the groundwork necessary to better unify civil-military efforts. Relationships, orders, staff organizations,

and processes were developed at the USF–I and Embassy levels that resulted in enhanced civil-military capacity. As Operation *Iraqi Freedom* transitioned from COIN to stability operations, the civilian-military teams on the ground further expanded civil-military partnerships and unity of effort. While there were many factors that complicated this mission, success was predicated on MNF–I (later USF–I) and civilian-military organizations becoming adaptive learning teams with leaders who drove change.

Today, although much has been accomplished, Iraq remains a fragile state with an uncertain future. Emma Sky, the chief political advisor to General Raymond Odierno from 2008 to 2010, recently cautioned:

> *Under the terms of the* [Strategic Framework Agreement], *the United States should continue to encourage reconciliation, help build professional civil service and nonsectarian institutions, promote the establishment of checks and balances between the country's parliament and its executive branch, and support the reintegration of displaced persons and refugees. Should Washington fail to provide such support, there is a risk that Iraq's different groups may revert to violence to achieve their goals, and that the Iraqi government may become increasingly authoritarian rather than democratic.*[31]

Best Practices for Unifying Civil-Military Efforts

What follows is a summary of the best practices for unifying civil-military efforts from 2007–2010. The elements described provide a framework for a whole-of-government approach for other complex contingency operations, and can point to potential ways to institutionally improve interagency coordination from the theater to tactical level.

Civil-military coordination between MNF–I/USF–I and the U.S. Embassy was facilitated by:

- Proximity: Being physically collocated helped build relationships and understanding.
- Open communication: Honest, detailed discussions facilitated the sharing of information and helped work through any remaining friction.
- Inclusivity: Everyone was expected to participate, and efforts were made to ensure all voices were heard.
- A focus on complementary capabilities: Everyone brought his or her strengths to the endeavor to fill gaps in capability or support others' capabilities.
- Understanding: Appreciation of and sensitivity to cultures and capabilities enabled development of innovative approaches.
- Choosing the right personnel: High-caliber, experienced personnel were aggressively recruited and then empowered for success. The planning process provided a common understanding of the direction to be taken and cemented relationships among staff and organizations. The resulting organizational agility allowed MNF–I and the Embassy to adapt to the environment, facilitate cooperation, and thicken limited resources.

U.S. efforts attempted to balance long-term development and short-term support to the population. The appropriate balance of efforts changed over time and by location, depending on the nature

of the operating environment. Additionally, as host nation capacity improved, increasing emphasis was placed on supporting the host nation in its reconstruction and economic development. When the environment was kinetic, local short-term projects predominated, trying to generate immediate jobs to provide an alternative to population support to the insurgency. When security conditions improved, projects tended to support longer term growth and development. CERP funding was aligned with PRT goals without undermining nascent host nation institutions. As Iraqi government capacity improved, coalition efforts focused more on enabling the host nation government's economic development efforts.

when security conditions improved, projects tended to support longer term growth and development

Kinetic and nonkinetic activities (referred to later as nonlethal targeting) were mutually supporting. Securing the population provided a necessary foundation for other improvements in governance and economic development. Improvements in governance and economic development sustained security gains.

While unity of command could not be achieved, civil-military cooperation established unity of effort in building Iraqi government legitimacy. This unity of effort was further enhanced by civilian and military leaders at all levels appearing together before all audiences. Regular engagements, both formal and informal, built relationships and encouraged adoption of policies consistent with coalition goals. Senior Embassy and coalition leaders regularly met with senior Iraqi leadership. Similarly, brigades and PRT personnel regularly met with local, district, and provincial leadership. Personal engagement (that is, face-to-face meetings) was used to apply integrated, civil-military leverage in order to combat sectarianism, corruption, and malign influences. Sectarian actors, policies, and programs were countered by private and public persuasion of the responsible leadership, enabled with corroborating intelligence and information. The quality of partnerships drove the effectiveness and the ability to influence.

MNF–I/USF–I and the U.S. Embassy leveraged a variety of sources to maintain situational awareness across the political, military, economic, social, information, and infrastructure domains. Ongoing assessments developed a comprehensive understanding of the changing environment. Sources contributing to these assessments included media, counterterrorism forces, Human Terrain Teams, key leader engagements, routine interaction with host nation partners, bilingual bicultural advisors, and PRTs.

Extensive efforts were made to strengthen ties between the Iraqi national government and its provincial entities. Some approaches brought Iraqi government representatives into the provinces for conferences and discussions with local leaders while other approaches enabled local leaders to meet face-to-face with government officials in Baghdad.

Embassy and coalition representatives worked with the Iraqi government to further economic progress in the country while PRTs and lower echelon coalition forces worked micro-economic initiatives to improve conditions in their local areas.

While the United States wanted to help set the conditions for economic development, it recognized that it was best to let the Iraqis do as much as they could. This increased Iraqi capacity and built legitimacy in the eyes of the population. In 2007, U.S. and coalition representatives

began to take a more advisory and supporting role to the Iraqis. As capacity and capability improved, the coalition and Embassy encouraged the Iraqi government and ISF to do as much as they could, while supporting them with enabling capabilities to fill gaps. U.S. entities engaged with the Iraqi government to influence legal framework, policy, central banking, justice, and trade.[32]

From the beginning of the implementation of the Security Framework Agreement on January 1, 2009, through the end of combat operations on August 31, 2010, there were multiple critical transitions taking place simultaneously and sequentially. These transitions were related to the evolving mission, the ever-changing operational environment, bilateral agreements between the United States and Iraq, normal rotational unit relief in place/transfer of authority events, redeployment of a significant portion of the force, consolidation of headquarters staffs, and the election and seating of new Iraqi officials. While many of the transitions were time-based, USF–I and the Embassy worked diligently to create the conditions required to make the transitions seamless. The conditions and drivers of instability differed from region to region, necessitating varying transition timelines. Strategic guidance and operational orders established transition priorities.

Military staffs, working jointly with the U.S. Embassy, ensured plans were detailed yet flexible enough to be adjusted in the midst of the evolving strategic environment. Each line of operation in the Joint Campaign Plan was analyzed, and the civil-military team determined whether each task, program, project, or relationship would be terminated, completed, transitioned to the Iraqi government, or transformed into a U.S. Embassy responsibility. These efforts identified more than 1,500 functions and/or activities for transfer to other entities.

The civil-military team, seeking to control the narrative, aggressively managed expectations and perceptions. This was accomplished by jointly articulating intentions to U.S. forces, civilian partners, host nation partners and population, regional audiences, and the American public. U.S. forces adopted the mantra "words are weapons"—using specific, clearly defined language to avoid miscommunication. Whenever possible, civil-military teams jointly engaged host nation leadership from strategic/national levels to tactical/local levels. This produced strong, trust-based relationships with host nation partners in order to influence and work through crises. **PRISM**

Notes

[1] U.S. Joint Forces Command, Joint Center for Operational Analysis (JCOA), *Transition to Sovereignty, Joint Lessons Learned for Operation IRAQI FREEDOM*, April 2007 (not releasable to the general public).

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[3] President George W. Bush, "President Bush's Address to Nation on U.S. Policy in Iraq," transcribed in *The New York Times*, January 11, 2007.

[4] Ryan C. Crocker, interview by JCOA, January 11, 2009.

[5] David H. Petraeus, "Remarks at the Presentation of the Distinguished Service Award," U.S. Department of State, October 6, 2008.

[6] David H. Petraeus, interview by JCOA, January 11, 2009.

[7] Former executive officer to commanding general, Multi-National Force–Iraq (MNF–I), interview by JCOA, January 30, 2009.

[8] Patrick Kennedy, interview by JCOA, February 27, 2009.

[9] Those agencies were State Economics Office, Iraq Transition Assistance Office, Departments of Treasury, Commerce, Agriculture, Transportation, Energy, Health, and the U.S. Agency for International Development.

[10] Former Coordinator for Economic Transition in Iraq, U.S. Embassy Baghdad, interview by JCOA, February 11, 2009.

[11] Scott F. Donahue and Daniel L. Higgins, "Building Civil Capacity in Iraq," *Engineer: Professional Bulletin of Army Engineers* 39, no. 2, May–August 2009.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Former executive officer to commanding general.

[16] Later, General Raymond T. Odierno, when he replaced General Petraeus as MNF–I commanding general.

[17] Director, CJ9, MNF–I, interview by JCOA, December 9, 2008.

[18] Former executive officer to commanding general.

[19] Director, CJ9, MNF–I.

[20] Condoleezza Rice, "Remarks at the Presentation of the Distinguished Service Award," U.S. Department of State, October 6, 2008.

[21] Raymond T. Odierno, "Guidelines for Achieving Sustainable Stability," May 3, 2009.

[22] Peter Newell, interview by JCOA, May 11, 2010.

[23] Commander, 1/3 Infantry Division Advise and Assist Brigade, interview by JCOA, August 21, 2010.

[24] Mr. Stewart, PRT Team Lead, Salah ad Din Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT), interview by JCOA, February 2, 2010.

[25] Peter Bodde, interview by JCOA, August 18, 2010.

[26] Deputy, Office of Provincial Affairs, U.S. Embassy Baghdad, interview by JCOA, August 16, 2010.

[27] Terry Wolff, interview by JCOA, August 14, 2010.

[28] Deputy Director, Political-Military Affairs Iraq Desk, U.S. Department of State, interview by JCOA, July 9, 2010.

[29] Ms. Malzhan, North Baghdad embedded PRT Lead, interview by JCOA, February 3, 2010; and PRT Lead, Kirkuk PRT, interview by JCOA, February 4, 2010.

[30] PRT Lead, Kirkuk PRT.

[31] Emma Sky, "Iraq, From Surge to Sovereignty," *Foreign Affairs*, March–April 2011.

[32] CJ9 Economics Division, MNF–I, interview by JCOA, November 10, 2008.

Book Review

Weak Links: Fragile States, Global Threats, and International Security

By Stewart Patrick
Oxford University Press, 2011
352 pp., $29.95
ISBN: 978-0-19975-151-8

REVIEWED BY PAULINE H. BAKER

Imagine a debate erupting in the United States over how much the government should invest in cancer research. (Such a debate might well emerge from the budget cutting that we are going to face over the next few years.) One school of thought argues that we should continue to fund the research generously because men have about a 1 in 2 chance of developing cancer at some point in their lives, and women have a 1 in 3 chance. Impressive statistics, says the other side, but while millions may contract cancer, the actual number of cancer deaths is estimated to be less than 600,000 in 2011. Millions of Americans may suffer and we should make them comfortable, but cancer is not an existential threat to America. We need not continue funding the search for a cure.

Stewart Patrick's book on fragile or failing states is the national security equivalent of the "it's-not-so-bad-after-all" school of thought. And it is equally unpersuasive.

This is an unexpected conclusion because Patrick starts off well, citing prominent foreign policy leaders on both sides who have warned of the dangers of failing states, including George W. Bush, Barack Obama, Condoleezza Rice, Robert Gates, Hillary Clinton, and former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Michael Mullen. Nevertheless, Patrick thinks they are all wrong. He states, "The relationship between state fragility and transnational threats is more complicated and contingent than the conventional wisdom would suggest." He coolly declares that "globally, most fragile states do not present significant security risks, except to their own people."

Patrick is a respected foreign affairs analyst with the Council on Foreign Relations. Some years back, when he was working at the Center for Global Development, he collaborated with United Nations Ambassador Susan Rice, then with the Brookings Institution, to produce an Index of State Weakness in the Developing World. In his new book, Patrick uses this index to explore the relationship of state fragility and five major issues: transnational terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), transnational crime, energy security, and infectious disease. Unfortunately, in trying to quantify linkages, he misses the forest for the trees, making several conceptual and methodological mistakes.

To begin, Patrick applies an American yardstick to the analysis, even though he asserts that he is looking at state fragility "globally." Repeatedly, he makes his assessments on the basis of how state fragility affects U.S. security interests, giving little significance to its impact on other states, regions, peoples, and world order generally.

Pauline H. Baker is President Emeritus of The Fund for Peace. She led several programs focused on state fragility, including the development of The Failed States Index, an annual global index of 177 states that has been produced by The Fund for Peace and published in *Foreign Policy* since 2005.

Second, he claims that he has a new approach: he matches the five transnational issues with the countries that have the worse rankings in his index. This is a new, but not necessarily better, approach. Eleven others are mentioned in a brief boxed insert entitled "Existing Attempts to Define and Measure State Weakness," all of which are dismissed in a page and a half. It looks as if Patrick inserted this as an afterthought to cover possible anticipated criticism that his analysis ignores insights from other research, which, in effect, it does.

Third, while his approach is original, his conclusions are overly simplistic, based on an index that, for these purposes, is flawed. A summary chart of the Patrick-Rice Index (sometimes referred to as the Brookings Index) lists three categories of state fragility: the "truly failed and critically weak states," "weak states," and "states to watch." However, the criteria by which Patrick matches the links between the three categories and the five issues are not altogether clear. For example, he asserts that "weak but functioning states" are the most hospitable and preferable environments for those who want to foster disorder in the world, but he does not say whether he means that they target the "weak states," the "states to watch," or both.

The lack of clarity stems in part from the fact that the index is selective and static—selective in that it leaves out stable, strong, and well-performing states, including states from the developed world, and static in that it was produced using data from 2008 (or the next closest year) and was produced only once. Thus, not only is the sample too narrow, but the timeframe is also too short to make the kind of generalizations contained in this book. The index does not tell us whether there has been improvement or deterioration in these states, or whether the observations and findings are valid for other periods. There are no trend lines. In sum, Patrick's conclusions are based on skewed evidence collected at one point in time.

In addition, Patrick makes his judgments based on a single calculation: whether there is a statistical correlation between the number of fragile states in the bottom two quintiles of his index and the number of incidents or links occurring in each of the five transnational issues. This is quantitative analysis at its weakest, for it ignores qualitative differences among the states and threats. For example, it might be useful to compare aggregate criminal incidents of transnational crime in different states as a proxy indicator of potential WMD smuggling opportunities. However, a low correlation does not necessarily mean a low threat potential. After all, only one successful incident of significant nuclear, biological, or chemical smuggling is needed for a catastrophic incident to take place. To be of value to policymakers, researchers have to find the unexpected and unpredictable events, not limit themselves exclusively to the typical or frequent ones that we already know about.

There are also major blind spots. One typical shortcoming is Patrick's tendency to confuse "strong states" with "strongman states." Strong states have legitimate, competent, and representative institutions that can manage society's problems peacefully, without an external administrative or military presence. Strongman states, on the other hand, may appear to be strong due to authoritarian tactics and large security forces, but they are really weak and often brittle entities, held together by corrupt dictators, oligarchs, or thugs who deliberately undermine institutions that are not personally loyal to them. State institutions cannot govern successfully once the strongmen are removed—through revolutions, coups, assassinations,

popular uprisings, invasions, or death by natural causes. Things tend to fall apart when they go. Before the Arab Spring, many would have classified Egypt as a strong, albeit authoritarian, state. Actually, it was a strongman state that was weak at the core, similar to the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and many others. Not all strongman states are destined to collapse or disintegrate, but they all contain the seeds of their own downfall if they do not adopt reforms or initiate fundamental change before those seeds germinate. By that time, the risk of collapse will be much greater, and the nature of the change will likely be more violent.

In every one of the five transnational issues examined, Patrick concludes that the threat may be real, but it does not come directly from the weakest of the weak, as is so often assumed. On WMD proliferation, for example, he states that it is not failing states that offer opportunities for proliferation. Rather, "the most problematic group of countries may be relatively 'strong states to watch' that have or seek nuclear weapons capabilities." In his framework, *states to watch* are defined as the more functional ones that still perform poorly in the bottom quintile of his index in at least two areas of state performance. This is where things get confusing. Such states, he argues, may include fragile democracies and authoritarian regimes, as well as regionally or globally significant counties such as Russia, China, Egypt, India, Venezuela, and Turkey. There is some truth to this observation, but Patrick underestimates the dangers of nuclear smuggling in fragile states, which are quite real. Border guards can be bought, illicit transactions are common, smuggling is endemic, and terrorist financing can be used to transfer nuclear materials. In ungoverned or poorly governed territories, there is little law enforcement and meager adherence to international norms of nonproliferation.

Patrick states that "Arguably, the only weak states that could pose a direct military threat to the United State are North Korea and Pakistan." Technically, this is true if one defines *direct military threat* as a full-scale nuclear attack on our homeland, but that is a 20th-century definition. Besides 9/11—a direct military attack on our homeland that originated from a failed state—there are more potential threats from states such as Iran and China. Although neither is likely to launch a full-scale direct nuclear attack on the United States anytime soon, they could be dangerous adversaries in other ways and under other conditions. Then there are threats that come in the form of rogue or complicit groups and individuals in weak and failing states, such as Pakistan's A.Q. Khan, who, alone or in concert with government officials, supplied nuclear know-how and materials to North Korea and Libya. In the 21st century, we face complex challenges including "threat convergence"—where the multiple threats of weak and fragile states, WMD proliferation, and terrorism overlap. This is a difficult concept to measure statistically, but it presents serious dangers nonetheless.

Patrick observes that "weak states do have certain vulnerabilities that proliferators might attempt to exploit," but that "globally, . . . state fragility does *not uniformly* correlate with proliferation potential" (emphasis added). Does any correlation apply "uniformly"? Is that sufficient reason to invalidate the association entirely? On whether weak states attract terrorists, Patrick similarly writes, "with the important exception of Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, weak states do not appear to have provided *disproportionally large* pools of recruits or targets for recent terrorism operations" (emphasis added). What, exactly, constitutes "disproportionally large"? And why should Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan be seen

as *exceptions* and not *prototypes* that can be imitated elsewhere? How does he know the recruits who flocked to Iraq have not dispersed to other areas? Patrick tries to cover himself with rhetorical qualifications throughout the book, stating that correlations are imperfect, threats are not disproportionally large, and conclusions about future dangers are exaggerated.

Equally thin assertions about fragile states and transnational terrorism generally are based only on al Qaeda and its affiliates, excluding all other terrorist organizations. Like his conclusion on WMD proliferation, he finds that "rather than truly failed states, what terrorists [read al Qaeda] and other illicit transnational groups find most conducive are weak but functional states," such as Pakistan and Afghanistan. Putting aside the questionable notion that these two countries are "functional states," the main problem with this view is that it is outdated. Terrorism experts argued this line for years, but it appears to have grown out of fashion. Experience shows that al Qaeda and its affiliates use whatever territory offers them the freedom to operate, even if they are basket cases that provide more difficult environments. Somalia and Yemen, two "truly failed and critically weak states," are regarded by the U.S. Government as containing the greatest terrorist threats since the death of Osama bin Laden. If that is so, then Patrick is pointing us in the wrong direction. Al Qaeda may be in retreat from its traditional strongholds, but its affiliated groups have metastasized. In any event, a blanket statement disassociating terrorism and state fragility does not hold when so many other terrorist organizations, such as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), Shining Path, Jemaah Islamiya, Hizbollah, and Lashkar-e Tayyiba, are omitted from the analysis.

And so it goes with each of the five threats, including energy security, transnational crime, and infectious diseases. None, in Patrick's view, rises to the level of being linked to state fragility in a significant way. In each instance, Patrick cites situations in which linkages might be made, and they may even be serious, but then he turns around and debunks his own initial analysis, concluding that, overall, they are insignificant.

The book is strongest when the focus is on the qualitative description of the five transnational threats. Indeed, if readers were to ignore the simplistic correlations, subjective exceptions, selectivity of the sample, static nature of the data, and rhetorical qualifications, they would get a better understanding of the real world threats facing us today. Indeed, the analysis of the five issues is so strong, and the linkages with state fragility so evident, that most readers would gain real value from reading these sections that can stand on their own. Nevertheless, in the end, these readers are likely to come to very different conclusions from those of the author.

Despite downplaying the threat, Patrick ends on a solid note. He maintains rightly that the United States should have a national strategy toward weak and failing states. It would have been preferable for him to have examined how to construct such a strategy, and what its central components should be, than simply calling for one after discrediting the importance of the issue.

Weak and failing states represent a new class of states whose internal weaknesses became evident after the Cold War, when superpowers lost interest in propping up foreign proxies. Their internal weaknesses had existed for decades, but they were suppressed by local leaders and papered over by external allies. "Big

men" in weak states ruled as tsars for decades, surviving in a bipolar world by exploiting the wider competition between the superpowers who did not want to rock the boat by pointing out human rights abuses and exposing oppression by allies. The time for tolerating such state pathology is fast running out. The Arab Spring is but one byproduct of that trend. Others will follow, at least for the next decade or two, as the growing pressures from globalization, youth bulges, economic hardship, inequality, mass migrations, international trade, information technology, and popular discontent combine to sweep away dictatorial rule. The results of festering state fragility will be seen in many ways, from famines, natural disasters, and other humanitarian disasters that overwhelm local authorities, to popular uprisings, extremist movements, and regime changes that will shake the world's power structures. To ignore or dismiss state fragility is to invite more human tragedies and violent unrest, which will affect the security and well-being of strong states as well as weak ones and transform the nature of the international political order.

A U.S. global strategy toward state fragility need not require significant new resources. It simply requires smarter investment of existing resources, a shared and coordinated international response, solid early warning techniques, culturally sensitive and well-timed interventions, and, most of all, a core group of officials committed to addressing the problem with enlightened leadership.

The last thing we need is an Alfred E. Neuman who says, "What, me worry?" PRISM

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