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# PRISM

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VOL. 4, NO. 1

2012

CCO  
CENTER FOR  
COMPLEX OPERATIONS  
DIPLOMACY • DEFENSE • DEVELOPMENT

A JOURNAL OF THE CENTER FOR COMPLEX OPERATIONS

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Iraqi army soldiers line up to vote in elections in Assariya, Iraq, December 2005

# How to Build Democratic Armies

BY ZOLTAN BARANY

**D**emocratization and thus the building of democratic armies usually take place in response to a major change that shocks the political system and sets it on a new path. The pivotal event may have been a long time coming or triggered in response to external causes. There are three categories of events to consider: building an army after war, during regime change, and following state formation.

Wars, particularly the two kinds of wars discussed in this article—cataclysmic wars such as World War II and civil wars—typically upset the status quo and induce major political changes that include the rebuilding of the armed forces. In the case of major wars, I am addressing the losing side, the country that suffered a devastating defeat (for example, Germany and Japan).

Regime change is another principal reason for building new armies. The old authoritarian regime—here I consider both military and communist regimes such as South Korea and Chile vs. Romania and Russia, respectively—was, by definition, supported by antidemocratic armed forces that must be reformed in order to be the servants of the emerging democratic political order.

Finally, state transformation poses another sort of demand for a new military. The two sub-categories of state transformation I take up in this article are those following colonialism (for example, India and Ghana), when a former colony becomes an independent state, and after (re)unification or apartheid (for example, Germany and South Africa), when two different political or social entities are joined. The number of these contexts might be further increased or subdivided, but they are broad enough to present most of the different challenges political, military, and civic elites face as they attempt to democratize their armed forces and, more generally, military politics.

In my recently published book, *The Soldier and the Changing State*,<sup>1</sup> I examined the following cases in the contexts and settings shown in the table.

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Table.

Context	Setting (following)	Cases
War	Major war	West Germany, Japan, Hungary
	Civil war	Bosnia and Herzegovina, El Salvador, Lebanon
Regime change	Military rule	Spain, Portugal, Greece
		Argentina, Chile, Guatemala
	Communist rule	South Korea, Thailand, Indonesia
State transformation	Colonialism	Slovenia, Russia, Romania
	(Re)unification and Apartheid	India, Pakistan, Bangladesh
		Ghana, Tanzania, Botswana
		Germany, Yemen, South Africa

Some crucial disparities between these settings appear even at first glance. For instance, after defeat in a major war, outside power(s) took on the responsibility to build new armed forces (West Germany, Japan). External influence is also considerable in the postcolonial and post-civil war settings, but

*external influence is considerable in postcolonial and post-civil war settings, but in the others building democratic armies is usually managed mostly internally*

in the others the project of building democratic armies is usually managed mostly internally. And, of course, integrating parts of East Germany’s armed forces into the West German Bundeswehr and establishing an army free of racial discrimination after white supremacist rule in South Africa presented challenges not experienced elsewhere.

Which of these predemocratic settings are the most conducive to the successful

democratization of military politics? What are the main conditions and policies that encourage the development of democratic civil-military relations and which ones impede it? How does the process of army-building differ in the various political environments in which democratic armies are built? These are some of the key questions those in charge of military reform ought to be able to answer.

**Different Tasks, Different Processes**

One conclusion that quickly emerges is that there are enormous differences not only between contexts and settings, but also within the same settings between the individual cases. The key objective in every setting is the same, however: to develop armed forces committed to democracy and overseen by civilian politicians in the executive and legislative branches of government. What are the major tasks and what generalizations (indicated by the bulleted lists) can one make about the process?

*After Major War.* The main tasks for army-builders after a major war are demobilization,

disarmament, purging the armed forces of personnel implicated in war crimes, and the indoctrination of the emerging army's officers and soldiers with democratic values. In many cases, and certainly in West Germany and Japan, after defeat in a major war politicians and society at large are deeply suspicious of remilitarization, and the military profession tends to lose its former luster. Moreover, the new constitutions place constraints on military activity that in some cases might even strait-jacket the armed forces in future defensive scenarios or effectively prohibit the state's use of the armed forces. Such legislations have given rise to curious situations, such as Article 9 of the 1947 Japanese constitution that banned collective self-defense.

- Foreign actors are highly likely to be involved in postwar state-building, including the building of the new armed forces.
- The devastating defeat of the old regime and the old army tends to advance the building of the new regime because it increases the victors' leverage and, in democratizing states, society's openness to a new political system and new army.
- The traditions of the defeated army are likely to be rejected and the new regime may overcompensate for past political mistakes by introducing regulations that limit the new army's effectiveness.

*After Civil War.* Thinking about army-building in the wake of civil war sharpens one's appreciation of the importance of peace treaties. While peace treaties ultimately end war, they occasionally undermine state authority (Bosnia), do not address the basic issues that spawned civil war to begin with (El Salvador), and even legitimize foreign military presence

in the country (Lebanon). The main tasks after civil war are demobilization, the disarmament of former combatants, the reintegration of the erstwhile warring parties into a newly integrated military force, and the demilitarization of politics. Some of the issues requiring careful decisionmaking are the timing of withdrawal for international peacekeepers and administrators. Another important concern is the equitable allocation of political and military positions according to the proportion of ethnic or religious communities. The most difficult task of all, however, is to convince former enemies that their loyalty to the new democratic constitution should come before their allegiance to their own community.

- Foreign actors, especially international organizations, frequently play a major role in building the new post-civil war army.
- Peace agreements, often hastily concluded, all too often do not focus sufficiently on actual provisions for postconflict army-building. For instance, disarming the former combatants is nearly always difficult and hard to complete.
- Due to the extremely time-consuming process of building trust between former enemies, army-building in post-civil war environments usually takes longer than it does in other contexts.

*After Military Rule.* The steps that must be taken in post-praetorian political systems everywhere are virtually identical: the army must be extracted from politics, the economy, and internal security organizations; its autonomy must be reduced along with its size and privileges; and a new institutional framework must be created for democratic civil-military relations. The question of how democratizers



should proceed is largely determined by the amount of leverage the outgoing military regime enjoys. In countries where the military regime retained some public support (such as in Chile, Spain, and South Korea), army-builders must act with caution and not jeopardize the transition process by needlessly accelerating the tempo of transition. In countries where the military regime retained minimal or no public backing (such as Argentina and Greece), democratizers can forge ahead without having to appease the generals of yesterday. Still, in many cases the military responds to the diminution of its privileges with hostile action, whether putting troops on alert as a warning to politicians or staging an outright rebellion or coup attempt. Prudent political leadership

*in many cases the military responds to the diminution of its privileges with hostile action*

is needed to take the sting out of the military's bite or, better yet, prevent them from engaging in threatening activities.

- The military regime's record will largely affect its leverage in dealing with the successor regime.
- During the transition period, democratizers should prepare for the possibility of political interference, even coup attempts, from the armed forces.

***After Communist Rule.*** If the main task of post-military rule democratizers is to take the military out of politics, in postcommunist systems it is the opposite, to take politics out of the military. In this kind of polity, the military was heavily indoctrinated by the Communist

Party, which maintained its organizational network in the armed forces down to the company level. In the wake of communism's demise, the Communist Party, along with all other political parties, must be removed from the barracks. The political indoctrination of officers and soldiers must be replaced by professional education and training and instruction in democratic principles in the armed forces.

- Civilian oversight of the armed forces must be transferred from the Communist Party to the executive branch and the legislature.
- In newly independent postsocialist states, the occupational prestige of the military will likely rise because officers and non-commissioned officers will be representatives of national interests, not supranational (that is, Soviet) interests, as in the past.
- The more difficult the process of transition, the more interest postsocialist regimes will display in joining military alliances.

***After Colonialism.*** The most important objective of army-builders after colonial rule is to establish independent armed forces and train a new officer corps. A related task is to get the colonial officers, who frequently stay behind until new officers can be trained, out of the country. Most often, postcolonial armies are not built from scratch but are built on the foundations of the armed forces left behind by the colonial power and can draw benefit from the positive attributes of that organization. For instance, even 65 years after the end of colonial rule on the subcontinent, the training, professionalism, and esprit de corps instilled by the British are some of their most lasting legacies in India and Pakistan. Many newly



independent countries are led by intellectuals who are strongly affected by the antimilitary bias of their activist years. Such a predisposition can negatively affect defense policy and, ultimately, the country's security. Another danger in many postcolonial settings is conflating the roles of the military and the police, which result in the former getting bogged down in domestic disturbances. This, in turn, is bad for the army's morale and societal reputation and introduces all kinds of negative vibes to the barracks (temptation to treat one ethnic or religious community differently, corruption, and others).

- Ethnic/tribal/religious identity is one of the most sensitive issues in the building of political institutions, including the armed forces.
- Especially in less developed states, the importance of competent political leadership is difficult to exaggerate.
- The robust executive control of the military in many postcolonial environments is accompanied by the legislature's weakness in overseeing the armed forces.

*After (Re)Unification and Apartheid.* There are only a few cases of army-building when two entities are brought together. But while re(unification) took place only in Germany and Yemen in modern times, one might contemplate the issue in past scenarios, such as the process of building a new army from the erstwhile warring sides of the U.S. Civil War. Also, reunification may well come about in the foreseeable future between the Koreas as well as between China and Taiwan. Post-apartheid army-building is even more unusual and presents interesting challenges to the would-be army-builder. The most important task in this

kind of context is to decide whether the two armies/guerrilla forces should be integrated (South Africa) or should one be essentially dismantled and/or a certain part of it be absorbed by the other (Germany). Depending on the political situation, this context is usually the most politically sensitive and must be dealt

*many newly independent countries are led by intellectuals who are strongly affected by the antimilitary bias of their activist years*

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with circumspectly. An important danger in the army-building process in this setting is the diminution of the newly integrated fighting forces' quality.

- The Cold War is a key background in all of the contemporary cases (including several potential future cases).
- The relative strength/leverage of the sides that are being united will largely determine the shape of the postunification/integration regime, including the kind of armed forces it will maintain.

### **Which Settings Are Most Conducive to Military Democratization?**

There are profound disparities not only among the three contexts and the six settings they encompass, but also within the individual regions themselves. Still, the settings that hold out the most promise of successful democratization are those following a devastating defeat in a major war, those following military rule in Europe, and those following a communist regime. Why?

Four things become immediately clear about the success of democracy-building in post-World War II Germany and Japan. First,

their democratization process had enduring and committed support from powerful democratic states. Second, both enjoyed high levels of social and economic development that aided postwar reconstruction. Third, because of the overwhelming political defeat of the ancien régime, institution-builders could start pretty much with a clean slate and did not need to excessively concern themselves with appeasing the old ruling class. Finally, these societies' memories of the excesses of militarism and the devastation visited on them by a self-inflicted war are likely to have motivated the extraordinary dedication of political and societal elites to the task of creating a democratic future and democratic civil-military relations.

*communist armies were firmly under civilian control even if the Communist Party was exercised by that control*

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Another setting favorable to democratization was Southern Europe after military rule. Although the shining example in this regard is clearly Spain, Portugal has also succeeded in developing democratic military politics, even if it has taken longer.<sup>2</sup> Greece is somewhat of an outlier primarily because of the weakness of its parliament in defense-security affairs. The important commonality in all three cases is the lure of membership in international organizations, particularly the European Economic Community (the precursor of the European Union), which holds out the promise of prosperity and international respectability for the sake of which political compromises are worth making.

Postcommunist states, particularly European postcommunist states, have also

been quite adept at transforming their civil-military relations. Slovenia was perhaps the most successful, but Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary compiled strong records as well. The prospect of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and European Union membership were strong incentives for postcommunist states, especially those such as Bulgaria, Romania, and Slovakia, whose progress toward democratic consolidation was more halting in the 1990s.<sup>3</sup> In other words, just as in Southern Europe, in Eastern Europe, too, international organizations were able to push domestic policies in a more democratic direction. Another reason for the relative success in building democratic armies in the postcommunist context is that this setting posed comparatively few difficult challenges for transforming civil-military relations. Most importantly, communist armies were firmly under civilian control even if the Communist Party exercised that control. Once party organizations were banished from the barracks, the hardest project was to infuse legislative oversight with substance.

It is clear, however, that the kind of context we are considering has no convincing correlation with the successful democratization of military affairs. The "after military rule" setting spawned positive examples in the Southern European context, but experiences in Latin America and Asia were more mixed. In the other settings, there were few cases of democratizing civil-military relations that did not have some serious drawbacks. One exception may be South Korea, which succeeded for a number of reasons including solid political leadership, relative economic prosperity, robust civil society, and the absence of the divisive issue of ethno-religious identity, the last particularly important in postcolonial and post-civil war

settings. Botswana could be another such outlier were it not for the domineering role of the executive branch in its civil-military relations.

### What Have We Learned?

What should democracy activists and politicians do in the defense-security domain to accelerate democratic consolidation? What should they avoid doing? What advice can we offer to those who formulate and implement policy?

**Good Leaders.** The availability of inspired and inspiring leadership is a factor that can be and often has been exceedingly important in successful democratization. Generally speaking, the more sophisticated the network of political institutions and the more highly developed the political system, the less impact individual leaders have. In contrast, where political institutions are embryonic and basic political relationships are yet to be defined—such as after colonial rule—good leaders can be hugely influential. Put differently, a long-standing consolidated democracy can successfully weather a mediocre and even an incompetent leader, while for a fragile state in the process of regime transition, a bad leader could be ruinous. Charismatic postcolonial leaders such as Jawaharlal Nehru of India, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, and Julius Nyerere of Tanzania are often instrumental in establishing their countries' first effective political parties.

Nyerere and Seretse Khama of Botswana were great postcolonial leaders who astutely conceived the proper role of the armed forces in their states. Following the 1964 Mutiny of the Tanganyika Rifles, the precursor of the Tanzanian People's Defense Force, Nyerere understood that his country's political stability required close collaboration between the

party-state and the military. Seretse Khama, however, wisely refused to establish a standing army—the cost of which, in any event, would have likely been prohibitive for the country prior to the discovery of major diamond deposits—until external security threats made it necessary, more than a decade after independence. It is easy to appreciate the stature of these politicians when they are contrasted with someone like Nkrumah who, while no less charismatic, was far more concerned with burnishing his own myth while needlessly antagonizing the army and running his country into the ground. Nehru is an unusual example of an otherwise great leader who was utterly ignorant of military affairs but nonetheless got deeply involved in them. He marginalized and humbled India's highly professional armed forces and involved them in an unnecessary war—the 1962 clash with China—that they could not possibly win.

Strong and enlightened political leadership is especially beneficial during regime change. Several states in my study were fortunate enough to have excellent and even visionary leaders such as Konrad Adenauer of West Germany and Yoshida Shigeru of Japan in times of epochal transformations. A number of them were instrumental in democratizing or attempting to democratize civil-military relations: Kim Young-sam in South Korea, Chuan Leekpai in Thailand, Raúl Alfonsín in Argentina, Patricio Aylwin and Ricardo Lagos in Chile, and Alfredo Cristiani in El Salvador. As in other contexts, some leaders rise to the challenge in difficult times while others do not. Michelle Bachelet, a victim of Augusto Pinochet's rule, became an outstanding politician and an able and judicious steward of the Chilean armed forces as defense minister and later as president. But Néstor Kirchner and

Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner needlessly antagonized and humiliated the Argentine military as an institution decades after the fall of the generals' regime. Monarchs, unelected as they are, are no exception. Spain was lucky to have King Juan Carlos during the heady days of the 1981 coup attempt. Thailand's widely idolized King Bhumibol Adulyadej, however, has continued to support coup-makers and military rule and has remained deeply apprehensive about real and substantive democracy.

***Unambiguous and Transparent Institutional Framework.*** Providing the armed forces with a transparent political environment ought to be a key objective of democratizers. Constitutions should be clear about the chain of command in peacetime, wartime, and during national emergencies. Just how important it is to clarify what signifies a "national emergency," for

*in its dealings with the armed forces leadership, the government should strive for transparency*

instance, was demonstrated by the Salvadoran example. According to the 1992 Chapultepec Peace Agreement, the Salvadoran army was constitutionally limited to external security operations and providing help in national emergencies—the latter was to denote, but did not explicitly state, natural disasters. When years later the army was deployed to counter an escalating crime wave, the government justified it with the national emergency provision.<sup>4</sup> What is an acceptable political endeavor by active duty, reserve, and retired armed forces personnel? Should they be able to vote? Join political parties? Appear in uniform at political rallies? Run for office? Such matters must

be explained and regulated, and the consequences of noncompliance must be unambiguously and consistently applied.

In its dealings with the armed forces leadership, the government should strive for transparency. If at all possible, political leaders should explain to the top brass, for instance, the political, social, and economic justifications for the defense budget, why the promotion of General X was vetoed by the prime minister, or the reasons for party debates regarding the abolition of universal conscription. Such transparency reduces insecurity, builds trust, and helps eliminate rumormongering and scheming.

***Gradualism and Compromise.*** In many democratic transitions following military rule, swift and drastic changes are inadvisable because they might unnecessarily provoke the ire of those for whom regime change means the loss of their power and privileges. A gradualist approach that favors coalition-building and a willingness to make acceptable compromises is usually a prudent way to proceed. For instance, Adolfo Suárez, Spain's first democratically elected prime minister, was smart to collaborate with reformist groups within the army and implement changes after consulting with them. In South Korea, too, Kim Young-sam was wise to discuss his reform initiatives with influential generals. They, in turn, became supporters of his reform program and used their clout to neutralize budding opposition in the high command.

In countries where the armed forces retain some political clout and public esteem after withdrawing from power, it is especially important not to needlessly alienate them by overly rapid reform programs designed to reduce their autonomy and perquisites. The inability of politicians to compromise when

necessary or to cut some slack to the generals on issues of minor importance might easily serve to alienate people who would otherwise be willing to subordinate themselves to civilian control. In other words, strategic compromises can enhance the prospects of successful democratic consolidation and civilian control over the armed forces.

For example, Patricio Aylwin was prudent not to start prosecuting generals for human rights abuses because he understood the timing was not right and that insistence on expediency could have resulted in a military coup. Nevertheless, by establishing the Commission on Truth and Reconciliation to search for the truth, identify victims, and investigate accountability, he signaled to Chileans that neither Pinochet's victims nor his henchmen would be forgotten.<sup>5</sup> In due course, once the army's political influence had faded and Pinochet was no longer a lightning rod for the officers' political activism, those guilty of human rights violations began to be held accountable. Similarly, Indonesian President S.B. Yudhoyono acted judiciously by not insisting on terminating the armed forces' business activities in late 2009, even if that meant not delivering on his promise to his constituents. He understood that budgetary restrictions did not permit the drastic expansion of defense outlays that would have been imperative to cover the revenue—which was used in part for operational expenses—the military would lose if they were banished from the economic realm. This concession ensured the generals' quiescence while allowing the state to gradually improve finances and create the fiscal conditions for the army's complete withdrawal from moneymaking ventures.

***Strengthen Legislative Involvement.*** One of the important conclusions of this article is

that there is a direct correlation between vigorous parliamentary participation in defense-security affairs and democratic civil-military relations. Consequently, enhancing the legislature's clout by increasing the authority of its defense committee(s) and encouraging or even requiring its substantive contribution to procedures and deliberations pertaining to the armed forces should be a priority for democracy activists. In fact, the legislature's robust involvement in defense issues is usually a reliable predictor of democratic civil-military relations.

In consolidated democracies, members of parliament are—or, at any rate, should be—genuine representatives of their constituents. Nevertheless, in many democracies, legislators do not play an independent role in overseeing the armed forces because of limitations on their ability to act, insufficient access to objective data and information imposed by a more influential executive branch, or lack of expertise and/or interest in defense matters. Inadequate legislative involvement in the defense-security domain is a shortcoming in numerous states such as Botswana, Greece, and Japan that otherwise have overwhelmingly positive civil-military relations.

In only a few polities does the legislature play the kind of role necessary for properly balanced civilian control of the military. This role comprises not just the debating and passing of defense-related bills but also, crucially important, taking an active part in three aspects of the armed forces' fiscal affairs: determining the process of how defense budgets are devised and by what institutions, participating in the formulation of the actual defense budget, and overseeing the disbursement and implementation of defense outlays. In my case pool, the countries with a



long-term—say, a 20-year—record of active and vigorous parliamentary oversights were Germany and Spain. One can add Bosnia and Herzegovina, and also Slovenia and South Africa if one relaxes the condition requiring sustained performance.

Giving the legislature too much power over the armed forces, however, can result in an unbalanced institutional arrangement. This is admittedly a rare occurrence with its emblematic case being post-Cold War Germany, but it is nonetheless associated with serious problems. More specifically, a dominant role over the army by the legislature hampers expeditious political decisionmaking and compromises the armed forces' fundamental functions in a democracy, namely serving as able and ready defenders of the state and/or as active and useful participants in military alliances.

It is worth noting that the effectiveness of both Germany and Spain as NATO members is diminished, but not because their armies lack professionalism. Rather, politicians in Berlin and Madrid are loath to send their armed forces to participate in NATO operations, and when they do, German and Spanish units operate under restrictions that limit their utility. There seems to be a positive correlation between legislative authority and a lack of enthusiasm for military deployments abroad. One might argue that parliamentarians enjoy a closer link with society, which ultimately spawns soldiers, than members of the executive branch, the policymakers who are more directly involved in decisions regarding military deployments.

*Promote Civilian/Societal Participation in Security Affairs.* Independent civilian defense

DOD (Helene C. Stikkel)



Military officers escort Secretary of Defense William Cohen (second from right) during armed forces full-honors welcoming ceremony at Western Province Command (Castle), Cape Town, South Africa, February 1999

experts, nongovernmental organizations, and journalists focusing on security issues can play a constructive role in advising elected officials and the public about military affairs. Their involvement encourages transparency and promotes confidence among society, the state, and the armed forces. Introducing defense-related courses at universities, allowing civilians—journalists, bureaucrats, politicians, among others—to enroll in appropriate programs at military academies, and providing public funding on a competitive basis to nongovernmental organizations studying defense issues would contribute to the overall improvement of democratic civil-military relations. In general, guaranteed media freedoms are not only a requisite of democratic civil-military relations—without them democracy cannot be consolidated. Democratizing elites must accept that supervising the media is not the state’s function; rather, it is the media’s responsibility to keep an eye on the state.

***Civic Education and Military Training: The Proper Role of the Military.*** Both in the school system and in military colleges and academies, students, trainees, and cadets should be taught about the appropriate role of the armed forces in a democratic state and society. The state must make an effort to teach its citizens early on in their formal education that the army’s role is limited to protecting them from foreign threats, providing assistance following natural disasters, and, if possible, assisting international peacekeeping operations. Similarly, professional military instruction from the basic training of conscripts or enlisted soldiers to the staff academy courses catering to senior officers must feature educational components at the appropriate levels on democratic political systems, civic engagement in security affairs, and the professional socialization of military

personnel, underscoring again and again that other than casting their votes, members of the military have no political role.

***Military Reforms: Sequencing and Interference.*** Different settings require different types of defense reforms. The main tasks for democracy-builders range from building new independent armies on the shaky or absent foundations left by imperial powers all the way to drastically reducing the autonomy, privileges, and size of the armed forces in post-*praetorian* environments. The thoughtful sequencing of defense reforms can be extraordinarily important in ensuring the military’s compliance and cooperation. Consulting with democratic-minded senior officers regarding the details and order of reform usually signals the state’s willingness to consider the perspectives of the armed forces and can be

*there seems to be a positive correlation between legislative authority and a lack of enthusiasm for military deployments abroad*

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expected to foster an agreeable inter-institutional climate. Such discussions do not mean, of course, that the government is obligated to take its generals’ advice, but, as the Spanish case suggests, they are helpful in learning the top brass’s preferences and usually benefit both sides. Military elites who are closely consulted by the state about prospective defense reforms are more likely to take ownership of the reforms, even if they do not agree with every single measure, than those who are cut out of the loop.

There are numerous other steps the state should take, such as following Samuel Huntington’s advice and decreasing the military’s presence in the capital city and



other political centers and developing political organizations capable of mobilizing throngs of supporters to help avert potential coup attempts.<sup>6</sup> Another eminently sensible Huntingtonian tip to civilian rulers is to identify themselves with the armed forces, attend their ceremonies, award medals, and praise the soldiers as exemplifying the most noble virtues of the nation.<sup>7</sup> To illustrate the good sense of this point, we need look no further than post-*praetorian* Argentina. President Carlos Menem significantly reduced the military's political autonomy and budget and yet was held in high regard by the officer corps due to his gestures signaling his appreciation of the armed forces. In contrast, Néstor and Cristina Kirchner created an unpleasant atmosphere between the executive branch and the army that has been damaging to civil-military relations.

*a timetable should be set for the military's gradual withdrawal from the economy during which the state must find the resources to compensate for lost revenue*

Ideally, the army's involvement in the economy should be terminated. At the same time, sequencing is critical. Practical issues must be considered before hastily outlawing the military's commercial pursuits. For instance, if the resources the military gains from its business activities are used for vital operational expenses, where else will the funds to cover those costs come from? If there is no satisfactory answer, a timetable should be set for the military's gradual withdrawal from the economy during which the state must find the resources to compensate for lost revenue.

Rigidly abiding by the timetable, however, is not advisable, and compromises might have to be made—as they were in Indonesia—for the sake of the larger public good.

The state should have the ability to oversee the promotion of the most senior members of the armed forces—in small- and medium-sized armies, promotions over the rank of colonel should be approved by appropriate civilian officials; in a large army, perhaps such approval should be in effect beyond the two-star general level. At the same time, if politicians veto promotions, they must make sure their reasoning is based on solid evidence regarding the objectionable candidate's professional incompetence or holding political attitudes incompatible with democratic civil-military relations. Politicians should not interfere with the routine promotions of those in the lower ranks, nor should they get in the way of military education, training, and professional concerns unless they are in conflict with fundamental democratic values.

**Identify New Missions.** In numerous countries experiencing democratic transitions, the obvious question of why armed forces are needed has been the subject of public debate. Why maintain an expensive army, people in the Czech Republic and Slovenia asked, in the absence of any real security threats or troublesome neighbors? In Argentina and Chile, journalists and pundits frequently question the utility of the armed forces. Nonetheless, there are very real uses for the military, even in the post-Cold War world. A state ought to have the capacity to protect itself from potential threats to its security and to fulfill its alliance obligations. Armed forces are also needed, for instance, to defend a country's air space from unauthorized air traffic and to repel illegal fishing vessels from its coastal waters.

Conventional armed forces ordinarily are unique in possessing the capacity to provide help in natural disasters.

Huntington wrote that policymakers should equip their armies with “new and fancy tanks, planes, armored cars, artillery, and sophisticated electronic equipment”; in other words, “give them toys” to keep them happy and occupied.<sup>8</sup> But most states do not have the resources to follow this advice. What should they do? One important part of the solution is to search for new missions for the military. For instance, the government could sign the armed forces up to participate in international peacekeeping operations. These activities will make soldiers feel useful, enhance their own prestige as well as international regard for their countries, and might even be a significant source of income for military personnel in poor states. In addition, the special skills and training peacekeepers require create the need for international peacekeeping centers and conflict prevention, management, and resolution programs that boost international cooperation and improve the army’s public image at home.

Alternatively, the armed forces can be trained to provide humanitarian assistance and disaster relief abroad. Such a strategy generally requires enhancing the military’s airlift and transportation capabilities, though such services may be provided by a more prosperous partner nation. Another worthwhile objective is preparing specialized military units for counterterrorism operations. The military should participate in these types of missions abroad, however, within the framework of international operations. Domestic counterterrorist activities that might involve the generals in politics should be left to the police, intelligence, and/or paramilitary organizations.

In general, a sensible government would seek to design and build an increasingly outward-looking military establishment.

Maintaining a military establishment is an expensive proposition and, especially for states undergoing the democratization process, can be politically risky. Therefore, if no productive endeavors can be found for active-duty personnel, if there is no societal support for keeping the army at its current size, and if the political risks of reducing the military establishment are manageable, it should be pared down to the level politicians, experts, and societal groups believe is indispensable for national security.

*Use the Military’s Expertise.* States and societies make considerable sacrifices to educate, train, equip, and otherwise maintain their armed forces. Marginalizing military officers by not asking their advice during the process of devising defense and/or foreign policy, let alone military strategy—as in Argentina and India, for instance—is irresponsible public policy and wasteful of public resources. In other words, officers acquire their specialized knowledge at a significant cost to taxpayers who should get some return on their investment.

In many countries, including some liberal democracies such as the United States, high-ranking officers accept lucrative jobs as lobbyists, consultants, and military advisors as soon as they retire. Former generals who are hired by defense contractors turn into acquisition consultants whose influence is used to serve the interests of their employers and contravene those of the public. This practice is unethical and harmful to civil-military relations.<sup>9</sup> South Korean law prohibits the employment of officers by defense firms for 5 years after their retirement. This is an excellent example of an important lesson the United States and other

long-consolidated democracies could learn from relative newcomers to their ranks.

## Conclusion

Efforts to order civil-military relations in diverse places into neat theories do not succeed because they cannot account for the massive differences in political and economic and societal conditions, let alone military history, culture, and traditional attitudes, which all affect how armies behave. It is no coincidence that scholars who seem intent on building “grand theories” of military politics do little or no actual field research. There is no grand theory of civil-military relations and there is no blueprint for building democratic armies that can guarantee success. Quite simply, there is no substitute for knowing places, languages, cultures, and peoples and for having contacts with political decisionmakers as well as ordinary people, generals as well as junior officers and infantrymen. The point is not to devise fancy theories but to generate plans and programs that actually work.

The United States is privileged to have a military establishment that has succeeded in training thousands of officers and soldiers who understand the local conditions in an improbably large variety of countries and world regions. Throughout the course of working on my book, I was fortunate to learn from such individuals at the Defense Attachés’s office in U.S. Embassies in countries as diverse as Botswana and Chile, Indonesia and India, and Tanzania and Bosnia. These individuals—virtually all of them multilingual and with multiple degrees—probably know the countries where they serve as well or better than any others. They already play an important role in helping these nations build democratic armies. Because democracy cannot be consolidated

in the absence of democratic armies, these American soldiers actually help build democracies, and they do so efficiently and with relatively small cost to taxpayers. **PRISM**

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Zoltan Barany, *The Soldier and the Changing State: Building Democratic Armies in Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Americas* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012).

<sup>2</sup> The best book in English on the Spanish military’s post-Franco transformation is Felipe Agüero, *Soldiers, Civilians, and Democracy: Post-Franco Spain in Comparative Perspective* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995).

<sup>3</sup> See Zoltan Barany, *The Future of NATO Expansion* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

<sup>4</sup> See Ricardo Córdova Macías, *El Salvador: Reforma Militar y Relaciones Cívico-Militares* (San Salvador: Fundación Dr. Guillermo Manuel Ungo, 1999).

<sup>5</sup> See Brian Loveman, “Misión Cumplida? Civil-Military Relations and the Chilean Political Transition,” *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 33, no. 3 (Fall 1991), 35–74.

<sup>6</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 252–253.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 253.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 252.

<sup>9</sup> See, for instance, “Old Soldiers Never Cash Out,” *The New York Times*, November 23, 2009; and Matthew Moten, “Out of Order: Strengthening the Political Military Relationship,” *Foreign Affairs* 89, no. 5 (September–October 2010), 2–8, especially 7–8.

# Civil-Military Cooperation

## A Way to Resolve Complex Crisis Situations

BY HANS-JÜRGEN KASSELMANN

*The first of these three aspects [of war] mainly concerns the people; the second the commander and his army; the third the government. The passions that are to be kindled in war must already be inherent in the people; the scope which the play of courage and talent will enjoy in the realm of probability and chance depends on the particular character of the commander and the army; but the political aims are the business of government alone.*

—Carl von Clausewitz<sup>1</sup>

Discussions about the most effective, efficient, and sustainable approach to resolving complex crisis situations have a long historical tradition, even if ongoing debates among politicians and researchers may suggest otherwise.<sup>2</sup> The discussions about developments in Iraq, Sudan, Somalia, and Afghanistan, as well as evaluations of the disasters in Haiti and Pakistan, call for all participants to find new solutions in response to obvious deficits and the looming prospect of failure. This holds especially true with regard to the question of when, where, and how the military instrument should be integrated with the activities of all the other actors involved in the resolution of complex crisis situations based on an overall political rationale.

However, an analysis of relevant publications in military and security policy or social science over the last few years clearly shows that different perspectives prevail. From a military viewpoint, the focus is typically on determining the right tactical approach, and the broader debates are only tangentially helpful. By contrast, the civilian side emphasizes that the resolution of complex crisis situations should primarily be obtained through civilian tools.

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Of course, these rather different perceptions of the same reality are easily explained in terms of the observer's particular expertise and interests—the situation is analyzed and best resolved with the help of the tools available to his or her particular field of expertise. However, such one-sided approaches have not passed the litmus test of reality. They are ill suited to capture and explain the interdependencies of complex crisis situations and combine them into a synergistic whole; most importantly, they do not address the vital issue of sustainability. As a result, efforts to provide incentives seep away, capabilities cannot be pooled and focused, and the main target audience—the population in need—looks upon all this activity with increasing caution or even outright rejection.

*civil-military cooperation was conceptualized, developed, and applied for the first time in its present form by NATO in the Balkans*

In the form of civil-military cooperation (CIMIC), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has created both a concept and capability to meet such challenges in the field of civil-military interaction (CMI). The following paragraphs examine this tool for its viability against the backdrop of changing conditions and lessons learned. The assessment criterion is the optimization of effects of deployed armed forces at the international level in a broader political context and their ability to make effective contributions. As a first step, the current key elements of CIMIC are outlined and assessed to illustrate the need for transformational change. An extended conceptual approach to CIMIC as a military

necessity and capability to resolve complex crisis situations is then offered, against the backdrop of NATO's comprehensive approach and Germany's principle of networked security. This is to be achieved particularly by interlinking CIMIC with the CMI approach currently being discussed within NATO.

### Description and Transformational Assessment

Civil-military cooperation, as a military capability and as a theoretical idea, was conceptualized,<sup>3</sup> developed, and applied for the first time in its present form by NATO in the context of its commitment in the Balkans. This development was originally triggered by an operational-level reorientation of the deployment of forces in significantly changing conflict scenarios after the end of the Cold War. The main objective was the creation of a military tool for analysis and action that would integrate the "civil dimension"<sup>4</sup> in an effort to meet the challenges posed by unclear confrontation patterns between opposing forces, changing geographical conditions, political and ethnic considerations, and domestic and international factors. It was also rational to take into account, at the operational level, the entire spectrum of civil actors and their interaction and effects regarding military mission accomplishment.<sup>5</sup> NATO's current CIMIC concept<sup>6</sup> and the corresponding national approaches<sup>7</sup> developed by most NATO countries provide for three main lines of effort.

**Liaison.** First, the military is enabled to liaise with relevant civil actors, including the civilian population, which creates the preconditions for an integration of the civil element into the conduct of military operations. Essentially, the aim is to establish communication channels. This improves the security situation of all

participants, which entails greater stability in the theater of operations and, at the same time, reduces the risk of attacks against all parties.<sup>8</sup>

**Support.** Secondly, military capabilities can support the civil environment directly on a subsidiary basis or in the event of an ethical-moral obligation. This can be achieved through civil-military cooperation in the implementation of projects and measures, but also as direct assistance administered by available military forces. There are multiple possibilities, as military contingents usually have capabilities in their force posture that can be adjusted to support civilians in an emergency. Examples include medical support for the population, logistic transportation support, and the use of military engineering equipment for civilian purposes. The main focus here is on the direct and immediate involvement of the local administration and government institutions, as well as the integration of the population. Overall, the “primacy of the military mission” and the integration of this type of CIMIC activity into military effects clearly take priority. The benefits include, among other things, improved security in the operating environment (force protection) and increased acceptance (hearts and minds) with respect to military action (support to the civil environment).

**Deconfliction and Coordination.** Thirdly, deployed contingents rely on the civil environment for support. Here, the emphasis is initially on deconflicting military operations and events and measures taking place in the civil environment. But this spectrum of activities also includes the coordination of access to available civil resources with due consideration for the requirements of the civilian population. Thus, at the tactical level, CIMIC forces are a permanently visible factor of everyday life in the conflict region. Given their continuous

presence throughout the theater, they also serve as points of contact for the population’s concerns, complaints, needs, and fears. This makes them an important source of information<sup>9</sup> on the civil environment, which is then included in the general operating picture. Essentially, this monitoring of relevant civil factors and influences is reflected in the planning and conduct of operations at all levels of NATO.<sup>10</sup>

### Need for Transformational Change

The CIMIC concept in all its facets illustrates the great importance the Alliance attaches to the civil dimension and its impact on military operations. However, the concentration on the military mission with regard to effects, while logical from a military perspective, is cause for a gravely misleading perception among civil actors. CIMIC is perceived as being synonymous with the co-optation of the civil environment by military planners or as the domination of long-term development contexts by the constraints of security policy. Though often misunderstood by civil partners, the term coordination by definition solely refers to the configuration of intramilitary processes and is not related to requirements for the level of ambition for civil-military interaction. For this purpose, the CIMIC approach relies on a basic understanding, which varies significantly in scope and depth depending on the situation and may in no case be assumed to be constant. The potential spectrum ranges from merely taking notice of the presence of civil actors to a fully harmonized approach. To resolve this apparent deficit of CIMIC, it will be essential to articulate this open and flexible approach to civil-military interaction more clearly, especially with civilian counterparts.

The use of the concept as a tool to support the civil environment during stabilization



operations, up to and including direct involvement of the armed forces in the implementation of development work, is met with categorical disapproval by most humanitarian organizations or at least is considered to be limited to subsidiarity and complementarity. The requirements for CIMIC projects, which may considerably differ from NATO's CIMIC concept depending on national guidelines and political objectives, are subject to considerable scrutiny if they are not related to any long-term development objectives. This applies in particular to primarily humanitarian projects—so-called quick impact projects carried out in support of winning hearts and minds effects.<sup>11</sup> In hostile environments such as Afghanistan, the proximity of such measures to the activities of the civil sector means they are considered a direct threat to the security of the civil actors.<sup>12</sup> Neither does the affected civilian population

understand why CIMIC projects are based on different national objectives. For them it is difficult to see why individual national contingents in a joint operations area take different approaches to address the same issues. This conflict of interests, intrinsic to civil-military cooperation, can only be resolved through a harmonization of the approaches in NATO's multinational CIMIC concept and, in particular, through transparency in civil-military interaction. In this context, military expertise should be used to discourage, above all, short-sighted politically motivated attempts to use CIMIC activities with a humanitarian hue to shore up political legitimacy for military operations.

While the concept generally calls for consistent integration across all echelons from the political to the tactical level,<sup>13</sup> its practical use as an effective tool is almost exclusively limited to the tactical, and in the operational-level

U.S. Air Force (Matthew Plew)



Polish soldier with CIMIC team inspects local projects in Ad Diwaniyah, Iraq, May 2008



context, it is solely conceived as a land-based concept. In the long-term readjustment of CIMIC, this basic understanding, which to some extent has been shaped by the dominance of the Afghanistan mission, can only be dissolved through the political integration of top-down civil-military interaction across all echelons as part of the coherent CIMIC planning approach. The joint nature of CIMIC as designed at NATO's operational planning level is also of crucial importance in this process. In light of the operations conducted to address the conflict in Somalia and the assessment of the disaster in Haiti, CIMIC's maritime dimension should lead to a change in the "joint perspective" of CIMIC. The same applies to the integration of the airspace due to the success of NATO during the Libya mission.

The implementation of the CIMIC concept within the military sector, too, still suffers from considerable deficits. The basic principles of CIMIC are still not reflected in many cases in the general understanding of command and control of armed forces. Military personnel at the operational level lack an appreciation for the vital importance of the civil dimension for an effective military contribution to the resolution of complex crisis situations. As a result, this dimension is often regarded in practice as a separable chore, which can be delegated to the CIMIC specialist. Addressing this deficit calls for a change in awareness in the military sector that can only be achieved through the enhanced operational-level integration of CIMIC as a principle of action in the planning and conduct of operations.

### **Comprehensive Approach: Political Framework Concept**

In a global world order, approaches to the resolution of complex crisis situations will

only be successful if they address the complexity of the underlying causes as well as the international context. This applies in particular to long-term development contexts in order to guarantee that causes of conflict are thoroughly mitigated. Lessons learned by the Alliance, in particular in Afghanistan, have also clearly shown that isolated military action against opponents did not even meet the requirement for a sustainable secure or at least low-risk environment. In addition, the Alliance had to deal with different national approaches and especially with the parallel and rather uncoordinated activities of numerous organizations around it.

*the basic principles of CIMIC are still not reflected in the general understanding of command and control of armed forces*

This assessment of the situation led NATO to realize that new approaches to cooperation with all actors involved need to be identified and pursued in order to attain sustainable, permanent solutions for its commitment in complex crisis situations. The Alliance responded by readjusting its policy conceptually through a comprehensive approach and linking its activities in the "security" dimension with its "development" activities in an overall algorithm. This approach was chosen with foresight since the term in itself already suggests that the Alliance neither owns nor directs the approach. It is one actor among equals who all work together to achieve a desired endstate. Differences among the various actors are accepted and taken into account. This approach mainly focuses on achievable objectives rather than trying to standardize procedures or assume leadership

responsibility. In essence, a comprehensive approach is therefore rather a kind of awareness or concept with a long-term political intent to optimize cooperation among all actors involved in sustainably resolving complex crisis situations in a neutral environment of consensus.<sup>14</sup>

**Developments to Date.** NATO's comprehensive approach dates back to a Danish initiative launched in 2004. Initially only referring to a reorientation of the approach taken by the Danish armed forces, it was elevated to the international level. At the 2006 NATO summit in Riga, the Comprehensive Political Guidance, which had been commissioned in 2004, was adopted; it already called for transformational efforts to improve cooperation with other actors.<sup>15</sup> In this context, the increased integration of the member states' nonmilitary instruments of power was initially discussed.<sup>16</sup> The summit's communiqué stated the need for the international community to adopt a comprehensive approach in order to integrate the efforts of all actors.<sup>17</sup>

NATO then commissioned proposals for the implementation of the Alliance's contribution within a comprehensive approach.<sup>18</sup> The resulting action plan was adopted at the 2008 summit in Bucharest and has since been used to direct transformational projects and measures for the operationalization of the political guiding principle. One focus area is NATO's own capabilities via the integration of a comprehensive approach into the planning and conduct of operations, lessons learned processes, the whole spectrum of training, and the planning and conduct of exercises. Another focal point is the integration of NATO efforts with outside actors through newly developed patterns of civil-military interaction and by raising awareness more generally.

**Challenges.** At a minimum, the successful implementation of NATO's comprehensive approach requires political coordination and decisionmaking on the part of the actors involved in providing solutions for complex crisis situations. It calls on them to develop effective procedures based on agreed-upon objectives and desired effects. However, since the approach taken by NATO complements or even competes with those of other international actors<sup>19</sup> or nation-states,<sup>20</sup> it can only be implemented through congruent design at the process level and an essential willingness to cooperate. This is especially true since the political objectives of an Alliance optimized for the security dimension do not correspond with those of organizations designed to provide humanitarian assistance or engage in long-term development cooperation. A NATO capability to participate across the whole spectrum of complex crisis situations in a comprehensive approach can thus only be achieved by means of pragmatic CMI patterns and agreements<sup>21</sup> with the principal actors concerned. Hence, it will be a matter of activating a network that is optimized in terms of effect at the respective political level, with gradual implementation at the practical level, so it can be accessed on a case-by-case basis. As far as implementation is concerned, NATO, especially in its cooperation with humanitarian aid organizations, has come up against clear boundaries both in terms of the basic willingness and the limited resources available to these organizations. A longer and more complex process is thus required. It should be designed for the areas of concerted planning, procedural transparency, capability for cooperation, creation of awareness, and consensus-building.<sup>22</sup>

To face the new challenges associated with the coherent implementation of a comprehensive approach in all civil-military relations,

including within NATO, major adaptation is required in terms of concepts, capabilities, and administration. To achieve the desired optimization of cooperation in complex crisis situations, it is necessary to break the isolation of CIMIC at the tactical implementation level, which, as a rule, consists of national troop contingents assigned to NATO. Capabilities must be provided cohesively in a top-down approach at all levels ranging from the politico-strategic level, through the crucial planning conducted at the operational level, to the theater.

However, lessons learned and newly developed tools from NATO's previous CIMIC approach—primarily located at the tactical level—have so far not been utilized in a targeted and comprehensive manner. The same holds for NATO's efforts to operationalize and implement a comprehensive approach and integrate and link the existing capabilities in conceptual and structural terms across all levels. In addition, NATO has so far failed to provide a common international denominator to resolve the contradictions highlighted above between different national approaches to CIMIC, especially with regard to their controversial proximity to humanitarian aid or to the deployment of armed forces in a development context. If the Alliance does not succeed in finding an internationally viable consensus that links national interests, it will be impossible to implement a comprehensive approach through declaration of intent at the political level, particularly in the regions affected by complex crisis situations. Furthermore, its effects, which in themselves are positive, will be countered by different national courses of action, especially at the tactical level.

Another reason for the restraint shown toward NATO's comprehensive approach, particularly on the part of civil aid organizations, is

the requirement stated in the stabilization and reconstruction operations concept for the development of capabilities, albeit moderate, for the performance of development tasks by armed forces under their own responsibility in originally civilian fields of competence. This is dismissed as the potential instrumentalization of development cooperation or development aid for military purposes. Thus, the prospects for acceptance of a comprehensive approach will also depend on demonstrating the limitations of these capabilities vis-à-vis civil responsibili-

*to achieve the desired optimization of cooperation, it is necessary to break the isolation of CIMIC at the tactical implementation level*

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ties by highlighting their subsidiary and complementary nature. However, this is made all the more difficult by current developments in Afghanistan since NATO and the nations committed to that country stand accused of "securitizing development" in order to accomplish the withdrawal of forces from Afghanistan.<sup>23</sup>

The mere adaptation of concepts and procedures for improved interaction with civilian actors alone is insufficient. The process of changing military mindsets requires patience since a move away from the classic military focus on kinetics and isolated military thinking is indeed an educational and sometimes even generational issue.

### **Networked Security<sup>24</sup>**

With the principle of networked security, the Federal Republic of Germany is pursuing a course that other partners and allies have already chosen at an earlier stage.<sup>25</sup> The key element is the interministerial pursuit of interests



ISAF (Laura K. Smith)

Members of Camp Malmal CIMIC team inspect site of new primary school located just outside perimeter of base, September 2008

intended to safeguard the long-term security of Germany. The emphasis is on the early identification of problems, common risk analysis, and the orchestrated conduct of measures. Security risks should preferably be countered outside the territory of Germany to prevent a direct negative impact on the population.

This draft is holistic in nature and comprises, so to speak, as the first stage of networking, the harmonization of all state institutions of relevance in case of crises and conflicts. What they also have in common is openness in the second stage of networking, namely the integration of the national civil society concerned and nonstate actors both inside and outside the respective sphere of state action. This second stage is thus comparable with the external dimension of NATO's comprehensive approach.

*Developments to Date.* The Overall Concept for Civilian Crisis Prevention, Conflict Resolution and Post-Conflict Peace-Building adopted by the German federal government in April 2000, and the related Action Plan of May 2004, are key elements of the developments that lead to our current understanding of what networked security entails. This is supplemented by the Cross-sectorial Concept for Crisis Prevention, Conflict Management and Post-Conflict Peace-Building in German Development Cooperation of June 2005, formulated by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, and the 2006 white paper issued by the Federal Ministry of Defense (FMoD). The latter in particular is of great relevance since the term *networked security* was used there for the first time. It is presumably due to the understanding that networked security extends far beyond the FMoD area of responsibility that the term has been left undefined. Yet the detailed description of this approach reflects its intended proximity to a

comprehensive approach.<sup>26</sup> The ministries concerned, however, have so far been unable to agree on a common understanding.<sup>27</sup>

*Challenges.* As far as the orientation and implementation of governmental action in the provision of assistance in complex crisis situations are concerned, the categorization of the principle of networked security in terms of security policy leads to security-centered thinking and ultimately to the "militarization of development policy," which tends to be the subject of criticism. In particular, the fact that nonstate actors, as required by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, are also integrated through the conditional award of public funds for development aid through development cooperation in the context of this approach has led to sharp criticism.<sup>28</sup> Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in particular feel pressured to cooperate with the Bundeswehr with fatal consequences for their own commitments.<sup>29</sup>

The lack of benchmarks for good conduct to judge NGO eligibility, however, will probably make it impossible to enforce this requirement in any case. Indeed, the German government does not even have the structural capability for interministerial situational assessments to facilitate coordinated action, let alone mechanisms for institutionalized implementation involving all relevant agencies and departments. As with the necessary developments pertaining to a comprehensive approach, it will thus be more a question of creating sufficient awareness to form a consensus among all key state and nonstate actors. This should at least lead to adequate and continuous coordination between key interfaces. A more far-reaching solution would necessitate an intensive strategy debate on national action in complex crisis situations, which would require clear long-term



foreign policy objectives to facilitate integration in NATO's comprehensive approach and other comparable supranational organizations at the international level.

### Conceptual Approach to Civil-Military Relations Across Levels of War

Although CIMIC, as indicated, is well developed across all levels of responsibility of the Alliance, the priority is on the tactical implementation and operational command levels. So far, it has proved difficult to achieve a coherent and uniform development, shaping, and conduct of CIMIC activities at the political and strategic levels. Due to these circumstances, a new avenue is being pursued with regard to shaping civil-military interaction with the supplementary conceptual CMI approach, which, however, still needs to be categorized and integrated in doctrines within the Alliance and,

*nongovernmental organizations feel pressured to cooperate with the Bundeswehr with fatal consequences for their own commitments*

above all, by member states. It is designed to link the respective levels of responsibility via the holistic shaping of CMI processes for the implementation of the political requirements of a comprehensive approach.

In the approach developed for the implementation of CMI, civilian personnel from the strategic level of responsibility have already been identified who, below the political level of the Alliance, are to liaise with civil management organizations, coordinate arrangements, and ensure harmonization procedures.<sup>30</sup> Ultimately, it is a matter of coordinating effects in the common sphere of action while at the

same time retaining autonomous decision-making and implementation of decisions. In addition, these personnel are to achieve basic agreement on future joint efforts regarding common training as well as exchange of information and consultation. At the top end of the target spectrum for civil-military interaction, efforts aimed at ensuring common generic preparations for complex future crises via situation analysis, planning preparations, planning implementation, and operational deployment of forces will be made. To enable the CMI approach, numerous communication mechanisms and principles are to be established. As the minimum requirement, they can ensure the continuous, knowledge-enhancing exchange of information.

### New Conceptual Approach to CIMIC

The comparison of the approaches described and discussed above inevitably leads to a new conceptual approach to CIMIC as a military capability for resolving complex crisis situations. The basic outline of this approach follows.

There can be no doubt as to the political and pragmatic necessity of integrating military effects and the possibilities for supporting civil actors via NATO's comprehensive approach. Regardless of the national orientation and capability for participation, national approaches such as the principle of networked security can only be defined in these international contexts. The linking and integration of all the actors involved in resolving complex crisis situations, including nonstate actors and even the civilian population, can only be ensured by building a common consensus. It must clearly communicate from the outset that NATO's military commitment will also be integrated via long-term development contexts for

the purposes of sustainable conflict resolution. In addition to creating basic awareness, this requires the integration at the process and, if appropriate, structural levels of required civil-military interactions to design comprehensive and coherent cooperation. However, to achieve common effects, the implementation of this approach among the respective actors outside NATO is also a basic prerequisite.

Key to its implementation in NATO is also the development of a conceptual approach to civil-military interaction on the basis of and in coordination with NATO's current CIMIC concept.<sup>31</sup> In it, the CMI approach describes the environment of consensus and action of civil-military relations arising via a comprehensive approach pursued by various actors involved in resolving complex crisis situations. NATO's CIMIC concept remains relevant by maintaining its orientation toward the joint planning and conduct of operations, especially for enhancing its coherent, cross-level capability to participate in shaping the environment of civil-military consensus and action.<sup>32</sup> The guiding principle of this CIMIC concept, which is also extended in terms of the orientation of the military dimension within a comprehensive approach, will then be the optimization of military effects in long-term development contexts.

The initially envisaged doctrinal autonomy of CIMIC and CMI thus needs not be pursued any further. Such an approach would not resolve the challenges for NATO's CIMIC concept discussed above, nor would the potential civil actors understand the juxtaposition. In addition, this would lead to NATO taking a separate course, which then could no longer be harmonized with, for example, the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations CIMIC policy or the European Union CIMIC concept, which feature identical

approaches in many areas. Furthermore, its procedural and structural implementation within NATO would not be feasible due to the numerous redundancies in a time of scarce resources. Moreover, a separate NATO CMI concept with a purely internal doctrinal basis would send the wrong signal to the exact civil actors at which a comprehensive approach is aimed in the first place, since this would intensify the negative perceptions held by the civil sector, such as military dominance or even NATO ownership, as already discussed in the context of a comprehensive approach.

Overall, it is a matter of reestablishing and integrating the proven military tool of CIMIC within NATO based on the broader basic understanding outlined above. NATO will

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*NATO's CIMIC concept remains relevant by maintaining its orientation toward the joint planning and conduct of operations*

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require patience in shaping the civil-military interactions called for by a comprehensive approach. The Alliance, together with potential civilian partners, will be more successful in achieving sustainable solutions to complex crisis situations the more it concentrates on the core of its founding purpose—ensuring security in an international context—while pursuing necessary civil-military interaction in an open and flexible process. **PRISM**

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 101.



<sup>2</sup> The basic understanding of *complex crisis situations* emphasizes the political dimension, including the requirements of development policy. Accordingly, it is far more comprehensive than the definition of *complex emergencies* used by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, which is limited to the humanitarian dimension.

<sup>3</sup> Established in Military Committee Document (MC) 411, *NATO CIMIC Policy*, January 2002, and Allied Joint Publication (AJP) 9, *NATO CIMIC Doctrine*, June 2003.

<sup>4</sup> This military tool or even this operational capability as such is not really new, as military history shows; see Thijs Brocades Zaalberg, "The Historical Origin of Civil-Military Cooperation," in *Managing Civil-Military Cooperation—A 24/7 Joint Effort for Stability*, ed. Sebastian J.H. Rietjens and Myriame T.I.B. Bollen (Farnham Surrey, United Kingdom: Ashgate, 2008).

<sup>5</sup> Definition of *civil-military cooperation*: "The coordination and cooperation, in support of the mission, between the NATO Commander and civil actors, including national population and local authorities, as well as international, national and non-governmental organizations and agencies." AJP-9, *NATO CIMIC Doctrine*.

<sup>6</sup> The revised edition of AJP-9 has been submitted to the competent NATO bodies for final signature as AJP-3.4.9, *Allied Joint Doctrine for CIMIC*.

<sup>7</sup> The CIMIC Centre of Excellence Study *Research into Civil-military Cooperation Capabilities*, conducted in 2011, shows that NATO's CIMIC concept has also been incorporated into the corresponding national foundations as a common operational denominator. See <[www.cimic-coe.org](http://www.cimic-coe.org)>.

<sup>8</sup> CIMIC core function of civil-military liaison.

<sup>9</sup> The CIMIC approach is, in terms of implementation, clearly delimited from the procedures and methods of intelligence.

<sup>10</sup> Core function of support to the force.

<sup>11</sup> In this context, the connection between relief projects or so-called quick impact projects and a sustained stabilization of the security situation or an enhanced acceptance of the deployed military forces has not been demonstrated. See, for example, Paul Fishstein and Andrew Wilder, *Winning Hearts and Minds? Examining the Relationship between Aid and Security in Afghanistan's Balkh Province* (Medford, MA: Feinstein International Center, November 2010), available at <<http://sites.tufts.edu/feinstein/files/2012/01/WinningHearts-Final.pdf>>.

<sup>12</sup> For a differentiated analysis of the CIMIC concept from the perspective of a nongovernmental organization, see Hans-Joachim Preuß, "Zivil-militärische Zusammenarbeit in Afghanistan. Eine Zwischenbilanz," in *ZFAS I* (2008), 26 et seq.

<sup>13</sup> For example, "Establishment of liaison at the political level by NATO is a pre-condition of success. Liaison and joint planning at Strategic Command (SC) level and within a JOA will flow from this." AJP-9, para. 104.

<sup>14</sup> The openness of this approach is reflected in the fact that NATO so far has not defined *Comprehensive Approach* politically and only refers to "a comprehensive approach" in all official documents. While flexible in political terms, the concept lacks the institutionalized framework for its coherent implementation since there is no standardized official definition of the term. The following is an attempt at a broad definition: "Comprehensive Approach is the synergy amongst all actors and actions of the International Community through the coordination and deconfliction of its political, development and security capabilities to face today's Challenges including Complex Emergencies." See NATO Internal CA Stakeholder Meeting, Enschede, Netherlands, September 23, 2010.

<sup>15</sup> "NATO . . . needs to improve its practical cooperation, taking into account existing arrangements, with partners, relevant international organizations and, as appropriate, nongovernmental organizations in order to collaborate more effectively in planning and conducting operations."

<sup>16</sup> One of "NATO's top priorities [is to develop] the ability to draw together the various instruments of the Alliance brought to bear in a crisis and its resolution to the best effect, as well as the ability to coordinate with other actors."

<sup>17</sup> "Experience in Afghanistan and Kosovo demonstrates that today's challenges require a comprehensive approach by the international community involving a wide spectrum of civil and military instruments, while fully respecting mandates and autonomy of decisions of all actors, and provides precedents for this approach."

<sup>18</sup> "We have tasked today the Council in Permanent Session to develop pragmatic proposals . . . to improve coherent application of NATO's own crisis management instruments as well as practical cooperation at all levels with partners, the UN and other relevant international organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations and local actors in the planning and conduct of ongoing and future operations wherever appropriate. These proposals should take into account emerging lessons learned and consider flexible options

for the adjustment of NATO military and political planning procedures with a view to enhancing civil-military interface.”

<sup>19</sup> All major international organizations such as the United Nations, African Union, or European Union have basically agreed on an analogous model, with the UN “Integrated Approach” of particular relevance.

<sup>20</sup> The comparable approaches taken by the participating nations can be summarized under the term *whole-of-government approach*.

<sup>21</sup> This is the principle underlying the definition: “Civil-Military Interaction is the overarching process of military and civilian actors engaging at various levels (strategic, operational, tactical), covering the whole spectrum of interactions in today’s challenges, complex emergencies and operations.” See NATO Internal CA Stakeholder Meeting, Enschede, Netherlands, September 23, 2010.

<sup>22</sup> Hans-Jürgen Kasselmann, “Change of Attitude—Change of Conduct: Achieving Effectiveness in Implementing the Comprehensive Approach,” in *Capability Development in Support of Comprehensive Approaches: Transforming International Civil-Military Interactions*, ed. Derrick J. Neal and Linton Wells II, 267–280 (Washington, DC: National Defense University, 2011).

<sup>23</sup> See, for example, the description and discussion of this context in Tsutomu Date, “Implementing Comprehensive Approach—Focusing on Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan,” University of York, 2011, available at <[www.cimic-coe.org](http://www.cimic-coe.org)>.

<sup>24</sup> There will be no assessment of the Bundeswehr’s CIMIC concept and its implementation at this point since the necessary changes can be regarded as similar to those for CIMIC at the international level.

<sup>25</sup> Actually, the German federal government has so far not published any concept in this regard. However, the understanding of “networked security,” which serves as a basis, has evolved from various official documents and broad discussion. The perception of the “security” element of the term as meaning “human security,” which has also been the subject of discussion (see, for example, Andreas Wittkowsky and Jens Phillip Meierjohann, “Das Konzept der Vernetzten Sicherheit: Dimensionen, Herausforderungen, Grenzen,” in ZIF, Policy Briefing, April 2011) is rejected as stretching a security policy concept too far.

<sup>26</sup> The concept states, among other things, the following: “The chief determinants of future security policy development are not military, but social, economic, ecological and cultural conditions, which can be influenced only through multinational cooperation. Security

cannot therefore be guaranteed by the efforts of any one nation or by armed forces alone. What is called for, rather, is an all-embracing approach that can only be developed in networked security structures based on a comprehensive national and global security rationale.”

<sup>27</sup> The Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development defines *networked security* as follows: “With the concept referred to as ‘Networked Security,’ the Federal Government is pursuing a comprehensive political approach in Afghanistan, according to which conflict prevention and management can only be achieved through coordinated action by all parties involved and integration of all instruments, both civil and military. Development policy plays an important role in this approach. In addition to governmental development cooperation, this also includes non-governmental development cooperation. The point is to ensure that civil and non-civil actors coordinate their activities. This does not mean that development cooperation is subordinated to military command. Hence, the status quo of separated responsibilities and a common responsibility for a common objective is maintained.”

<sup>28</sup> *Frankfurter Rundschau*, April 2, 2010: “In Afghanistan, Federal Minister for Development Niebel seeks to enlist support for the networking of the Bundeswehr and civilian aid. However, the relief organisations so courted remain skeptical.”

<sup>29</sup> German Bundestag, Publication 17/2868, minor interpellation of September 7, 2010: “Various non-governmental organizations have protested against the regulations making relief funds subject to development policy conditions, which have been introduced by the Federal Government for the first time, and against the subordination of development cooperation to military objectives.”

<sup>30</sup> These structural elements, which are at the design stage, also provide for the implementation of the CMI approach in direct conjunction with CIMIC.

<sup>31</sup> This linkage is possible in the revised version of MC 411, *NATO CIMIC Policy*, which is required anyway.

<sup>32</sup> It is intended to extend NATO’s definition of *CIMIC* accordingly: “*CIMIC* is an integral part of the modern multidimensional operations that provides for the full spectrum of interaction with all influencing actors and the civil environment. *CIMIC* enables the NATO commander to create, influence and sustain conditions and to provide capabilities that will ensure obtaining operational objectives.”



Graduates attend Afghan Local Police ceremony at Forward Operating Base Marjah, April 2011

# Making the Afghan Civil-Military Imbalance Conducive to Democratization

BY CHRISTIAN BAYER TYGESEN

**I**n-conflict state-building in fragile states (such as Iraq and Afghanistan), defined as building effective and legitimate civilian and military state institutions to advance the stabilization and democratization of the state,<sup>1</sup> creates unbalanced civil-military relations in the host state by producing weak and dysfunctional civilian institutions vis-à-vis relatively stronger and more functional military institutions. This imbalance positions the military to become a dominant political actor in state formation upon the withdrawal of the international military presence. This can have significant implications for the political trajectory of the state.

The civil-military gap is a reflection of the asymmetric nature of state-building progress in the context of state failure: building civilian institutions cannot match the trajectory of progress in building military institutions. This is in large part due to four crosscutting drivers, introduced below, that condition the timelines of progress in the civilian and military state-building tracks differently. Once the host state is in charge of its own affairs, the political risks of the civil-military imbalance will assert themselves: the military, still in an early stage of professionalization and confronted by weak civilian institutions, will become a politicized and dominant actor in the continuing state formation process. The political prospects of the state will become highly dependent upon the political role of the military and its relationship with the civilian elite.

The civil-military imbalance is also crucial to the long-term state-building outcome in Afghanistan and Iraq. In both countries, the state will likely face internal threats of a deeply contested political nature for many years. Stakeholders in the illicit economy, irreconcilable insurgents, and antigovernment warlords, to name a few, will continue to cause political ruptures and spikes of instability. The Iraqi state is wrestling with such challenges today and the Afghan state will likely follow suit. Internal threats cannot be tackled in a political vacuum; they are entangled in a highly sensitive and politicized context such as disputes over the distribution of oil revenue

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in Iraq, land rights in Afghanistan, and the legitimacy of armed nonstate groups in both countries. The military will become politicized or at least be perceived as such.

Civil-military relations theory tells us that the politicization of the military is detrimental to democratization. It undermines the professionalism of the military, which in turn weakens military effectiveness and cohesion. Furthermore, the politicization of the military is typically marked by a struggle among groups vying for control over the military. Subjective elite interests could capture the armed forces, leaving disenfranchised groups with no alternatives but to accept their political marginalization, continue to seek influence within military ranks, or arm themselves to deter predatory state behavior and hedge against a civil war. Moreover, politicizing pressures from outside and within the military could undermine its cohesion, leading to its

*state-builders do not have the luxury of ruling the military out of politics based on conventional zero-sum understandings of democratic development and the political military*

fragmentation. Upon the withdrawal of the international military presence, therefore, the political future of the state becomes a story of the role of the military. Will it remain loyal to the state's national interests, will autocratic powers in uniforms or suits use the military as an instrument to monopolize political power, or will the military fall apart, thereby dissolving the most robust and foundational pillar of the state?

In Afghanistan and Iraq, state-builders have failed to address the civil-military

imbalance and the military's politicization. In Afghanistan, a growing civil-military imbalance is making the country's political progress increasingly vulnerable to would-be autocrats in suits or uniforms. In Iraq, Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki has seized the civil-military imbalance to gradually monopolize control of the military. Some observers—and many Iraqi Sunnis and Kurds—fear Iraq may soon be ruled by a new iron fist. A relapse to autocracy would be a revolution in terms, but not the kind anyone would have hoped for.

If dealt with effectively and from the start of the state-building effort, the civil-military relations of the host state can be conducive to democratization despite the inevitable imbalance and the military's politicization. But the answers to this challenge are not found in the prescriptions offered by conventional security sector reform (SSR) policy. They are unfeasible given the near-term obstacles inherent in a failed state context, and they fail to adequately address the civil-military imbalance and the political role of the military. State-builders simply do not have the luxury of ruling the military out of politics based on conventional zero-sum understandings of democratic development and the political military.<sup>2</sup>

This article introduces the civil-military gap and its implications and suggests how to deal with them. It begins by presenting a key driver of this gap: the distinct obstacles that shape the respective timelines of the civilian and military state-building tracks. This is followed by an examination of the civil-military gap in the state-building effort in Afghanistan and the political risks incurred by the civil-military imbalance in Iraq. Finally, the article presents steps to deal with the political risks caused by the civil-military imbalance.



## Civil-Military Gap and Its Political Risks

A host of context-particular factors influence the civilian or military state-building tracks separately. But one must look at constant, crosscutting drivers in order to compellingly compare and explain the trajectories of the civilian and military state-building tracks. Against this backdrop, the following four factors are identified as key drivers of the asymmetric trajectories of the civilian and military state-building tracks:

- difference in the time span and process of building capacity in the civilian and military tracks
- difference in the civilian and military institutions' receptiveness to reform
- difference in the international leverage toward the civilian and military institutions
- difference in the level of national preferences toward reform in the civilian and military institutions.

These drivers are prominent in the literature on state-building, SSR, and military change and were common denominators in the interviews I conducted with a wide array of international and national actors over the course of 7 months in Kabul in 2011 and 2012. The underlying mechanisms of the four drivers of the civil-military gap are introduced in the examination of Afghanistan.

One could argue that if deficiencies in the international state-building effort—such as lack of resources or disunity of effort—were fixed or reduced, the civil-military gap would be closed as a result of a more effective civilian state-building effort. But this argument is based on the premise that international actions are the primary determinants of state-building

outcome or, at least, they are influential as national determinants such as local capacity, local preferences, and so forth. But as experiences in Afghanistan and past state-building missions have shown, the impact of international efforts on state-building outcome is highly dependent upon national actions and local circumstances.<sup>3</sup> In the absence of an effective national effort, therefore, a more effective international effort would yield little added benefit. It may reduce the civil-military gap, but this article posits that it would not close it. In theory, only a change in the effectiveness of the national effort could close the gap, but this is hardly realistic, as exemplified by the case study of Afghanistan.

The asymmetric development of the state's national civilian and military institutions sets the stage for unbalanced civil-military relations: weak, ineffective, and divided civilian institutions vis-à-vis relatively stronger and more effective military institutions.<sup>4</sup> In addition, given the fragile state environment, the military will most likely have to address internal security threats and deal with the subsequent politicization.

Checked by weak civilian institutions and politicized by the domestic threat environment, the risk of political interventions by the military is high. Motives for interventions vary. They can be subjective, to advance the military's own political or economic agenda, or more objectively oriented, aimed at taking more direct control of national security affairs if the civilian government is deemed too weak or divided to shoulder the responsibility.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, in a fragile state context with a nascent democratic culture, the civil-military imbalance renders civilian leaders dependent upon the military leadership for maintaining internal stability, facilitating civilian



reconstruction efforts, and safeguarding the political order.<sup>6</sup> This has the dual effect of making the military both powerful and crucial as an arena in which various political factions will seek to expand their influence. In sum, the military is well positioned to become a dominant actor in the long-term state formation effort. In the initial years following international withdrawal, this saying will generally apply: “As goes the military, so goes the state.”

As a way of approaching the challenge in a structured manner, the civil-military imbalance can be understood as posing three structural risks to the state’s democratization and potentially its stability.

**Civilian Autocracy.** A civilian political faction monopolizes control of the military at the expense of democratic standards of civilian control and, to some extent, the military’s autonomy. The loyalty of the military leadership is secured through patronage, threats, purges, and parallel military structures. The military is used as a blunt instrument to advance the subjective interests of the elite and safeguard regime survival.

*the military institutions in fragile states are generally more capable, funded, and trusted than the civilian institutions of the state*

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**Military Rule.** In the absence of effective civilian institutions to enforce civilian control, the military, propelled by its corporate interests, evolves from being the main security facilitator of the state formation effort to its main benefactor. The military leadership’s political and economic power grows as military intervention into politics escalates. Alternatively, a civil-military split over national security affairs may lead to a military intervention on the

grounds that the government is deemed unfit to define, administer, and protect the national interest. Both scenarios pave the way for direct or indirect military rule.

**State Collapse.** The illegitimacy and weakness of the civilian or military leadership sets off an arms race between nonstate armed groups and the intense politicization of all communal factions as they compete for control of the military and political power.<sup>7</sup> The risk of civil war grows as state institutions fail to facilitate an orderly, legitimate, and deliberative democratization. The state splinters along factional lines.

At first glance, it may seem counterintuitive to posit that the same institutional civil-military imbalance can lead to all three outcomes in a fragile state environment. Civilian autocracies and military regimes are different typologies of civil-military relations. But in a fragile state they generally share a common institutional imbalance. Indeed, the military was subordinate to civilian principals in autocracies such as North Vietnam or postcolonial Indonesia as opposed to the military regimes of Ne Win’s Burma or Idi Amin’s Uganda. But in both cases, the military institutions were a foundational institutional pillar of the regime.

The military institutions in fragile states are generally more capable, funded, and trusted than the civilian institutions of the state. To the extent civilian autocrats enforce effective control over the military in such states, it is personalized, centralized, and based on various co-opt-proofing measures such as patronage, indoctrination, and balancing mechanisms within the military. It is rarely based on strong institutional capacity within the government or parliament—a defining characteristic of democratic civilian control in strong states. In fact, civilian autocratic

control of the military can often be somewhat restricted. Under Suharto in Indonesia and Hosni Mubarak in Egypt, the military enjoyed significant autonomy and economic privileges.<sup>8</sup> The civilian control was only effective inside the perimeters of the military's red lines.

It is important to note that the three long-term risk scenarios are not mutually exclusive. For instance, direct military rule can follow from an intervention to supplant a civilian autocrat, or the military can install a civilian autocrat to forestall state collapse. The outcome depends on a host of factors beyond the scope of this article, such as the quality and actions of leaders, political culture, security environment, and actions of international stakeholders. But the article does address a common challenge central to all three long-term risks: the primacy of the military as the most capable and, quite often, most popular institution of the state.

An important reason for the emphasis on the primacy of the military is that it strikes at the crux of a problem in dominant SSR policy as practiced today. As a line of effort in in-conflict state-building in fragile states such as Iraq and Afghanistan, dominant SSR policy seeks to advance a functional and democratic civil-military relation by conventional means. This includes key priorities such as bolstering civilian institutions and ensuring civilian control in accordance with human rights, inducing democratic norms in the apolitical professionalization of the military, enhancing the democratic culture to make political legitimacy unobtainable by the military leadership, and so on.<sup>9</sup>

While effective democratic civilian control is no doubt important to a fragile state's long-term democratization (decades, not years), the immediate conditions in nonpermissive

environments render such conventional steps unfeasible in the near term (years, not decades). The necessary conditions for liberal models of civil-military relations are absent.<sup>10</sup> The civilian institutions are weak, the state's monopoly on violence is contested, the democratic culture is fragile, and the military is more capable and popular than the civilian institutions tasked to keep it in check. Moreover, conventional SSR thinking fails to recognize that the civil-military imbalance and the military's politicization is a near-term reality that must be addressed. Can the politicization of the military be shaped to support the democratization of the state? We return to this question after looking at Afghanistan and Iraq.

### Civil-Military Gap as Driver of Imbalance

Comparing the institutional development of a state's civilian and military institutions can seem questionable at face value. They serve different aims, harness different skills, and exhibit different organizational traits. But by comparing their respective institutional development against the backdrop of their respective core functions, it becomes possible to discern whether their development is comparably balanced or unbalanced. Are they developing symmetrically toward attaining the capacity necessary to fulfill their respective core functions? The answer reveals how the state's civil-military relations are developing and offers insight into probable future patterns of civilian control of the military and the state's political plight.

On the whole, the Afghan National Army (ANA) has developed substantially. In strictly quantitative terms, ANA, facing numerous difficulties, grew at a slow pace from 2002 to 2008,<sup>11</sup> but then it surged from 79,000 in

October 2008 to 171,600 in October 2011 to reach its final growth target of 195,000 in September 2012. But, as the much worn-out argument goes, the ANA's development is much more than growth rates; its operational capabilities, military effectiveness, and professionalization have also progressed.<sup>12</sup> By March 2012, the ANA participated in 95 percent of all operations nationwide, led almost 40 percent of all operations, and manned and conducted 85 percent of the training.<sup>13</sup> This progress is also reflected in the headway made in the transition process, a phased transferral of lead security responsibility to the ANA within designated areas. The first two tranches, covering about half of the population, were launched in March and November 2011. By the summer of 2012, the number of enemy-initiated

attacks had declined in almost all of the transitioned areas—not least in Lashkar Gah, the capital of the volatile Helmand Province.<sup>14</sup> Many factors account for this, not least the conflict-dampening effect of a reduced international military presence, but most Afghan and international security experts I spoke to in Kabul in the summer of 2012 highlighted the ANA's performance as crucial. Indeed, the army still faces substantial challenges, and it still cannot shoulder the entire security burden alone.<sup>15</sup> It still has significant capability gaps within areas such as logistics, medical evacuation, and operational planning. Problems with attrition, corruption, cohesion, and poor leadership remain prevalent.<sup>16</sup> But much suggests that it has made clear strides toward assuming full responsibility for Afghanistan's internal



U.S. Embassy Kabul

Judicial graduation ceremony held at Afghanistan Supreme Court

security and will require significantly reduced international support by late 2014.<sup>17</sup>

In contrast, the development of Afghan civilian institutions at the national level has been more incremental and modest. Positive exceptions include a handful of ministries such as the Ministries of Finance and Education, but they do not wield the main levers of civilian control of the military. North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) trainers point to the increasing capacity of the Ministry of Defense (MOD), but it remains heavily militarized as officers fill the vast majority of positions of influence. There are no signs that this will change anytime soon. Uniforms monitoring uniforms hardly constitutes civilian control. One anecdote captures this military dominance well. When former Minister of Defense Abdul Rahim Wardak—who was often referred to by his military rank of general—traveled abroad, the chief of the general staff, General Shir Mohammad Karimi, served as de facto acting minister. The first deputy minister of defense, Mr. Nazeri, the only through-and-through civilian in the MOD top tier and formally next in line after Wardak, simply lacked the weight to control his own ministry.

The capacity of the presidential palace is strong at the top level but often described as one-man deep. The national security council provides an important, institutionalized, and weekly platform for President Hamid Karzai to address national security issues and exercise his prerogatives as commander in chief. But civilian control exerted from the presidential palace is highly personalized and centralized and almost exclusively limited to the president and his closest advisors. The capacity of the Parliament is anemic, rendering the legislative branch—the primary democratic check on the executive’s control of the ANA—highly

dysfunctional.<sup>18</sup> The Parliament’s decision in August 2012 to move for the dismissal of Minister of Defense Wardak and Minister of Interior Bismullah Khan was, at first glance, a show of muscle.<sup>19</sup> But based on past trends in Afghan domestic politics, the Parliament could not have acted with such force without the consent of the presidential palace. In addition, Wardak’s sacking does not detract from the fact that the Parliament has little institutional capacity to systematically monitor the actions of the ANA and the government.<sup>20</sup> Four crosscutting drivers inherent in the state-building effort have been central to this civil-military gap.

### *it takes at least a generation to build effective civilian institutions from nothing*

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The training time and process in the civilian and military state-building tracks are substantially different. It takes decades to educate and train a civil service corps from scratch to being able to fulfill the most basic governance functions. This is supported by studies of civilian institution-building in fragile states, which find that it takes at least a generation to build effective civilian institutions from nothing.<sup>21</sup> The necessary baseline skills include basic literacy, basic administrative capacity, and sufficient expertise within a specific area of government. A civil servant must at least have a basic education supplemented by some level of further education to carry out the main tasks of the job description. The military rank and file is much quicker to train and deploy. A newly commissioned soldier has completed 8 weeks of basic warrior training and 9 weeks of branch-school training in an assigned battalion. Only officers have an

educational background comparable to, if not more extensive than, an able mid- or higher-level civil servant.

This is compounded by the profound differences in the civilian and military training process. ANA recruits are channeled through a highly structured and supervised training program backed by a strong effort led by the NATO Training Mission–Afghanistan.<sup>22</sup> Would-be civil servants must chart their own courses through a dysfunctional higher educational sector backed by an uncoordinated international effort. Graduates must then overcome obstacles such as deficient salary resources, nepotism, and bureaucratic inefficiency to join the civil service. In contrast, the private is almost instantly assigned to a battalion and deployed after completing basic warrior training.

A second driver of the civil-military gap is the respective institutional receptiveness to reform of the civilian and military institutions. The ANA has a centralized and hierarchical command structure under the general staff and, although still not sufficient, a pool of trained officers to draw on to build capacity. This has increased ANA institutional receptiveness to reform and induced conditions conducive to institution-building. Factional divides continue to strain internal cohesion, but the ramifications have so far mostly been limited to the distribution of positions at the division and corps level or in the general staff. While the factional power balancing is disconcerting and must be dealt with, the overriding and shared goal of a professional and capable ANA has persevered to uphold the military's receptiveness to reform and institution-building.

In comparison, security-related civilian institutions were less conducive to absorbing capacity and reform.<sup>23</sup> Intra- and

inter-ministerial tension, inefficient institutional processes, weak absorption capacity, and duplication of tasks and responsibilities severely hampered their receptiveness to reform. Furthermore, the strong prevalence of a military mindset in the MOD made it reluctant to embrace international advisors' call for a civilianization of the staff and its bureaucratic practices.<sup>24</sup> This was exacerbated by a distinct shortfall of trained civilians with sector-specific skills, let alone a basic knowledge of public administration.

Third, the international leverage has been greater in the military state-building track than in the civilian track.<sup>25</sup> The ANA's development in terms of personnel, institutional capacity, and capabilities was highly dependent on the international community's advisors and trainers, financial assistance, and material support. The ANA had no alternative but to cooperate with its international counterparts if it were to avoid the daunting costs of failing to be ready to take on full responsibility for Afghanistan's security by 2014.

The leverage of international actors in the civilian state-building track has been more limited—or at least far more difficult to utilize.<sup>26</sup> To be sure, civilian institutions were also dependent on international financial and technical support. But they faced few if any costs for not cooperating with international efforts to build capacity. Unlike Afghan military institutions, which had a strong incentive to build capacity to shoulder the security responsibilities that were increasingly transferred to them, the cost for civilians of failing to build sufficient capacity to provide basic services was minimal. Lack of accountability and transparency allowed obstructive and malign actors at all levels of the civilian institutions to pursue corrupt activities or otherwise spoil

the capacity-building effort with relative impunity.<sup>27</sup> Often, the best reform-minded Afghans could hope for was that the spoilers would be moved to different positions.

Fourth, differences in the prevalent Afghan preferences toward reform across the civilian and military tracks drove the civil-military gap. As a new and still unsustainable military institution confronted by the dual pressures of a potent insurgency and a rapid transition timetable, prevailing preferences in the general staff and among ANA corps commanders were strongly in favor of implementing the necessary reforms to build a capable and professional army. Furthermore, there continues to be a pervasive recognition that cooperating with the international community is the key to attaining this goal.<sup>28</sup> Of course, the partnership has by no means been frictionless, but the tension has been most pronounced at the lower levels.<sup>29</sup>

In contrast, reform-averse preferences were prevalent at all levels of the civilian institutions, complicating the civilian state-building track even further.<sup>30</sup> The aversion toward reform reflected both legitimate Afghan reservations toward adopting Western bureaucratic models and norms and more malevolent preferences toward maintaining opaque, dysfunctional, and unaccountable practices to maintain space for corruption and patronage.<sup>31</sup> Of course, corruption has undercut the capacity-building effort in both the military and civilian tracks. There is neither sufficient nor valid data to adequately compare the levels of corruption in the military and civilian spheres. But an approximation, based in part on experience and national perceptions of the high credibility of the ANA vis-à-vis the strained public support for most government institutions,<sup>32</sup> tends toward expecting more

corruption within the latter. If corruption was a larger obstacle in the civilian state-building track than in the military track, it should have reinforced the civil-military gap.

### Risks to Afghanistan's Political Development post-2014

Afghanistan's civil-military imbalance may have decisive consequences for its political future after 2014. The ANA is poised to become a dominant actor in the state formation of post-International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) Afghanistan.<sup>33</sup> Checked by ineffective civilian institutions, marked by fragile professionalism and cohesion, and confronting a host of internal and deeply politicized security threats, the military will become politicized—through politicizing pressures from outside factions vying for control, by direct political action by the military, or by being perceived by parts of Afghanistan's heterogeneous population as a subjective party in a politically charged crisis.

*there is neither sufficient nor valid data to adequately compare the levels of corruption in the military and civilian spheres*

Despite the civil-military imbalance and the politicization of the ANA, Afghanistan's civil-military relations can still be conducive to a democratic and stable development. It depends on the political role of the military—will it be supportive of democratization or undermine it?

One plausible post-2014 scenario is that a stronger president, newly elected and less constrained due to the international withdrawal, tightens his grip on the military to use it as a blunt instrument to monopolize political



power. Afghan history is full of examples of this, such as the Iron Amir, Abdual Rahman, who sought to centralize power in Kabul via a brutal use of the armed forces. An important counterweight to this scenario is that if the equilibrium in the distribution of power among Afghanistan's ethnic factions within the security apparatus is undercut, it would most likely have destabilizing ramifications. All serious Afghan political leaders are aware of this. The current arms buildup among Tajik groups in the North serves as both a reminder of this lesson and a deterrent against Pashtun-led brinkmanship or power grabs in Kabul.

A second scenario is that the military intervenes to install a new civilian leadership, as in the Saur Revolution in 1978, or to seize political power itself and rule behind a civilian façade, as in Iran or Pakistan. The ANA's dependence on international support may reduce this risk, although a reckless and divisive civilian government would provide the ANA with a strong case for intervening to restore responsible governance.

Third, a probable post-2014 scenario is that the military becomes the center of a power struggle between ethnic factions vying for control over the ANA. Many signs indicate that this power struggle is already playing out today, with ongoing and intense competition among ethnic blocks over the distribution of positions within the general staff and the corps and division commanders. This competition will likely intensify toward 2014 and beyond as the importance of the ANA increases as a function of ISAF's withdrawal. It is unclear how much pressure the ANA's cohesion can withstand. But caught in a politicized and ethnicized cross-pressure, the ANA could fragment. The state would collapse in the absence of its strongest pillar, as the Najibullah regime

did in the spring of 1992 with such devastating and chaotic consequences.

### Iraq's Unbalanced Civil-Military Relations

Iraq provides insight into how the risks of the civil-military imbalance emerge upon the international military withdrawal. Iraqi civil-military relations are marked by an imbalance between a relatively professional and effective military apparatus and weak, although growing, civilian state institutions.<sup>34</sup>

The civil-military imbalance has made it possible for Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki to gradually monopolize control of the military in general and the counterterrorism forces in particular.<sup>35</sup> This became increasingly evident once the U.S. withdrawal gained pace in 2009 and 2010.<sup>36</sup> Al-Maliki circumvents formal structures of civilian control by issuing orders to various military units directly from his office.<sup>37</sup> Admittedly, such a hands-on approach may be necessary given the ineffectiveness of the civilian institutions and Iraq's ongoing security threats. On the other hand, al-Maliki has also demonstrated a readiness to use the military as a blunt instrument against political foes or as the coercive muscle to back up politicized civilian offices.<sup>38</sup> Such moves understandably stoke fears that Iraq is sliding back into a predatory state masked by a democratic façade.<sup>39</sup>

In an assessment of Iraq's political future, Ned Parker identifies three bleak outcomes that align well with the three risks incurred by the civil-military imbalance: an authoritarian power grab by al-Maliki that instigates a violent backlash by his political enemies and Iraq's large sectarian and ethnic minorities; a military intervention to seize power and subject Iraq's political order to direct or indirect military rule; or a de facto state collapse as

Iraq's Kurdish, Sunni, and Shia leaders divide the state into autonomous regions.<sup>40</sup> Other observers find Parker's analysis too bleak and crude, but while the jury may be out, it seems hard to deny that Iraq's hard-won democratic progress can still unravel due to its dysfunctional civil-military relations.<sup>41</sup>

This should not be taken as a critique of the decision to train and build an effective Iraqi military. Indeed, this has been crucial to the stabilization of the country and ensuring an orderly and responsible U.S. withdrawal. But it does underline that the civil-military gap inherent in state-building cannot be neglected. The failure to address the increasing civil-military imbalance while the United States still had the necessary time, resources, and leverage may inadvertently paved the way for the unraveling of Iraq's democracy.

## Conclusion

This article makes the case that in-conflict state-building generates unbalanced civil-military relations in the host state. This is largely due to the civil-military gap inherent in in-conflict state-building, which seeks to build both military and civilian institutions to provide a viable basis for military withdrawal. Civilian and military institutions at the national level will develop asymmetrically, with the former unable to match the progress of the latter. Military institutions are simply more conducive to short-term institution-building.

Four crosscutting drivers were identified as critical to the civil-military gap in state-building: the difference in time span and process between training military and civilian personnel; the difference in the institutional receptiveness to reform; the difference in international leverage in the military and civilian state-building track; and the difference

in preferences toward reform. These fundamental differences condition the civilian and military state-building track, making it impossible to ensure symmetric progress across the tracks. The dynamics of the civil-military gap are evident in the state-building effort in Afghanistan. As expected, that effort is generating an increasing civil-military imbalance in the fragile Afghan state. How can the political risks engendered by the civil-military imbalance be effectively addressed?

The impetus among security sector reformers is to focus on the civilian side of the equation: build civilian institutions to ensure strong civilian control, develop practices of civilian monitoring and parliamentary oversight, advance institutions and norms of rule of law to safeguard human rights, promote mechanisms of oversight by the civil society through a vibrant media and the freedom of speech and press, and so on. Measures toward

*failure to address the civil-military imbalance while the United States still had the necessary resources may have paved the way for the unraveling of Iraq's democracy*

the military are less developed and draw on classic civil-military relations ideals: promote an apolitical, professional military that adheres to the principle of civilian control. While necessary for consolidating democratization in the long term, such measures are both inadequate and unfeasible in the initial, crisis-prone stages of Afghanistan's political development in the near term. State-builders and security sector reformers alike must pursue more realistic measures. This entails dealing with the military's politicization and recognizing the civil-military imbalance as the baseline.

This should include a deliberate and proactive effort to shape the military's politicization in a manner that is conducive to democratization. What follows are four measures to promote democratically conducive civil-military relations in the near term.

***Promote Converging Civil-Military Preferences.*** Promote a shared political horizon between the civilian and military leadership that identifies national security interests and maintains civilian control of the military and democratization as key principles. This includes fostering an understanding within the military leadership that the military's core preferences are tied to the state's stability and democratic progress. The aim is to reduce the risk of a split between the civilian and military leadership over national security issues (a distinct possibility due to the fused nature of internal security and domestic politics). Furthermore, the aim is to foster an understanding within the officer corps that it is in the military's institutional interest to guard against autocratic pressures from within (coup-inclined officers) and outside (power-grabbing civilians).

***Promote Military Cohesion.*** Promote a nationalistic, professional ethic in the military to gradually override the strong emphasis on ethnic and sectarian balance in the military (an emphasis, which, unless replaced by a nationalistic ethic, will harden sub-identities inside the military and undermine cohesion). This will buttress the military against politicizing pressures from subgroups vying for subjective control of the military.<sup>42</sup>

***Recognize and Shape the Military's Role on High-politics Issues Concerning National Interests.*** The role of the military in politics must be recognized. Even if it seeks to remain politically neutral, it will be perceived as

political by parts of the population due to the politically charged nature of internal threats. This needs to be addressed head-on by carving out space in the national debate for a legitimate military voice on high-politics issues in close coordination with, and subject to the approval of, civilian leadership.

***Hand Civilians the Power of the Purse.*** The military budget must be under the control of the civilian government. This could be advanced by disbursing bilateral and multilateral military assistance to the national fiscal budget, allowing the relevant civilian government institutions to channel the funds to the military. This would serve to reinforce the formal civil-military hierarchy in symbolic and concrete ways and thereby counter the institutional imbalance between civilians and their military counterparts.

The first three measures seek to shape the politicization of the military into a constructive force behind the democratization of Afghanistan. The fourth measure is aimed to ensure that the otherwise weak civilian institutions have an effective lever of control over the military to mitigate the civil-military imbalance. Such steps are crucial in order to keep Afghanistan on an even keel in the near term. Despite ethnic tensions, all major factions within the population must have sufficient faith in the national purpose of the military. Despite intervening neighbors and an ongoing insurgency, the population must be able to rely on the capability of the military to advance the country's security. Despite a history of failed governance and conflict, the population must begin to see the state as an effective guarantor of the national interest. And despite inept and often corrupt civilian institutions, a frail democratic culture, and a stumbling political process, all stakeholders must increasingly put

their trust in the democratic standards that guide civilian control of the military.

The challenge of Afghanistan's civil-military imbalance is where the security transition—the transfer of security responsibility to the Afghan National Security Forces—and the political transition—placing Afghanistan's democratization on a sustainable foundation—overlap to become mutually reinforcing or mutually undermining.

State-builders should simultaneously pursue conventional SSR aims of building effective and legitimate state institutions and advancing the basic conditions for effective and democratic civilian control. After 2014, during Afghanistan's so-called transformational decade and beyond, it will be both necessary and possible—provided the state institutions grow stronger and the democratic culture more robust—to gradually reduce the military's political role and institute more conventional forms of democratic civilian control. The military should not have a lasting voice on political issues, nor should its focus on internal security remain.

Understanding the dynamics of the civil-military gap and recognizing the risks entailed by the civil-military imbalance are crucial to advancing sustainable stability and democratization in fragile state environments such as Afghanistan. Developments in Iraq demonstrate how a failure to address the civil-military imbalance incurs considerable political risks. Iraq's future is not set in stone, but the international leverage to affect it is now significantly diminished. It would be a tragedy if this mistake is repeated in Afghanistan. If Afghanistan is to stand on its own beyond 2014, the state-building effort must address the increasing civil-military imbalance. **PRISM**

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> David Lake, "The Practice and Theory of U.S. State-building," *Journal of Intervention and State-building* 4, no. 3 (2010), 257–284, describes how this form of state-building emerged in 2007 in his examination of how U.S. approaches to state-building have developed since the Cold War.

<sup>2</sup> Alfred Stepan describes this liberal bias in his seminal *Rethinking Military Politics—Brazil and the Southern Cone* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 128–145. See also Larry Diamond and Mark Plattner, *Civil Military Relations and Democracy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996); and Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957), 83–85.

<sup>3</sup> Roland Paris, *At War's End: Building Peace after Civil Conflict* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Astri Suhrke, *When More Is Less: The International Project in Afghanistan* (London: Hurst & Company, 2011); Roland Paris and Timothy Sisk, eds., *The Dilemmas of State-building: Confronting the Contradictions of Postwar Peace Operations* (New York: Routledge, 2009); James Dobbins et al., *The Beginner's Guide To Nation-Building* (Washington, DC: RAND, 2007). Seth Jones, "Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan," *RAND Counterinsurgency Study*, vol. 4 (Santa Monica: RAND National Defense Research Institute), 7–24, makes a convincing, parallel point, coined as "the fallacy of the external actor," on the determinants of counterinsurgency outcomes.

<sup>4</sup> Suhrke, 231; Jason Wood, "The Importance of Cohesion in the Afghan National Army to Post-Transition Afghanistan," *The RUSI Journal* 157, no. 4 (August/September 2012), 42–47.

<sup>5</sup> Samuel E. Finer, *The Man on Horseback—The Role of the Military in Politics*, 4<sup>th</sup> printing (London: Transaction Publishers, 1962).

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 129–140.

<sup>7</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), 192–263.

<sup>8</sup> Steven Cook, *Ruling But Not Governing: The Military and Political Development in Egypt, Algeria, and Turkey* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007); and Marcus Mietzner, *Military Politics, Islam, and the State in Indonesia—From Turbulent Transition to Democratic Consolidation* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2009), 37–59, 291–329, 360–384.

<sup>9</sup> Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), "Security Sector Reform and Governance," in *DAC Guidelines and Reference Series*; OECD, *OECD DAC Handbook on Security System Reform: Supporting Security and Justice*, 2007 ed.; Mark Sedra, "Security Sector Reform in Afghanistan: The Slide Towards Expediency," *International Peacekeeping* 13, no. 1 (2006), 94–110; Mark Sedra, ed., *The Future of Security Sector Reform* (Waterloo, ON: The Centre for International Governance Innovation, 2010); and Dylan Hendrickson and Andrzej Karkoszka, "The Challenges of Security Sector Reform," in *SIPRI Yearbook 2002: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security*, 181.

<sup>10</sup> Albrecht Schnabel, "Ideal Requirements versus Real Environments in Security Sector Reform," in *Security Sector Reform in Challenging Environments*, ed. Hans Born and Albrecht Schnabel (Münster: LIT, 2009).

<sup>11</sup> Obaid Younossi et al., *The Long March—Building an Afghan National Army* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2009); Antonio Giustozzi, "Auxiliary Force or National Army? Afghanistan's 'ANA' and the Counter-Insurgency Effort, 2002–2006," *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 18, no. 1 (2007).

<sup>12</sup> David M. Rodriguez, "Leaving Afghanistan to the Afghans: A Commander's Take on Security," *Foreign Affairs* 90, no. 5 (September/October 2011), 45–53; William Caldwell, "Security, Capacity, and Literacy," *Military Review*, January–February 2011; and Stephen Biddle, "The Difference Two Years Make," *The American Interest* 7, no. 1 (September–October 2011).

<sup>13</sup> Interview with North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen on Denmark's National Television (DR1), February 11, 2012. See also NATO, "Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF): Training and Development," Media Backgrounder, 2012.

<sup>14</sup> The scale of the decline varies across different reports, but the trend lines generally point in the same direction. See Afghanistan NGO Safety Office, *Quarterly Data Report, Q1 2012*; Afghanistan NGO Safety Office, *Quarterly Data Report, Q2 2012*; NATO Media Backgrounder on ANSF, February 2012; and International Security Assistance Force records of monthly security trends, available at <[www.isaf.nato.int/article/news/monthly-trends.html](http://www.isaf.nato.int/article/news/monthly-trends.html)>.

<sup>15</sup> In particular, high annual attrition rates, professionalism, and internal cohesion continue to be central obstacles.

<sup>16</sup> Wood.

<sup>17</sup> Rodriguez; Biddle; William Caldwell, "DoD News Briefing with Lt. Gen. Caldwell via Teleconference from Afghanistan," *DOD News*, February 11, 2011;

Bruce Reidel and Michael E. O'Hanlon, "Mission Incomplete," *Foreign Policy*, March 13, 2012.

<sup>18</sup> Suhrke, 117–154, 229–234; Reidel and O'Hanlon; Biddle.

<sup>19</sup> Alissa Rubin, "Two Top Afghan Security Ministers Face Dismissal," *The New York Times*, August 4, 2012.

<sup>20</sup> In interviews conducted in June 2012, key ministers on defense issues in the Parliament acknowledged that the Parliament has little capacity to monitor the Afghan National Army and is often sidelined or disregarded by the Karzai government.

<sup>21</sup> *World Development Report 2011: Conflict, Security and Development* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2011), 11.

<sup>22</sup> William Caldwell, "DoD News Briefing with Lt. Gen. Caldwell via Teleconference from Afghanistan," *DOD News*, August 23, 2011.

<sup>23</sup> Suhrke, 136–140; see also *World Development Report 2011*.

<sup>24</sup> Interviews with international advisors to the Ministry of Defense.

<sup>25</sup> The United States provided approximately 90 percent of the NATO Training Mission–Afghanistan (NTM-A) annual budget from 2010 to 2012 and provided by far the majority of NTM-A personnel.

<sup>26</sup> Suhrke, 140.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 126–140.

<sup>28</sup> Caldwell; Younossi et al., 7–8. This is backed by findings from several discussions and briefings with NTM-A advisors and senior officials, meetings with senior officers in the ANA General Staff and at the National Military Academy of Afghanistan, discussions with ANA officers in Nahr-e Saraj (Helmand Province), and observations at Afghan interagency meetings with representatives from the Afghan National Army, Afghan National Police, Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Intelligence, National Security Council, National Directorate of Security, and international representatives.

<sup>29</sup> Wood; Veneri. Insider attacks are of particular concern in this regard. See Richard Opiel, Jr., and Graham Bowley, "Afghan Attacks on Allied Troops Prompt NATO to Shift Policy," *The New York Times*, August 18, 2012.

<sup>30</sup> Suhrke.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 136–140.

<sup>32</sup> United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Corruption in Afghanistan, Bribery as reported by the victims*, January 2010, available at <[www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4cad7b072.html](http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4cad7b072.html)>; *Afghanistan in 2011: A Survey of the Afghan People* (Washington, DC: The Asia Foundation, 2011); Transparency International,

*Corruption Perceptions Index*, 2011, available at <<http://cpi.transparency.org/cpi2011/results/>>.

<sup>33</sup> Wood.

<sup>34</sup> International Crisis Group, *Failing Oversight: Iraq's Unchecked Government*, Middle East Report No. 113, September 26, 2011; International Crisis Group, *Loose Ends: Iraq's Security Forces between U.S. Drawdown and Withdrawal*, Middle East Report No. 99, October 26, 2010; Michael Knights, *The Iraqi Security Forces: Local Context and U.S. Assistance*, Policy Notes 4, Washington Institute for Near East Policy, June 2011.

<sup>35</sup> International Crisis Group, *Loose Ends*, 5–8, 12–17; Knights, 8.

<sup>36</sup> Ned Parker, "Machiavelli in Mesopotamia: Nouri al-Maliki Builds the Body Politic," *World Policy Journal* (Spring 2009), 17–25; Nir Rosen, "Baghdad Gives Sunni Rude Awakening," *Jane's Islamic Affairs Analyst*, Jane's Terrorism and Insurgency Centre, 2010; Nir Rosen, "What America Left Behind in Iraq," *Foreign Policy*, September 7, 2011; Steven Lee Myers and Anthony Shadid, "Leader Faulted on Using Army in Iraqi Politics," *The New York Times*, February 10, 2010.

<sup>37</sup> International Crisis Group, *Loose Ends*, 5–8; Parker, 95–103.

<sup>38</sup> Michael Knights, *Iraq's Political Crisis: Challenges for U.S. Policy*, Policy Watch 1884, Washington Institute for Near Eastern Policy, December 21, 2011; Rosen, "Baghdad Gives Sunni Rude Awakening"; Parker.

<sup>39</sup> Parker; Rosen, "Baghdad Gives Sunni Rude Awakening"; and Knights (2011).

<sup>40</sup> Parker, 99.

<sup>41</sup> Anthony Blinken, "Morning in Mesopotamia," *Foreign Affairs* 91, no. 4 (2012), 152–154; Norman Rinklefs, "A Solid State," *Foreign Affairs* 91, no. 4 (2012), 154–156.

<sup>42</sup> Wood offers a good examination of the importance of cohesion to the future of the ANA.





Personnel inspect cross-border drug-smuggling tunnel discovered inside warehouse near San Diego, California, 2011

# Thinking About Strategic Hybrid Threats—In Theory and in Practice

BY FRANK J. CILLUFFO AND JOSEPH R. CLARK

As the United States resets in the wake of Iraq and Afghanistan, and in the face of growing uncertainty in the South China Sea, a good and important debate is occurring about how best to provide for our national security. Reasonable arguments can be made about the threats posed by potential peer competitors such as China, rogue nations such as North Korea, and prospective revisionist powers such as Russia. Arguments can be made about threats arising from political instability or intrastate conflicts, such as in Pakistan, Uganda, and Syria. Arguments can also be made about the threats posed by jihadi terror groups, organized crime syndicates, and drug trafficking organizations. The dangers highlighted by any one of these arguments are real and perhaps grave. They are not, however, novel.

For each of these dangers, we have established procedures, tools, and resources for deterring, mitigating, and perhaps even resolving their associated risks. Yet there are threats for which we lack well-established security mechanisms. Chief among them are the hybrid threats woven from the hazards above to directly endanger the safety and security of our society and citizens at home—as well as our national interests abroad.

What follows is an argument for casting greater focus on the dangers posed by hybrid threats at the strategic level.<sup>1</sup> We use Iran and the availability of proxy capabilities to illustrate the mechanics of, and risk posed by, strategic hybrid threats. We also offer a general model for what is needed to detect and respond to hybrid threats. Still, increased attention is not enough. It is our intent that this argument serve as fuel for a richer discussion about the doctrine, strategies, material resources, and organizational behaviors the United States ought to develop to respond to strategic hybrid threats in both theory and practice.

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## Hybrid Threats

Hybrid threats have been part of the security vernacular since the late 1990s. Despite a surge of recent attention, the concept remains ill-defined. Various authors, proponents and opponents of the idea, have added or removed defining traits. This has often confused rather than clarified the issue. As a result, discussions tend to devolve into debates about whether hybrid threats represent a novel class of security challenges. The two central issues—the degree to which such threats currently pose a danger and how the United States ought to deal with them—risk being lost in the rhetoric.<sup>2</sup> To correct this and return to the crux of the matter, this argument begins with a proposal of how *hybrid threats* might be better defined and differentiated from other threats.

As a means of clearing away the conceptual confusion produced by past debates, let us begin by explaining what we would remove from past treatments of the term. We are not talking about multimodal wars or the threats they pose. The ability of adversaries to move up or down the spectrum of warfare, or engage in multiple phases of warfare simultaneously, may be intensifying—but it is not

*hybrid threats are “custom-designed” capabilities crafted by a principal actor to overcome the predominant power or position of an adversary*

new.<sup>3</sup> Such was the case during many of the insurgencies and civil wars of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, including those in Russia, China, Vietnam, and Nicaragua. We are not talking about *asymmetric threats*. That idea has itself devolved to a level of questionable utility. The principle of

attempting to match one’s strength against an enemy’s weakness is a well-established military dictum. All combatants seek to maximize asymmetric threats or engage in asymmetrical warfare, for the successful asymmetrical alignment of capabilities maximizes one’s leverage and increases the probability of success. Nor are we talking about *irregular tactics* or *unconventional warfare*. Those terms describe indirect actions taken by an actor to undermine the legitimacy, influence, or position of an occupying power or government.<sup>4</sup> Because they may be employed in the service of nation-states and their interests, hybrid threats should not be confused with the irregular use of forces or capabilities that is commonly, but not exclusively, observed during insurgencies.

Hybrid threats do, however, share some similarities with irregular tactics and unconventional warfare. Hybrid threats may target a wide range of military and civilian targets (including the general population of an adversary) and may be undertaken to weaken a defender’s power, position, influence, or will—rather than to strengthen those attributes for the attacker. These characteristics explain much of the difficulty in defending against hybrid threats and why they warrant so much attention.

A clear conceptual definition of *hybrid threats* should start by acknowledging that they are “custom-designed” capabilities crafted by a principal actor to overcome the predominant power or position of an adversary.<sup>5</sup> From there, it should be noted that hybrid threats are innovative stand-alone capabilities designed to achieve the principal actor’s goal(s). What truly differentiates hybrid threats from others, however, are the following three elements. Hybrid threats are unique in that the desired objective of a threat, the endstate it is to achieve, lies beyond the endogenous capabilities of

the principal actor motivating the threat's creation and deployment. This condition forces the principal actor to find exogenous entities who can act as agents supplying the desired skills, materials, and/or access. It is from this principal-agent relationship, and the resulting weaving together of disparate capabilities, that the hybrid threat emerges.

A *strategic hybrid threat*, building on the concept above, should be defined as a customized capability produced through a principal-agent relationship for the purpose of seriously decreasing or adversely changing vital elements or instruments of a defender's national power. Strategic hybrid threats are undertaken for the express purpose of achieving the objective(s) of the principal actor—though the target of the threat and the goal may be only indirectly related.<sup>6</sup>

### Core Characteristics

Strategic hybrid threats can be delineated and demarcated by three core characteristics—their origin, their composition, and their fungibility.

Their origin is the product of the principal actor's nature, the actor's strategic context, and the actor's strategic goal(s). For instance, the origin of a specific hybrid threat will be determined by whether the principal actor is a nation-state, terrorist organization, or criminal syndicate; that actor's geographic location, relative distribution of power vis-à-vis other actors, and existing alliance structures; and the particular endstate the actor is trying to bring about. These elements give rise to the threat's purpose and objectives. In this, the strategic hybrid threat is no different from any traditional threat. It is the inability of the principal actor to develop the threat endogenously that differentiates it.

The composition of a strategic hybrid threat is characterized by the capabilities of the potential agent, goals of the agent, and most exploitable vulnerabilities of the defender that align with the principal actor's strategic goal(s). The capabilities of the potential agent affect how the purpose and objectives of the desired threat are realized. They form the avenue of attack (or threatened attack). The agent's goals shape whether the principal-agent relationship is a transactional payment for goods or services, a longer term business arrangement, an ideologically driven partnership, or some combination of these. The agent's goals determine whether the hybrid is the product of a one-time exchange or a longer term coordinated effort. They also shape the duration of the threat and how easily it can be reconstituted or modified once used (or detected and defended against). The vulnerabilities of the defender lead to the identification of targets by the principal-agent partnership. The alignment between the defender's vulnerabilities and hybrid threat determine at what target the attack or threat may be directed—so as to produce the highest probability of achieving the principal actor's goal(s).<sup>7</sup>

The threat's level of fungibility is the product of its composition. It determines the range of targets that may be successfully threatened, the likelihood of a priori detection, and the ease with which the defender may correctly attribute the threat (or attack). The range of potential targets determines the scope of what, where, and when the principal actor may attack or threaten to attack. For example: if the hybrid threat may be used equally well against civilian and military targets, or both simultaneously, the scope of what may be threatened expands. Fungibility also

determines the ease and speed with which the principal actor may shift the target of the threat (or attack) in response to actions by the defender. Furthermore, a strategic hybrid threat that may be easily and quickly deployed against a wide scope of targets has fewer target-unique attributes and provides the defender with less warning.

High levels of fungibility make attribution and deterrence much more difficult. This difficulty arises from the fact that the strategic hybrid threat is the product of multiple actors. Attribution and deterrence may be masked by the principal's lack of capabilities or the agent's lack of intent.

Perversely, the intelligence services of the defender may rule out the principal actor behind the threat because it lacks the capability to carry out the threat. Lacking obvious intent, the defender may not consider the agent an imminent danger. The situation becomes more complex with the fact that the principal need not make itself known. If the principal actor's strategic goals do not require that it signal its responsibility, the actor may choose to remain anonymous (possibly allowing attribution to

fall upon another). This is likely to be the case if the hybrid attack was simply meant to block or delay a given response. For example, if a regional power wanted to seize the territory of a neighboring nation-state allied with the United States, it might launch a hybrid attack designed to slow the American response.

Regardless of the success of its territorial ambitions, the actor would have no compelling interest in divulging its responsibility for the hybrid attack. Finally, the principal-agent relationship of the hybrid threat makes deterrence more difficult. As fungibility increases, the defender is confronted with an increasing number of potential suspects or combinations of suspects that may have the intent or capability to level the threat. Under such conditions, deterrence becomes nearly impossible. The defender cannot credibly threaten to retaliate against a range of potential yet unproven suspects.

Although it is unlikely that any single actor is in a position to pose a grave threat to the United States, it is increasingly conceivable that a revisionist actor could seek out third-party capabilities for the creation of a customized capacity to threaten or strike against America's ability or willingness to use military force—undermining the deterrent threat that ultimately provides national security. It is for this reason that hybrid threats deserve increased attention. With that in mind, we offer the following illustration of the potential mechanics and risks that hybrid threats could pose to the United States.

### Iran's Potential Hybrid Threats

To be clear, much of what follows is evidence-based conjecture. It is presented to illustrate the danger posed by strategic hybrid threats. Nonetheless, what is described occupies the

## Figure 1. Utility of Strategic Hybrid Threats and Principal Actors

### PROS

- Acquire capabilities beyond endogenous skills and resources.
- Relatively quick development time.
- Leverage unexpected avenue of attack.
- Anonymity.

### CONS

- Potential lack of control over agent.
- Potential dependence on agent may flip the nature of the relationship.
- Threat/Attack may not be sustainable.

realm of the possible, if not probable—and may be unfolding at this very moment.

Threats emerge out of the conflicting objectives of a given set of actors and the context of current conditions; we use these as our start point. From the perspective of the United States and the status quo, the government of Iran represents a revisionist power. It seeks to rework the politics and power of the Middle East, establishing regional hegemony for itself while promoting the relative position of its political ideology and Shia Islam. These are Iran's maximum strategic objectives. Its minimum strategic objectives are to prevent regime change in Tehran.<sup>8</sup> To achieve these objectives, it has employed a grand strategy designed to frustrate and weaken the ability of neighboring powers (and the United States) to buttress the current system or challenge Iran's domestic regime. To operationalize its grand strategy, the government of Iran has employed state-sponsored terrorism and occasionally conventional force. Iran's maximum strategies have thus far failed. Policies in support of its minimum objectives have been successful.

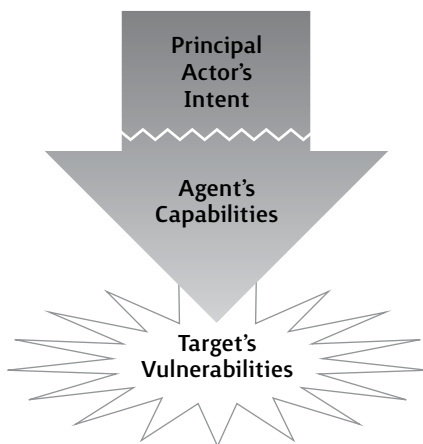
Current geopolitical conditions now present opportunities for Iran. The political upheaval in (and U.S. exit from) Iraq, a combat-weary United States, and the effects of the Arab Spring have weakened the regional status quo. Still, Tehran lacks the endogenous capability to realize its maximum strategic objectives, and even a relatively drained United States poses a threat to the regime's minimum

### *the principal-agent relationship of the hybrid threat makes deterrence more difficult*

objectives. This creates motivation for the government of Iran to find innovative solutions that would allow it to exploit current conditions. Developments outside the geography of the Middle East hint at the possibilities for hybrid threats in support of Iran's strategic objectives.

In Mexico, President Enrique Peña Nieto has promised to commit more resources to fight his country's narco-insurgency.<sup>9</sup> This is good. In the short term, however, violence and

Figure 2.



**Strategic Hybrid Threats** are produced through principal-agent relationships that combine one actor's intent with another's capabilities for the purpose of seriously decreasing or adversely changing vital elements or instruments of the target's power.

#### CORE CHARACTERISTICS

**Origin** - gives rise to the threat's purpose and objective.

**Composition** - determines the avenue of attack and the duration of the threat.

**Fungibility** - determines the range of potential targets and the ease of a priori detection and defense.



instability are likely to continue. Trafficking on the part of the drug cartels poses a threat to both the United States and Mexico. Their routes into the United States will continue to provide a conduit for the transport of money, weapons, drugs, and people between the two countries. Furthermore, Mexico's internecine warfare creates within the cartels an ever-increasing need for greater weaponry and tactical expertise—something Iran could supply in return for access to the cartel's smuggling routes.

In the United States, dependency on ever-denser cyber networks is growing. These networks pay great dividends. They make the energy sector more efficient, fuel economic growth, support the health and well-being of American business and educational endeavors, and are central to its modern military capability. They have become intertwined with the vital instruments of U.S. national power. They have also shifted and diffused American vulnerabilities. Furthermore, these changes have been accompanied by a diffusion of the knowledge

*Iran may not possess sufficiently robust cyber capabilities with which to attack the United States, but others do*

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and resources needed to threaten those cyber networks. Iran may not possess sufficiently robust cyber capabilities with which to attack the United States, but others do.

With their objectives and these conditions in mind, it is plausible that Iran could move to custom engineer two different types of strategic hybrid threats against the United States. One is a hybrid guerrilla threat and the other a hybrid cyber threat. Each has the capability of supporting Tehran's minimum goal of

preventing regime change in Tehran and its maximum goal of regional hegemony.

### Hybrid Guerrilla Threat

What might a hybrid guerrilla threat from Iran look like? More than likely, it would take the form of a small-scale attack against the American population, infrastructure, or military targets. It would be designed to divert attention and resources away from, or to undermine the political will to take, certain actions. Consistent with the definition above, the strategic objective of the assault would be determined by the government of Iran. For example, the objective might be to prevent U.S. actions against Iranian nuclear facilities or prevent U.S. involvement in Syria. Depending on how much risk the regime in Tehran might be willing to accept, its perceptions about U.S. intentions, and/or the strength of its domestic position, a hybrid guerrilla threat could also be deployed in an attempt to force an easing of U.S.-led oil sanctions or as a means for opening up space for Iranian policies in the Middle East. In short, a hybrid guerrilla threat could serve as an ultimatum to gain concessions.

Because Iran likely lacks the expertise and experience to successfully execute such a strategic attack, including the ability to confidently transport the necessary men and materials onto U.S. soil without detection, Tehran would need to establish principal-agent relationships to acquire capabilities and increase its probability of success.

Hizballah, long an Iranian proxy against Israel and Lebanon, could provide the expertise necessary for such an attack. Hizballah excels at small unit tactics. It has proven skills in the operation of 6- to 10-man teams in dense urban environments against a militarily superior adversary.<sup>10</sup> It possesses the tactical

knowledge needed to carry out a guerrilla attack within the United States and has proved willing to target U.S. interests overseas. Given its longstanding relationship with and deep ideological ties to the government of Iran, it can be assumed that Hizballah would be willing to coordinate and carry out such attacks.<sup>11</sup> Getting its fighters and the necessary equipment onto American soil, however, represents a capability that is not only beyond Iran, but Hizballah as well. This would necessitate a second agent to complete the crafting of the hybrid threat. Enter the cartels.

Mexican drug cartels have access to the United States and to the weapons, explosives, and communications equipment that would be needed to facilitate an attack. The cartels have established routes into at least 233 American cities in 48 states.<sup>12</sup> They have proven adept at securing weapons or improvising them when necessary. Why might the cartels agree to help Iran? As criminal enterprises, they have traditionally sought to avoid bringing attention (and heat) upon themselves. The short answer is that they are at war.

Things have changed. It is not hard to imagine a cartel being willing to serve as a transactional agent of the Iranian regime. They could supply transport to American targets in exchange for more sophisticated weapons and explosives (including rockets, antitank weapons, and Semtex) and tactical knowledge—all of which could then be employed in their fight against Mexican authorities and/or rival organizations.

Essentially, the hybrid guerrilla threat is that of a Mumbai-style assault on U.S. soil carried out by Hizballah fighters at the direction of the government of Iran and facilitated by Mexican drug cartels. What makes this a strategic hybrid threat is the fact that it could divert U.S. attention or sap American political will at a critical moment, allowing Iran to further its maximum goals. The fungibility of this threat adds to its danger. It could deploy against a range of targets, and easily shift to avoid detection or in response to the strengthening of U.S. defenses. A threat against Los Angeles could become a threat against Kansas City. For this reason, even if U.S. intelligence became aware of such a threat, it could be difficult to stop.

Figure 3. Potential Hybrid Guerrilla Threat from Iran Against the United States



From the Iranian perspective, a hybrid guerrilla threat makes sense; it is cost-effective, fungible, and hard to detect. It has a good chance of accomplishing the range of objectives for which it might be used. For all these reasons, it would be foolish to ignore this threat—or dismiss the likelihood that it could occur. Yet it has limits.

A Mumbai-style assault that kills American citizens on U.S. soil would bring about an overwhelming punitive strike against Iran. Logically (but not assuredly), the government of Iran knows this. Furthermore, it can be expected that Iran's military would reinforce this point by reminding the current regime that even a weakened United States possesses the ability to unleash a crippling strike from the air and sea without the need to engage ground forces. An attack on U.S. soil would certainly give the United States *casus belli* to attack Iran and would threaten the Iranian government's minimum and maximum objectives. Yet actors miscalculate and at times behave irrationally. Under the pressure of the sanctions regime, under the belief that no other course of action existed—or in an attempt to quell internal divisions and rally the Iranian people around the regime—the government of Iran might unleash such an attack. U.S. national security should not be dependent upon sound judgment in Tehran.

### Hybrid Cyber Threat

In the last few months, Iran has engaged in a heavy degree of cyber saber rattling, promising a “teeth-breaking” response to the cyber attacks launched against it.<sup>13</sup> Because Tehran has itself suffered cyber attacks, it may be motivated to respond in kind. Yet as discussed, a hybrid cyber threat would be most likely undertaken to forestall U.S. action to

gain Tehran time and space to achieve its strategic objective(s). Thus, a hybrid cyber threat would be customized to neutralize American capabilities by diverting attention and resources—and/or undermining the political will of the United States. Although impossible to rule out, it is unlikely the government of Iran would instigate an attack designed to produce mass casualties and/or gravely harm the United States. As in the earlier illustration, triggering a full-scale and potentially unlimited U.S. military response threatening the existence of the current regime could not conceivably serve the government of Iran's strategic objectives—but it cannot be ruled out, especially if the current regime feels cornered or believes such would assuage domestic pressure against the regime.

The most likely hybrid cyber threat scenario is one in which a threat (or actual attack) is deployed either to distract vital instruments of U.S. power away from Iranian actions or to render those instruments blind, deaf, mute, and/or ignorant of Iranian activity. This could be done in three general ways. First, cyber attacks against the electrical grid (including American nuclear reactors), water supply, air traffic control system, or the financial system—including banking, commerce, and/or stock and commodities markets—could easily produce sufficient distraction. To be successful, such attacks need only divert the attention of the national security apparatus. They need not be devastating in effect or national in scale. They need only generate sufficient discomfort and concern within the general public that they foster the perception of crisis. Second, a hybrid cyber attack could take the form of a psychological operations campaign. Such a campaign could involve the theft and release of sensitive information

designed to create political turmoil to block a U.S. response. This could be accomplished by releasing information that calls into question the legitimacy of Washington's motives and creates domestic and international resistance to U.S. action. Doing this could raise the costs of any given American response to the point that it becomes prohibitive. Third and finally, depending on the strategic objectives of Iran and its perceptions concerning risk and reward, a cyber attack could be launched directly against U.S. civilian and military communications networks. An attack against these could disrupt message traffic and deceive sensor data. It could conceivably replace them with false information. Such an attack could be launched to conceal Iranian movements by preventing U.S. or allied sources from observing or reporting on it. An attack against U.S. communications networks could also be used to alter deployment or resupply orders, in the hope of ensuring U.S. forces were out of place or unable to execute a timely response. Regardless of its exact manifestation and whether it is aimed at civilian or military targets, a cyber attack in support of Iran's strategic objectives could increase the frictions of war faced by any U.S. response to Iranian aggression. Still, at this point, Iran cannot execute such a strike alone.

A sophisticated and grave cyber attack against the United States is not confidently within the reach of Tehran—yet. It is true that the government of Iran has begun investing in its cyber capabilities. At this point, however, those investments are primarily aimed at securing its minimum objective of regime security from domestic threats. These cyber investments have increased the regime's ability to monitor the online activities of its citizens. To launch a cyber attack against the United

State that is sufficient in scale to achieve the goals above—one significant enough to be more than a nuisance—would require technical expertise beyond that actually demonstrated by the Iranian government.

Short of the actions of a well-placed spy or traitor, a significant cyber attack against the United States would require the creation of a large and sophisticated botnet, worm, or other exploit. Regardless of the instrument used, it would have to be capable of attacking the cyber infrastructure of the private sector and/or penetrating those of American military,

*a hybrid cyber threat would be customized to neutralize American capabilities by diverting attention and resources*

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Intelligence Community, and national security entities. The programming code used to craft the assault would need to have unique encryption protocols for its command and control. Such sophistication would be necessary to deploy the attack, prevent detection (and a subsequent spoiling attack), and execute the threat at a moment synchronized with the execution of regional actions taken to secure Iran's strategic objective(s). To develop such a customized hybrid cyber threat, Iran needs agents willing to provide the required technical capabilities.

As in the earlier illustration, Hizballah represents one potential agent with which the government of Iran could fabricate a hybrid cyber threat. Its standing relationship and ideological alignment with Iran makes it a trusted and willing partner. Hizballah has demonstrated offensive cyber expertise beyond that of the current Iranian regime. The Central Intelligence Agency has noted Hizballah's

growing cyber capabilities for more than a decade. Furthermore, its technical expertise was displayed during its 2006 summer war with Israel. During that war, Hizballah proved capable of data interception and hijacking Internet and communications infrastructures. It has been implicated in cyber attacks against

*Hizballah represents one potential agent with which the government of Iran could fabricate a hybrid cyber threat*

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targets in Saudi Arabia and other countries and is continuing to expand its cyber capabilities. In June 2011, the Cyber Hizballah was established to train and mobilize hackers.<sup>14</sup> Nonetheless, Hizballah does not represent the best choice for a hybrid cyber threat from Iran; its technical expertise, while greater than Iran's, is likely insufficient to the challenge. Furthermore, its close relationship with the current Iranian regime makes it difficult for Tehran to capitalize on one of the benefits of such an attack—the ability to remain anonymous, shielded by the difficulty of attribution. Anonymity would be of no importance for a hybrid threat in support of Iran's minimum objective, but could prove vital in support of its maximum objectives.

Hacktivists, disaffected and technically sophisticated individuals, represent another potential source of agents for the crafting of a hybrid cyber threat. Such individuals might self-identify with the principle behind the creation of the hybrid threat. Media reports suggest this may have been the case with the 2011 cyber attacks that brought down the Dutch firm DigiNotar. The attacks, sanctioned and supported by the government of Iran, appear to have been carried out by a single individual

of Iranian descent living in Europe. Using fake security certificates, his attacks compromised the security and communications of Dutch government Web sites. The attacks also inflicted significant damage to the cyber infrastructure of the Netherlands. DigiNotar collapsed under the weight of the attacks; its security certifications had to be quarantined and were rendered useless.

Purportedly, the hacker was motivated by the desire to avenge Muslims massacred at Srebrenica during the Balkan wars of the 1990s. The hacktivist held the Dutch responsible because of the failure of their peacekeepers to prevent the slaughter. Like Hizballah, hacktivists present problems as potential agents in a hybrid cyber attack against the United States. Uneven levels of technical expertise and questions about their ability to carry out the level of synchronization necessary to achieve the strategic objectives motivating the attack would likely lead the government of Iran to seek out more proven and disciplined agents.

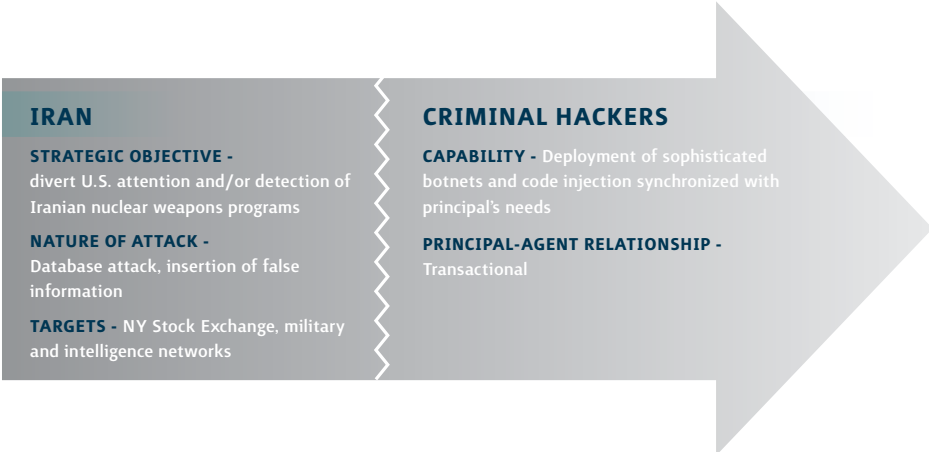
Criminal hackers represent the most likely agents for an Iranian-led cyber attack against the United States. Several groups, including organizations operating in Eastern Europe, Russia, China, and Taiwan have a history of operating as hackers-for-hire. They have proven adept at both cyber-spying and denial-of-service attacks. Criminal hackers have proved to be at the forefront of the weaponization of malware—including the development of techniques for corrupting computer programs through the injection of additional coding that can consume processor functions and bring down large databases. Many criminal hackers specialize in helping clients evade detection. Most importantly, they have proved capable of synchronizing their attacks

with the coordinated efforts of a principal actor. The best example can be found in the cyber attacks against Georgia that preceded the Russian invasion. The motivation behind their willingness to act as an agent of Iran would be simple and persuasive: money. Their skills and motivation make criminal hackers the best, most reliable set of agents with which the Iranian regime could construct a hybrid cyber threat against the United States.

How exactly might a hybrid cyber threat manifest itself? Let us consider what is perhaps the worst-case possibility: a strategic campaign in support of Iran’s nuclear ambitions. Consider this potential sequence of events. In the furtherance of its maximum objective of regional hegemony and its minimum goal of preventing regime change, the current government of Iran decides to develop nuclear weapons. To achieve that, the regime undertakes a sprint toward the weapons-grade enrichment of uranium and the construction of a bomb. Such a strategy would require the regime to prevent detection, and then (if necessary) delay any American response. Knowing

this, the government of Iran could turn to a hybrid cyber threat as an effective mechanism for avoiding detection by distracting, blinding, and deceiving the U.S. Government. To craft the threat, Iran could decide to enter into a transactional principal-agent relationship with criminal hackers to launch an attack against the New York Stock Exchange to distort prices, interfere with trade activity, and even bring down the electronic systems of the exchange—wiping out economic activity and halting the markets. Such an attack would easily rattle the confidence of global markets. It would precipitate a crisis likely to engulf the attention of the White House and Congress without drawing attention toward Tehran. At the same time, or perhaps as Iran neared the nuclear finish line, Iran could craft another hybrid cyber attack, again with the support of criminal hackers. This time the attack could be aimed at U.S. communications and sensor networks. Information could be fed into the system to create white noise, making it harder for American analysts to develop solid intelligence. If the United States became suspicious,

Figure 4. Potential Hybrid Cyber Threat from Iran Against the United States





Iran could decide to feed misinformation into U.S. communications and intelligence networks to draw attention to a false nuclear site in Iran, providing diversionary targets for U.S. military strikes, protecting the site of Iran's actual weaponization process, and buying the regime time to achieve its objectives.

How realistic is the above scenario? Why might Iran go the hybrid route? Why not develop these capabilities internally? From the Iranian perspective, a hybrid cyber threat provides three benefits to the current regime. First, it is fast. There is an arms bazaar of cyber weapons available from criminal hackers, and using it to acquire offensive capabilities would be quicker than domestic development. This lowers the bar to the level of point and click.

*there is an arms bazaar of cyber weapons available from criminal hackers, and using it would be quicker than domestic development*

Second, transactional principal-agent relationships avoid one potential pitfall of internal development—the fact that domestically held cyber skills could be turned against the regime itself. As the 2009 Iranian elections and Green Movement demonstrated, cyber tools have the potential not only to secure the current regime, but also to threaten it. Third, the hybrid route offers a heightened chance of avoiding attribution. A hybrid threat would offer the government of Iran the ability to hide behind the agent of the attack. This would introduce doubt into the political processes of the United States and international community, which could forestall (or reduce the severity of) any response. Given this, and given the strategic risk-to-reward ratio for Iran, dismissing the potential of such a threat would be foolish.

## Countering Strategic Hybrid Threats

Strategic hybrid threats have the potential to directly threaten the safety and security of American citizens, society, and interests at home and abroad. They manifest themselves in novel combinations. They are fungible. They may strike municipal, state, or national targets. This last point magnifies the intrinsic difficulty of countering hybrid threats; it ensures that any defense against them is inherently a complex operation. It defies a hierarchical top-down response. It requires multiple agencies at various levels of governance (including state and local) to assume complementary roles and operate in close proximity—“often with similar missions but conflicting mandates.”<sup>15</sup>

Given the above, what advice and prescriptions do we offer American practitioners and policymakers? We begin by recognizing the fact that the critical tasks that must be accomplished to defend against hybrid threats are beyond the capability and operational purview of any single actor. Strategic hybrid threats present a unique challenge. Because they may manifest themselves at any or all levels of governance, they confound modern approaches to national security. They cannot be solely or adequately addressed by an executive authority who directs actions abroad to provide security at home. When it comes to responding to strategic hybrid threats, no single service solutions exist. Each critical task—detection, analysis, and response—is itself a set of complex operations that must be coordinated among private and public sector entities at the local, state, and national levels. This requires a high degree of coordination among actors that may have little history of working together. Luckily, history provides a model for

how such challenges may be undertaken, managed, and accomplished.

Beginning with Spain's King Charles V, Western governments have employed war councils composed of public- and private-sector actors to address complex threats to national security.<sup>16</sup> Before the rise of our modern bureaucratic security structures, war councils were employed to determine strategy and select courses of action. They were also employed to manage the current and future material needs of military operations. Historically, the use, composition, and authority of war councils were of an ad hoc nature in the United States. American war councils operated at the state and Federal levels—and at times both, acting as a mechanism for uniting state and Federal efforts. For example, this was the case during World War I when the Federal Government asked the states to create councils of defense to support the national Council of Defense. Although American councils of war varied in their levels of statutory authority, and some existed as purely political bodies while others were created by legislative act, they shared a common trait. They were customized in response to the specific threat faced and expired once it had been defeated. Interestingly, war councils (in both the United States and in other Western governments) normally lacked operational authority or control. These were traditionally left to the constituent members of the council, which served as a mechanism for deliberation, decisionmaking, and coordination.

We recommend that the war council concept be dusted off, updated, and tailored to meet the specific characteristics and challenges of hybrid threats. It provides the best model for the establishment of customized (and by necessity, decentralized) responses

to meet customized threats. In many ways, we expect that threat councils should mirror the principal-agent relationship that gives rise to the threat. At the core of a threat council would be a principal actor, one responsible for the national security of the defender. In the United States, that role would be fulfilled by the President or by another actor or entity entrusted to act under Presidential authority—for example, the National Security Staff (historically known as the National Security Council staff). The direction or management of the council might fall to the Director of National Intelligence or another designee. The important point is that under the constitutional architecture of the United States, any threat council could have only a limited hierarchical nature. To be successful, it must find a way to leverage decentralized actors by providing a seat at the table for state and local entities, which any defense against strategic hybrid threats would require. Even outside the United States, the fungible nature of hybrid threats results in a situation in which no strict principal-agent relationship is possible in the defense. This is the value of the war council model—where the principal actor at the core must negotiate, coordinate, and at times accept a role subservient to the other actors comprising the council.

In practice, once a hybrid threat has been identified (either through observation or theorization), a threat council should be organized. It must then be tied into existing national security structures. Logically, the most effective way to accomplish this would be to connect the newly established threat council to an existing forum for inter-agency coordination. Such forums are a mainstay of the modern White House. Labeled Interagency Policy Committees in the Obama

administration and Policy Coordinating Committees in the Bush administration, these forums coordinate national security policy and provide policy analysis for other senior committees. Tying a threat council to the appropriate executive body for coordination would ensure that national policy and decentralized action are unified to the greatest degree possible. Given the fungibility of hybrid threats, council membership ought

*tying a threat council to the appropriate executive body for coordination would ensure that national policy and decentralized action are unified*

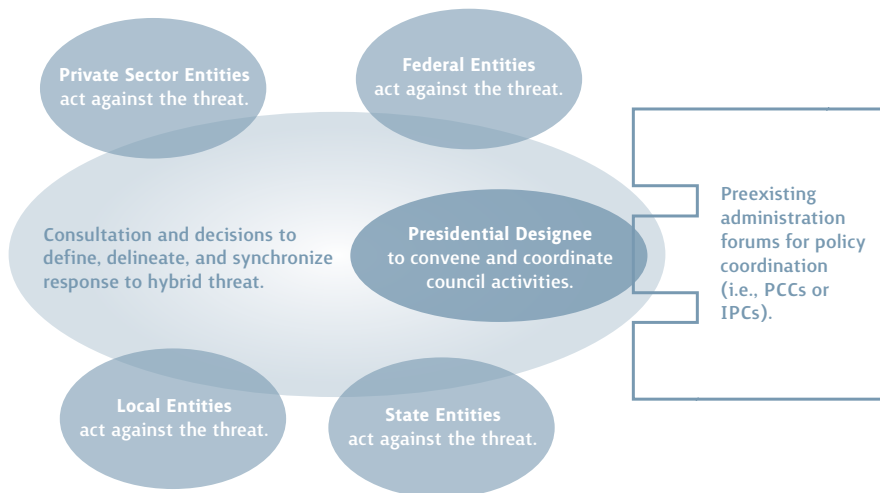
to be as inclusive as possible. The number of assembled stakeholders and experts should be expansive enough to provide appreciation for strategic context as well as operational truths. Furthermore, council membership must provide for the multidimensional and interdisciplinary perspectives necessary to question

conventional assumptions, evaluate standard operating procedures, foster learning, and provide for red teaming between the council's conclusions and recommendations.

Once established, the council must analyze the hybrid threat to define and delineate its specific character. Based on that, the council must deliberate and coordinate a response. Its actions must be unified. In the United States, this means bringing concert to the application of a response across various agencies and jurisdictions at the local, state, regional, and Federal levels of governance. This can only be accomplished through a well-defined mission statement. The mission statement itself should be a product of the council's work and should identify the core elements of the threat and the causal relationships and motivations that give rise to it.

Based on this information, the council should identify and implement actions to break the principal-agent relationship. Everything possible should be done to counter the enemy's partnership and cleave the

**Figure 5. Threat Council Model within U.S. Constitutional Architecture**



agent from the principal.<sup>17</sup> The threat council's mission statement must also simplify the threat by highlighting the key weaknesses of both the attacker and defender, which is vitally important for the facilitation of the response. Once that is done, council members must coordinate orders of battle, attack plans, and arrests to maximize strategic impact. They must also evaluate the consequences of such actions, including their second- and third-order effects.

Council members must also coordinate actions to harden the defender's vulnerabilities. In doing this, the council should strive to reduce the defender's area of vulnerability to the hybrid threat. At the very least, it should endeavor to shift the defender's point of vulnerability outside the area where it directly threatens the lives and security of civilians.<sup>18</sup> As that suggests, the success of the threat council depends on its ability to produce a clear understanding of the hybrid threat. This understanding becomes the touchstone upon which activity will be coordinated and the concept that unifies the activity of the council's constituents.

Our final recommendation is a direct one: act now. Under the leadership of the Director of National Intelligence (or other designee), threat councils ought to be established based on the two potential avenues of attack outlined above, the potential guerrilla threat and potential cyber threat. Each of these scenarios represents growing dangers whether carried out by the principal-agent relationships we describe or some other combination of actors. Because of that, now is the time to constitute councils that can begin coordinating the work of detection. Other avenues of attack may exist. If so, those too deserve attention. We need to be on watch; it is vitally important that we begin to act.

## Conclusion

We have attempted to illustrate the risks strategic hybrid threats present to the national security of the United States. The Iranian examples represent but one set of dangers. They are the most pressing examples, but others exist. General Carter Ham, commander of U.S. Africa Command, recently warned of emerging trends with al-Shabaab and Boko Haram.

*to meet the customized challenges hybrid threats present, the United States needs a customized response*

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General Ham's comments suggest that al-Shabaab and Boko Haram may be fostering principal-agent relationships to enhance their capabilities.<sup>19</sup> Similarly, General Douglas Fraser, commander of U.S. Southern Command, has warned of developments in the Tri-Border Region of Brazil, Paraguay, and Argentina. General Fraser has highlighted growing relationships among Hizballah, al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya, al-Jihad, al-Qaeda, Hamas, al-Muqawamah, and local actors in the region.<sup>20</sup> Still other reports suggest that Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) guerrillas have established a principal-agent relationship with entities in Venezuela and offshoots of al-Qaeda. The Venezuelans supply FARC with safe haven airstrips, and al-Qaeda supplies access to safe havens and routes through Africa and Europe. The threat brings drugs into Europe and the United States, generating revenue for all parties.

Strategic hybrid threats pose a unique and growing danger to the United States. Their origin, composition, and fungibility present novel challenges, not the least of which is the

fact that their nature reduces detection and response times to the point that single-service defenses are practically useless. To meet the customized challenges hybrid threats present, the United States needs a customized response, and the establishment of threat councils provides a model and starting point.

As with all national security discussions, we do not expect complete agreement with our argument. It is important, however, that we engage in an honest debate that differentiates strategic hybrid threats from other dangers, considers the risks they pose, and examines how best to mitigate their effects. Strategic hybrid threats warrant increased attention and thought, thus we welcome the debate. **PRISM**

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Most of the debate over hybrid threats has thus far been focused on the tactical or operational levels and whether or how the uniformed armed services ought to adapt in response. What has received far less attention is how hybrid threats might be used to achieve strategic goals.

<sup>2</sup> Robert G. Walker, "Spec Fi: The United States Marine Corps and Special Operations" (Master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 1998), 4–5, 7–12; James N. Mattis and Frank G. Hoffman, "Future Warfare: The Rise of Hybrid Wars," *Proceedings* 132, no. 11 (2005), 30–32; Frank G. Hoffman, "Complex Irregular Warfare: The Next Revolution in Military Affairs," *Orbis* 50, no. 3 (2006), 397–399; Gian P. Gentile, "The Imperative for an American General Purpose Army That Can Fight," *Orbis* 53, no. 3 (2009), 461; Russell W. Glenn, "Thoughts on 'Hybrid' Conflict," *Small Wars Journal* (2009), available at <<http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/thoughts-on-hybrid-conflict>>; T.X. Hammes, "How Will We Fight?" *Orbis* 53, no. 3 (2009), 372–373; Fulvio Poli, "An Asymmetrical Symmetry: How Convention Has Become Innovative Military Thought" (Master's thesis, U.S. Army War College, 2010), 1–8.

<sup>3</sup> John J. McCuen, "Hybrid Wars," *Military Review* 88, no. 2 (2008), 107–113; Hammes, 373; Frank G. Hoffman, "Hybrid vs. Compound War," *Armed Forces*

*Journal*, 2010, available at <[www.armedforcesjournal.com/2009/10/4198658/](http://www.armedforcesjournal.com/2009/10/4198658/)>.

<sup>4</sup> Joint Publication (JP) 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Washington, DC: The Joint Staff, November 8, 2010, amended April 15, 2012), 166, 334; Mark Grdovic, "Developing a Common Understanding of Unconventional Warfare," *Joint Force Quarterly* 57 (2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2010), 136–138.

<sup>5</sup> Hoffman, "Complex Irregular Warfare," 397–398.

<sup>6</sup> This conceptualization borrows the definition of strategic vulnerability from JP 1-02. Thus, we assume that strategic hybrid threats could be aligned against a defender's political, geographic, economic, informational, scientific, sociological, or military factors. See JP 1-02, 307.

<sup>7</sup> It is this aligning of the agent's capabilities with the defender's vulnerabilities that erroneously leads to the equating of asymmetric warfare with hybrid threats.

<sup>8</sup> Anoush Ehteshami, "Iran: Regional Power with a Global Strategy," Podcast, International Relations and Security Network, Zurich, Switzerland, Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, available at <[www.isn.ethz.ch/isn/Digital-Library/Podcasts/Detail/?lng=en&id=140438](http://www.isn.ethz.ch/isn/Digital-Library/Podcasts/Detail/?lng=en&id=140438)>; Vali Nasr, "When the Shiites Rise," *Foreign Affairs* 85, no. 4 (2006), 58–74.

<sup>9</sup> Adam Thomson, "Mexico's President-elect to Shift Drug War focus with 40,000-strong force," *Financial Times*, July 3, 2012, A1.

<sup>10</sup> Steven Erlanger and Richard A. O'Connell, Jr., "A Disciplined Hezbollah Surprises Israel With Its Training, Tactics, and Weapons," *The New York Times*, available at <[www.nytimes.com/2006/08/07/world/middleeast/07Hezbollah.html?pagewanted=all](http://www.nytimes.com/2006/08/07/world/middleeast/07Hezbollah.html?pagewanted=all)>; Andrew Exum, "Learning from Hezbollah," Middle East Strategy at Harvard Blog, available at <[https://blogs.law.harvard.edu/mesh/2007/12/learning\\_from\\_Hezbollah/](https://blogs.law.harvard.edu/mesh/2007/12/learning_from_Hezbollah/)>; Casey L. Addis and Christopher M. Blanchard, *Hezbollah: Background and Issues for Congress*, R41446 (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, January 3, 2011).

<sup>11</sup> Cyrus Miryekt, "Hezbollah in the Tri-Border Area of South America," available at <[http://usacac.army.mil/cac2/call/docs/11-15/ch\\_11.asp](http://usacac.army.mil/cac2/call/docs/11-15/ch_11.asp)>.

<sup>12</sup> Tyler Hayden, "How Do You Solve a Problem Like the Panga? Sheriff Meets with Federal Officials on How to Deal with Increased Maritime Smuggling," *Santa Barbara [CA] Independent*, available at <[www.independent.com/news/2012/jul/09/how-do-you-solve-problem-pangas/?on](http://www.independent.com/news/2012/jul/09/how-do-you-solve-problem-pangas/?on)>; "Mexican Cartels: Drug Organizations Extending Reach Farther into U.S.,"

Associated Press, available at <[www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=124703094](http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=124703094)>.

<sup>13</sup> Richard Adhikari, "Iran Promises Knuckle Sandwich if US Cyberattacks Persist," *TechNewsWorld*, available at <[www.technewsworld.com/story/Iran-Promises-Knuckle-Sandwich-if-US-Cyberattacks-Persist-75736.html](http://www.technewsworld.com/story/Iran-Promises-Knuckle-Sandwich-if-US-Cyberattacks-Persist-75736.html)>.

<sup>14</sup> Hilary Hylton, "How Hizballah Hijacks the Internet," *Time.com*, available at <[www.time.com/time/world/printout/0,8816,1224273,00.html](http://www.time.com/time/world/printout/0,8816,1224273,00.html)>; Kevin Coleman, "Hizballah's Cyber Warfare Program," *DefenseTech*, available at <<http://defensetech.org/2008/06/02/Hizballahs-cyber-warfare-program/>>; Greg Grant, "Hizballah Claims It Hacked Israeli Drone Video Feeds," *DefenseTech*, available at <<http://defensetech.org/2010/08/10/Hizballah-claims-it-hacked-israeli-drone-video-feeds/>>; "Spotlight on Iran (Week of September 21–28, 2011)," The Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, available at <[www.terrorism-info.org.il/en/article/17844](http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/en/article/17844)>.

<sup>15</sup> Michael Miklaucic, "Introduction," in *Commanding Heights: Strategic Lessons from Complex Operations*, ed. Michael Miklaucic, x (Washington, DC: NDU Press, 2010).

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Weapons and money seized by U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration

# Chinese Organized Crime in Latin America

BY R. EVAN ELLIS

In June 2010, the sacking of Secretary of Justice Romeu Tuma Júnior for allegedly being an agent of the Chinese mafia rocked Brazilian politics.<sup>1</sup> Three years earlier, in July 2007, the head of the Colombian national police, General Oscar Naranjo, made the striking proclamation that “the arrival of the Chinese and Russian mafias in Mexico and all of the countries in the Americas is more than just speculation.”<sup>2</sup> Although, to date, the expansion of criminal ties between the People’s Republic of China (PRC) and Latin America has lagged behind the exponential growth of trade and investment between the two regions, the incidents mentioned above highlight that criminal ties between the regions are becoming an increasingly problematic by-product of expanding China–Latin America interactions, with troubling implications for both regions.

Although data to quantify the character and extent of such ties are lacking, public evidence suggests that criminal activity spanning the two regions is principally concentrated in four current domains and two potentially emerging areas. The four groupings of current criminal activity between China and Latin America are extortion of Chinese communities in Latin America by groups with ties to China, trafficking in persons from China through Latin America into the United States or Canada, trafficking in narcotics and precursor chemicals, and trafficking in contraband goods. The two emerging areas are arms trafficking and money laundering.

It is important to note that this analysis neither implicates the Chinese government in such ties nor absolves it, although a consideration of incentives suggests that it is highly unlikely that the government would be involved in any systematic fashion. This article also does not suggest that the criminal ties spanning both regions reflect a coordinated group of purpose-driven criminal organizations. Rather, it calls attention to a problem that is an unfortunate but natural artifact of the expansion of human and commercial contacts between Latin America and Asia, and for which Latin America may be frighteningly unprepared.

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## The “Chinese Mafia” in Latin America

As in other parts of the world, organized criminal groups with linkages to mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Macau have long operated within the relatively closed ethnic Chinese communities of Latin America. Some but not all of these groups, referred to as the “triads,” had their origins as “secret societies” organizing Chinese diaspora communities, with respect to both their new countries and to political activities in mainland China and surrounding areas, but which evolved into criminal groups over time.

Because ethnic Chinese communities abroad have historically been reluctant to report problems among their own members to non-Chinese host nation authorities, the activities of Chinese mafias in Latin America have been almost invisible to date. Nonetheless, in recent years, stories have increasingly emerged regarding extortion and other criminal activity by such groups operating in the major urban centers. In Argentina, for example, where Chinese mafias with ties to Fujian Province have had a recognized presence since the 1990s, there have been increasing news accounts regarding extortion-related violence against Chinese shopkeepers.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, accounts of such activities and related crimes against members of the Chinese business community have appeared in the press not only in metropolitan Buenos Aires, but also in other parts of the country, including Mar del Plata,<sup>4</sup> Bahia Blanca,<sup>5</sup> and Lomas de Zamora.<sup>6</sup> Similar incidents have also been reported in the interior of Argentina, including the modest-sized provincial capital of Mendoza, where authorities reported 30 separate extortion threats in one 48-hour period in 2011.<sup>7</sup>

In metropolitan Lima, Peru, which is host to one of Latin America’s largest Chinese communities,<sup>8</sup> similar accounts have emerged of “Chinese mafias” extorting ethnic Chinese owners of hotels, saunas, restaurants, discos, and other commercial establishments.<sup>9</sup> Examples include an attack against a Peruvian Chinese restaurant in the neighborhood of Callao involving a Molotov cocktail (presumably for not paying “protection money”),<sup>10</sup> and shopkeepers being extorted by members of the Red Dragon group from prisons in or near the capital.<sup>11</sup>

Authorities have detected Chinese mafias operating in Venezuela for at least the past 3 years.<sup>12</sup> Accusations have also been made against Chinese mafias in Guayaquil and other parts of Ecuador since at least 2009.<sup>13</sup>

In Panama, whose Chinese population is arguably the largest in the region as a percentage of the population, comments from government officials appearing in the press refer to Chinese gangs involved in the extortion of members of the local Chinese community and other crimes.<sup>14</sup> Publicly, the killing of five Chinese youths in the neighborhood of Chorea received national attention not only for its brutality, but also for the perceived lack of a substantial response by the national police.<sup>15</sup> Members of Panama’s security forces, speaking off the record for this investigation, acknowledge that the Chinese mafia is very active in their country.

Violent assaults against Chinese communities in the Caribbean basin in recent months have highlighted the presence of Chinese mafia groups there as well, including a widely publicized double homicide in Trinidad in July 2012.<sup>16</sup> In Paramaribo, Suriname, suspicious incidents in recent years have included a 14-year-old Chinese boy who was found

chopped to pieces in front of a popular tourist hotel and, in a separate case, the beheading of a Chinese father and son.

Sometimes it is difficult to distinguish the Chinese mafia from the powerful but legitimate support structures of local Chinese communities. It is said that such mafias provide capital to help Chinese entrepreneurs establish businesses, a wholesale network for the goods sold in those stores, “organization of the market” assuring individual shopkeepers individual segments of the neighborhood, and, of course, protection services. On the other hand, in the case of Suriname, the official “club,” Kong Njie Tong Sang, and others representing the established Chinese community, are instrumental in providing revolving credit to the younger Chinese communities, while the hundreds of Chinese shops in the capital Paramaribo depend on a handful of Chinese wholesalers from the older generation Chinese-Surinamese community. Yet such structures do not make the established Chinese-Surinamese community a criminal mafia.

The activities of Chinese mafia groups create an inherent criminal link between China and Latin America, insofar as threats against families in China are often used as one of the tools for extorting Chinese individuals in Latin America.<sup>17</sup> A particularly worrisome example of such ties is the presence of the Chinese mafia in Tapachula, in the state of Chiapas, which serves as a point of entry into Mexico for Chinese and others crossing at Frontera Corozal, following trafficking routes up the Atlantic coast of Mexico that are currently controlled by Los Zetas.

Although such activities and ties are troubling in and of themselves, in the context of expanding flows of people, products, and money between China and Latin America, the

risk is that these mafias, with their connections to Asia, will opportunistically expand into other types of activities associated with those flows. In Peru, for example, the group Red Dragon, whose activities were once principally confined to extorting local Chinese restaurant owners and shopkeepers, has diversified to include global human smuggling networks and, most recently, into trafficking cocaine and synthetic drugs from Asia.<sup>18</sup>

### Trafficking in Persons

Currently, smuggling of persons from Asia through Latin America to Canada and the United States is the largest visible transnational criminal linkage between the two regions. Illegal Chinese immigration into Latin America has been recognized as a significant problem by multiple organizations, including the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes.<sup>19</sup> Such trafficking is highly lucrative, generating \$70,000 or more per person and representing a \$750 million per year business for the Chinese mafias alone, according to one estimate.<sup>20</sup>

*accounts have emerged of “Chinese mafias” extorting ethnic Chinese owners of hotels, saunas, restaurants, discos, and other commercial establishments*

Many of the routes used to move Chinese immigrants go through Europe, then to different parts of South America. In the case of Suriname, many of the immigrants come through the Netherlands, although Dutch authorities have recently taken steps to stop these flows.

Many immigrants begin their trip through South America in the Pacific coast nations of

Colombia, Ecuador, or Peru,<sup>21</sup> with patterns in such flows being strongly affected by changes in law enforcement patterns and policies in those countries. In 2007, for example, when Colombia ceased requiring visas for Chinese nationals to enter the country, the nation's security service, the Departamento Administrativo de Seguridad, reported an increase in Chinese nationals transiting through the country, ultimately leading the government to reimpose the visa requirement.<sup>22</sup>

A similar dynamic occurred in neighboring Ecuador in February 2008 when that country dropped its own visa requirements for Chinese nationals entering the country, prompting an increase to almost 6,000 Chinese entering through official immigration channels that year and media coverage of the trafficking of Chinese as an issue.<sup>23</sup> Associated with that event was a new wave of detentions as those individuals were moved overland through Colombia and then northward toward the United States by Chinese mafia groups such as Red Dragon.

### *government employees of the national document registry were implicated in providing false identity documents*

Like Colombia and Ecuador, Peru has been beset by problems involving Chinese mafia groups such as Red Dragon illegally moving immigrants through the country, often across its border with Ecuador,<sup>24</sup> and acquiring documents for them. In at least one case, government employees of the national document registry were implicated in providing false identity documents,<sup>25</sup> including one case in which 22 members of the agency were accused of issuing false birth certificates.<sup>26</sup>

Beyond the Pacific coast countries that often serve as points of entry, other Chinese trafficked into the region travel overland through Bolivia and Paraguay,<sup>27</sup> ultimately remaining in countries such as Argentina<sup>28</sup> or later moving on toward the United States. In Bolivia, in particular, a number of detentions of Chinese nationals traveling through the country without proper documents have been reported in recent years.<sup>29</sup> As with Peru and elsewhere, such activities have come to involve government workers in the process of obtaining false identity documents. In 2006, for example, 16 current and 12 former Bolivian congressmen were implicated in granting false visas to Chinese immigrants.<sup>30</sup>

Although a portion of those entering the region through such illegal networks remain in South America, the majority continue toward the United States and Canada, often traveling overland through Central America and Mexico.<sup>31</sup> Anecdotal evidence of such flows includes the April 2011 implication of the head of the Panamanian immigration directorate in generating false documents for Chinese passing through the country.<sup>32</sup> An expansion in the flow through Costa Rica has also been detected<sup>33</sup> with a corresponding increase in detentions.<sup>34</sup>

Anecdotal public evidence also suggests a correlation between Chinese entering the Pacific coast of Latin America and illegal flows of Chinese migrants through Central America. Between January 2006 and 2007 alone, detentions of Chinese illegally passing through Costa Rica, Panama, and Colombia registered a 2,500-percent increase after the previously noted policy change in which the Colombian government temporarily suspended the visa requirement for Chinese nationals.<sup>35</sup>

Mexican authorities distinguish between two separate flows. As noted, Chinese

nationals crossing through the southern border of Mexico enter principally at Frontera Corozal, in the state of Chiapas, into Tapachula, where there is a sizable ethnic Chinese community. They then journey by train to the Atlantic coast through territory controlled by Los Zetas. Separately, Chinese migrants enter directly from Asia, passing through ports on the Mexican Pacific coast, including Puerto Vallarta in Jalisco, Manzanillo in Colima, and Coyacan in Mazatlan. Still others come in by air directly to Mexico City, where the activity of Chinese trafficking networks has been publicly reported by the Attorney General's office.

Part of the worrisome dynamic created by such flows is the opportunities for interaction they create between the mafias linked to China, such as Red Dragon, which ostensibly manage the journeys of these immigrants, and the Latin American-based criminal groups that control the territory through which they pass, such as Mexico-based transnational criminal organizations.<sup>36</sup> Chinese immigrants illegally entering through the Pacific coast, for example, currently pass through areas in which illicit activities such as human trafficking are controlled and taxed by the Juarez and Gulf cartels. Chinese people entering Mexico from Central America reportedly follow routes currently controlled by Los Zetas. Among other risks, the interactions associated with the implied collaboration between Chinese groups and the Mexican cartels are its potential to diversify into other forms of collaboration, as well as competition.

Although the Central America–Mexico route is a major pathway for Chinese bound for the United States, it is also important to mention other routes, such as

smuggling Chinese through Venezuela and the Caribbean.<sup>37</sup> The use of Venezuela reflects both the sizable Chinese community there and the increasing corruption of authorities at all levels.<sup>38</sup> On multiple occasions, authorities detected and acted against the Chinese trafficking network operating out of Puerto Ordaz, in northeast Venezuela, with one major case reported in 2007<sup>39</sup> and another in December 2011 in which the Venezuelan Intelligence Service found government equipment used for the production of documents in the hands of these criminal groups.<sup>40</sup>

In Trinidad and other parts of the Caribbean, authorities have registered an increase in the trafficking of Chinese people since 2006.<sup>41</sup> Analysts in Trinidad and Tobago have expressed concern that the officially authorized entry of Chinese workers for the growing number of construction projects undertaken by Chinese firms may also facilitate human trafficking, with Chinese nationals overstaying their work permits and being smuggled by the Chinese triad-affiliated “snakehead gangs” into the United States.<sup>42</sup>

*the officially authorized entry of Chinese workers for the growing number of construction projects undertaken by Chinese firms may also facilitate illegal human trafficking*

In Suriname, similar patterns are suspected of Chinese individuals entering the country on work permits, facilitated by the government's revolving construction agreement with China Dalian, then overstaying their visas. In Guyana, undocumented Chinese workers were exposed in the nation's gold-mining sector.<sup>43</sup>



## Trafficking in Narcotics and Precursor Chemicals

Beyond human trafficking and extortion in Latin American Chinese communities, troubling new trans-Pacific ties appear to be forming in the domain of narcotrafficking. Mexican cartels, such as Sinaloa and Tijuana, source many of their precursor chemicals from Asia, particularly those for methamphetamines, such as ephedrine and pseudoephedrine.<sup>44</sup>

The Mexican cartel Jalisco Nueva Generation, for example, imports both cocaine from Colombia and ephedrine from China.<sup>45</sup> Multiple seizures of such chemicals coming from China and India, and entering commercial ports such as Lazaro Cardenas and Michoacán, have been made in recent years by Mexican authorities.<sup>46</sup> Although publicly available evidence does not make it clear whether Chinese organized crime groups are involved, or whether the Mexican cartels are simply buying precursor chemicals from Chinese companies with lax controls,<sup>47</sup> anecdotal evidence such as the Zhenli Ye Gon case<sup>48</sup> suggests that Chinese organized crime is likely participating.<sup>49</sup>

In addition to Mexican ports, shipments of precursor chemicals have been intercepted coming into other Latin American countries such as Peru, where both the Sinaloa and Tijuana cartels are believed to be operating.<sup>50</sup> Moreover, the Peruvian connection suggests the possible emergence of a global narcotics supply chain, with precursor chemicals such as kerosene moving to “source zone” countries such as Peru, where the drugs are made and ultimately transshipped by Mexico-based cartels to the United States and elsewhere.

In addition to precursor chemicals, criminal groups are smuggling finished drugs between the two regions, with the growing

potential for collaboration and competition between Chinese and Mexican criminal organizations. Recent cases suggest that the Sinaloa cartel, for example, is attempting to enter the Asian market,<sup>51</sup> including a September 2011 incident involving a shipment of cocaine from Mexico to Hong Kong.<sup>52</sup> Cocaine has also been intercepted following a southern route from Chile to Asia,<sup>53</sup> and some interactions have been reported between Mexican drug cartels and Asian heroin-trafficking groups.<sup>54</sup>

## Trafficking in Contraband Goods

In addition to people and narcotics, the flow of illicit merchandise from China to Latin America, including pirated software, music CDs, and brand-name clothes, presents an opportunity for collaboration between organized crime in the sending and receiving countries, particularly where Chinese merchants in Latin American are vendors of those goods, or where the territory in question is dominated by Latin American criminal organizations such as Mexican cartels or even street gangs.

The Chinese groups Fuk Ching, the Flying Dragons, and Tai Chen, for example, have been identified as importing contraband goods into the tri-border area.<sup>55</sup> Chinese gangs in Venezuela reportedly rob merchandise and resell it to Chinese merchants in their protection network.<sup>56</sup> Mexican groups such as Los Zetas appear to take a cut from groups distributing pirated Chinese software. Beyond just distribution, Mexican authorities interviewed for this study indicated that there are indeed emerging ties between the cartels and Chinese organized crime in the importation of contraband goods, including in the port of Veracruz, previously controlled by Los Zetas, as well as various Pacific coast ports. At the time this study was written, most of the retail sales of

Chinese contraband goods, such as the market of Tepito in Mexico City, were still being run by Mexicans with the suggestion that Chinese merchants and associated criminal organizations were being kept out.

Interaction involving the flow of illegal commercial goods is not limited to the retail sector. In Michoacán, the La Familia cartel was identified as organizing and taxing the illegal extraction of ore from mines in the region and its sale to China.<sup>57</sup> Chinese criminal groups are similarly reported to be engaged in illegal mining in the remote province of Madre de Dios in southeastern Peru.<sup>58</sup> As the volume of contraband flows increases between the regions, as part of the expansion of all trade between the regions, the prospects seem high for organized crime on both sides to more actively seek to capture this revenue stream.

### Arms Trafficking

Although much attention is given to flows of firearms from the United States into Mexico, the PRC, through the black market, is one of the principal providers of military-grade munitions to the region.<sup>59</sup> A particular problem is Chinese arms smuggled into Mexico, often through the United States.<sup>60</sup> In 2008, for example, the commander of 8<sup>th</sup> Military Zone of Mexico, Luis Villegas, claimed that Chinese arms were being smuggled across the U.S. border into Tamaulipas, along with U.S. and Russian arms.<sup>61</sup> Chinese-manufactured grenades and other military items have been seized in Puebla and elsewhere in Mexico, although it is not clear that the Mexican cartels are purchasing directly from Chinese criminal groups or arms companies.

Reports suggest that such arms are smuggled into the country in containers of Chinese merchandise through many of the same Pacific

coast ports as ethnic Chinese people and contraband goods, including Manzanillo (which by coincidence is controlled by the Hong Kong-based logistics company Hutchison Whampoa).<sup>62</sup>

*arms are smuggled in containers of Chinese merchandise through many of the same Pacific coast ports as ethnic Chinese people*

Although there is little evidence that the Chinese government is knowingly involved in the trade, the degree to which Chinese arms companies such as the Northern Industries Corporation ensure that their weapons are not sold or diverted into the black market is not clear. Recognizing such concerns, the Chinese government promulgated the Law on Control of Guns in July 1996, issued regulations on the Administration of Arms Export in October 1997, and started amending the regulations from October 2002, allowing sales only to licensed buyers.<sup>63</sup>

In arms trafficking, there are also troubling gray areas, as highlighted in a recent investigation by the Colombia prosecutor's office implicating a Venezuelan government official for the purchase of Chinese weapons by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia.<sup>64</sup>

### Money Laundering

Finally, as banking and commercial ties expand between China and Latin America, and as options increase for converting Chinese currency into dollars or Latin American currencies, criminal groups on all sides may increasingly use trans-Pacific financial flows to hide income and protect illicitly gained wealth. There is evidence that such activities have already begun, taking advantage of the

Flickr (Xiaming)



Mafias provide capital to help Chinese entrepreneurs establish businesses

difficulty Latin American investigators have in following or scrutinizing transactions in Asia. In March 2010, for example, the Mexican Federal Police made public a case in which the Colombian Valle de Cauca cartels, in their dealings with the Mexican group La Familia, had sent part of their earnings to the PRC.<sup>65</sup>

Chinese-owned gambling operations in Latin America also present significant opportunities for money laundering, given the large cash flows involved with such establishments, just as the Russian mafias operating in Panama and Uruguay reportedly use casinos there to launder money.<sup>66</sup> In a similar vein, as with all major gambling-oriented commercial establishments, new Chinese gambling facilities such as the \$2.5 billion Baha Mar resort currently being built in the Bahamas could play such a role.

Finally, although there are currently few indications that flows of money by Chinese investors into the British Virgin Islands and Cayman Islands play a major role in money laundering by Chinese criminal groups,<sup>67</sup> evidence suggests that a variety of Chinese entities already use these destinations for tax shelter purposes, implying that it is reasonable to expect that Chinese criminal entities will increasingly use them to hide their earnings as well.

### Implications for Latin America

Latin American law enforcement is woefully unprepared to meet the challenge of increasing criminal ties between the two regions. In particular, police forces are already overwhelmed by a lack of resources, competing demands, corruption, and low levels of trust from the societies in which they operate. They thus have little ability to penetrate Chinese communities where the new criminal activities are taking

place and conduct such basic activities as gathering evidence and obtaining witnesses.<sup>68</sup> Authorities lack not only ethnic Chinese agents, but also reachback to technical contacts in Asia who can provide background information regarding the people and gangs they are investigating. Also absent is the basic language skill to interrogate suspects and witnesses in the communities in which the crimes occur.<sup>69</sup>

In some cases, the Chinese or Taiwanese embassies have provided assistance in operations involving Chinese communities, as was the case in Ciudad Guyana in December 2011, when the Chinese embassy helped local authorities analyze documents, computer records, and other seized assets.<sup>70</sup> During a police investigation into the Chinese mafia in Mar del Plata, Argentina, in December 2011, for example, specialists had to be brought in from Buenos Aires because the authorities where the crime was committed were from Fujian and did not speak Mandarin Chinese, let alone Spanish.<sup>71</sup> Nevertheless, anecdotal stories of technical assistance from Taiwan or the PRC only underscore the degree to which Latin American security forces lack the linguistic, human, and technical capabilities to follow the trail of criminality into Chinese communities or the contacts to follow it back to Asia itself.

A compounding problem in managing such criminal activities throughout the region is that the police have historically not made a significant effort to penetrate the Chinese communities in their jurisdictions, all too often allowing what happens in the Chinese barrios to be the business of the communities themselves. A senior officer from the Trinidad and Tobago Criminal Investigations Unit referred to the “culture of the Chinese . . . to ‘keep things to themselves.’”<sup>72</sup> In some cases, authorities publicly deny that Chinese gangs



even exist, including a case in Peru that was covered in the media.<sup>73</sup>

Although criminal ties with China are not one of the major problems currently facing Latin American governments, it is likely

*police have historically not made a significant effort to penetrate the Chinese communities in their jurisdictions*

to increase with the expanding commerce and investment between the two regions. Based on historical precedents to date, activities by Chinese triads and tongs are likely to grow in Chinese communities in major Latin American cities, diversify into other activities, and forge new linkages with other criminal organizations, as happened when the Red Dragon organization in Peru evolved from extortion to human trafficking to narcotics and other activities.<sup>74</sup>

Human trafficking flows are likely to expand with the growing number of Chinese workers, including those used in the new influx of loan-backed Chinese construction projects in the Caribbean. Purchases of precursor chemicals from China and India by Mexican drug cartels are likely to expand into other forms of collaboration, as well as competition for turf in overlapping business areas such as Pacific maritime logistics. Mafias on both sides of the Pacific are likely to become increasingly involved in taxing, and perhaps controlling, the growing and highly lucrative contraband trade. New trans-Pacific banking ties, increasing currency convertibility, and Chinese-owned casinos in Latin America will present new options for both Latin American and Chinese criminal organizations to launder money and protect assets that will be difficult to monitor.

Such concerns apply across a range of scenarios for the future of China–Latin America relations. If the Chinese economy slows, for example, floating urban populations in coastal urban areas are likely to expand the pool of U.S.-bound migrants for human trafficking organizations to move through Latin America. If Chinese economic growth remains strong, flows of people, container traffic, and financial transactions will proliferate the number of opportunities for organized crime on both sides to move merchandise.

### Implications for the United States

Expanding China–Latin America criminal ties affect the United States in myriad ways. First, the majority of ethnic Chinese being smuggled through Latin America, and a good portion of the synthetic drugs produced from precursor chemicals originating in the PRC, are destined for the United States. Second, expanding money laundering options involving Chinese banks and companies benefit Latin America–based transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) such as the Mexican cartels and Colombian BACRIM (that is, criminal bands), which the United States is directly combating. Moreover, an increase in the power of Latin America–based TCOs, or alternatively, an increase in violence due to turf wars with Chinese mafias, would further destabilize countries such as Mexico and affect Central America and the Caribbean, both closely connected to the United States in economic and human terms, and whose most vulnerable and marginalized people historically seek refuge in the United States when conditions worsen.

Finally, although Chinese communities in Latin America are not a threat themselves, given evidence that they are the nexus for organized crime ties between the PRC and Latin

America, it is a national security risk that U.S. and Latin American authorities have almost no visibility into.

The United States has a strategic interest in working with both the PRC and Latin American governments to manage the challenge posed by expanding China–Latin America criminal ties. Indeed, this area is arguably one of the most promising arenas in which the PRC, the United States, and Latin America can combine their efforts for the benefit of all, and in the process build confidence not only in the China-U.S. bilateral relationship, but also Latin America’s view of the United States as a partner. Washington already has programs for working with the Chinese on criminal issues in major cities with substantial Chinese populations, including San Francisco and Los Angeles. Through multilateral forums, and empowered by new trilateral agreements, U.S., Chinese, and Latin American authorities should set up multinational anticrime mobile assessment and training teams and eventually “fusion centers” in the region.

The Chinese government would provide translators with experience in Mandarin, Cantonese, Hakka, and other dialects, as well as access to Chinese police and other databases. The United States should involve agencies such as the Drug Enforcement Administration; the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives; the Federal Bureau of Investigation; and select state and local police forces. It should use its own experiences in working with the Chinese on crime issues to help Latin American police forces combat crime effectively.

Collaboration on organized crime among the United States, China, and the countries of Latin America could be an important vehicle for building confidence and overcoming

tension as China expands its presence in Latin America in the context of the dominant U.S. position there. Ironically, if such collaboration were channeled through multilateral American institutions such as the Organization of American States, it could show that continuing to include Washington in the region and its institutions is desirable as it reaches out to China and other actors. **PRISM**

## Notes

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<sup>4</sup> “Investigarán la mafia china en Argentina,” *Diario Uno* (Buenos Aires), December 24, 2011.

<sup>5</sup> “Mafia china en Argentina: 70 mil dólares o te matamos,” September 23, 2011, available at <[www.pdegdigital.com](http://www.pdegdigital.com)>.

<sup>6</sup> “Un nuevo golpe de la ‘mafia china,’” *Clarín* (Buenos Aires), October 2, 2011.

<sup>7</sup> Alejandro Gamero, “La mafia china arribó a Mendoza e intimida a los comerciantes,” *Diario Uno* (Buenos Aires), August 21, 2011.

<sup>8</sup> The Overseas Compatriot Affairs Commission, established by the government of the Republic of China to oversee issues of “overseas Chinese,” ranks Peru as the country in the hemisphere with the largest Chinese population and puts the number at 1.3 million. See “Overseas Compatriot Affairs Commission,” available at <[www.ocac.gov.tw/english/public/public.asp?selno=1163&no=1163&level=B](http://www.ocac.gov.tw/english/public/public.asp?selno=1163&no=1163&level=B)>.

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Coast Guard petty officer looks for survivors in wake of Hurricane Katrina

# Adaptive Leadership in Times of Crisis

BY CHIEMI HAYASHI AND AMEY SOO

Nothing throws leadership into starker relief than a crisis, as Hurricane Katrina and the Great East Japan earthquake both demonstrated. Now more than ever, the ripple effects from a crisis spread far beyond its epicenter, often in unexpected ways. At the same time, faith in authority has eroded: trust in the U.S. Federal Government's ability to handle domestic problems, for example, has been declining for the past decade.<sup>1</sup> Add the challenge of managing digital media and its rapid information cycle, and leaders have but minutes to disseminate mitigation strategies. However, by examining the response to past catastrophes, lessons can be gleaned on how leadership must be transformed to raise collective resilience to today's complex and interconnected risks.

In August 2005, Hurricane Katrina was a disaster of epic proportions, killing 1,833 people and affecting 500,000 livelihoods<sup>2</sup> and, according to census data, causing a 29-percent dip in the population of New Orleans.<sup>3</sup> In March 2011, the Great East Japan earthquake took the lives of nearly 20,000 people and ruined the livelihoods of hundreds of thousands. But in addition to the devastating human loss of such tragedies, unanticipated repercussions were felt around the globe. Leaders in London were surprised when the hurricane in the United States caused gas prices to spike in the United Kingdom, and few imagined that a disaster in Japan would shut down a car manufacturing plant in Detroit or trigger dramatic changes in nuclear energy policy in Europe.

In a national context, the two incidents were adaptive challenges. Ronald Heifetz, the founder of Harvard's Center for Public Leadership, makes the distinction between "technical" and "adaptive" challenges. The former pertains to problems where solutions are already known. Adaptive challenges, on the other hand, are those for which new solutions must be invented. In an international context, the two incidents were textbook examples of the impact of exogenous shock that spread quickly in an interdependent and hyperconnected world. The two dimensions

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highlight the need for *adaptive leadership*, which Heifetz<sup>4</sup> defines as specifically about change that enables the capacity to thrive in crisis environments.

The World Economic Forum's 2012 *Global Risks Report*<sup>5</sup> featured a special report on the Japan earthquake. The 9.0 magnitude earthquake and the resulting tsunami led to the meltdown of three nuclear reactors at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant. In the leadership sphere, the report identified insights including the need for adaptability, the importance of advancing swiftly into the information space, and the necessity of the skills of leadership and "followership," which entails avoiding either excessive conformity or excessive conflict. Similar points were later made in the findings of the independent Kurokawa Commission charged by the Japanese parliament to investigate how a natural disaster evolved into a nuclear power crisis.<sup>6</sup>

### *an excessively rigid leadership style cannot be sustained when circumstances change*

This article builds from the *Global Risks Report* analysis to explore three main characteristics of leadership: the ability to adapt to rapidly changing circumstances, to make efficient use of communication tools, and to embrace flexible forms of collaboration. All three are pertinent to the security sector, given the key role of communication and cooperation in the wake of major crises.

#### **Adaptive Leadership**

The need for good adaptive leadership in a crisis is widely acknowledged, but it is also needed to address the increasing toughness of global challenges. In their 2012 article

"Advances in Global Leadership,"<sup>7</sup> Dave Ulrich and Norm Smallwood clearly distinguish between leaders and leadership and argue the need for sustainable leadership, a concept that is closely connected to adaptability, since an excessively rigid leadership style cannot be sustained when circumstances change. A leader is defined by the ability to focus knowledge, skills, and values, demonstrating how he or she can become more proficient in his or her ability to lead others.<sup>8</sup> On the other hand, leadership transcends the individual and refers to an ability to shape the environment and leave behind a pattern for success. Leadership is a combination of the right knowledge, the right person or people, the right behavior, and also the right actions. Therefore, great leadership capability endures over time and can evolve to ensure that it adapts to the changing environment. Leaders do matter but, over time, leadership matters more.<sup>9</sup> With the unexpected nature of global risks and their complexity, it is more and more important that leadership models are adaptable, flexible, and, therefore, resilient to potential shocks created by internal and external risks.

In August 2005, Hurricane Katrina caused immense destruction and the flooding of the historic city of New Orleans, killing thousands of people and ruining livelihoods. It resulted in people questioning leadership—or lack thereof—exhibited by officials before, during, and after the storm. Almost 6 years later, another deadly catastrophe occurred, but across the ocean in Japan. In the aftermath, leadership exhibited by officials was also questioned, but, surprisingly, during the disaster the model for potential great leadership was also discovered: It was exemplified by a company called Lawson, Japan's second most profitable convenience store chain, and

how it coped better than most. Within 4 days, Lawson's production lines and logistics hub had recovered sufficiently to resume about 80 percent of its business. The company was able to reorganize itself and deliver its core function.<sup>10</sup> This ability was attributed to the networked managerial structure that has been refined and fine-tuned over the years as Lawson experienced catastrophes and disasters. As the nature of crises can never be fully anticipated, a network of employees that has access to real-time coordinating methods and the authority to make decisions was more valuable than teams of highly trained risk managers. Adaptive leadership, therefore, does not only appoint one leader, but also distributes the capacity for leadership to all levels and hands these individuals the authority to make decisions in a crisis. This allows people and groups to operate with minimal central authority and deal with a crisis quickly and effectively, potentially lowering the impact of disasters and risks.

These lessons may pose a challenge for civil servants, who often have entrenched hierarchies and ways of working. Nevertheless, that does not make them less important. As demonstrated by Lawson, organizations fare better in a sustained crisis if they have a distributed leadership, a dispersed workforce, less interdependency among parts of the organization, cross-trained generalists rather than specialists, and if they are guided by simple yet flexible rules.<sup>11</sup>

A recent government report provided harsh insights into the Japan disaster and the gaps in leadership. It concluded that "Although triggered by cataclysmic events, the subsequent accident at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant cannot be regarded as a natural disaster."<sup>12</sup> The report stated that

Fukushima was a man-made disaster that could, and should, have been foreseen and prevented. Several factors were to blame including the failure of regulatory systems and a reluctance to question authority. The operator of the nuclear power plant, Tokyo Electric Power Company management, had a mindset of "obedience to authority" that meant it failed to question regulators and put in place mitigation measures. Although responsibility is dispersed to different levels, authority rarely is—this is experienced to varying degrees in different countries. In contrast to this approach, the convenience store that placed substantial trust in its employees showed how empowering individuals to make the right decisions at the right time can help to build resilience, even in seemingly helpless and hopeless situations.

*adaptive leadership does not only appoint one leader, but also distributes the capacity for leadership to all levels*

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Incremental improvements in leadership are no longer enough. Cities and populations are exploding, with ever more livelihoods hinging on the capacity of urban centers to continue their core functions. As a result, each disaster is potentially more devastating in its impact. Although there has been a slow evolution of leadership, what is required now is a transformative leap to meet the increasing pace of risks, interdependencies of systems, and the resulting complexities of this world. After each crisis it must be the goal of authorities to learn from the lessons that emerged and ensure there is an improvement in preparedness for the next crisis, whether it is natural, man-made, or a combination of both.



## Changing Roles of Communications and Social Networks

The information space is a critical leadership tool for communication that is not currently fully or properly utilized. During both disasters, the importance of communication networks and technologies was evident. Hurricane Katrina whipped up a storm over vast communication gaps, with an official inquiry reaching the damning conclusion that “Soon after Katrina made landfall (on 25 August), State and local authorities understood the devastation was serious but, due to the destruction of infrastructure and response capabilities, lacked the ability to communicate with each other and coordinate a response.”<sup>13</sup> The challenges were extreme. Katrina debilitated 911 emergency call centers, toppled more than 50,000 utility poles, and caused more than 3 million customers to lose telephone services.<sup>14</sup> This hampered the ability of rescuers to reach victims, stopped much-needed supplies from being delivered, and led to unnecessary suffering and loss of life.

*with social media tools such as Twitter and the ubiquity of smart phones, information—and misinformation—can now propagate at breakneck speed*

Despite the efforts of the military, it was only a week later that mobile communications systems began to provide much needed telephone and two-way radio communication in the area. Meanwhile, many communications assets were not used because of a lack of high-level coordination. For example, the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Forest Service’s radio cache—the largest civilian

supply of radios in the United States—was not fully taken advantage of, despite its contribution to the relief effort.<sup>15</sup> Better interoperability between the systems used by different agencies and more open information sharing could have eliminated the duplicate efforts and communication black holes that thwarted the recovery operation.

Leaders need to go a step further than just recognizing the importance of communication networks: they also need to address the demands and opportunities of the digital age. A decade ago, the media expected authorities to issue guidance on an unfolding crisis within 24 hours; now the window for dominating the information space has shrunk to a matter of minutes. During the nuclear crisis that followed the earthquake and tsunami in Japan, rumors filled the gap left by silence. With social media tools such as Twitter and the ubiquity of smart phones, information—and misinformation—can now propagate at breakneck speed. The speculations that spread rapidly because of a reluctance to use modern media methods allowed these rumors to appear as facts.

This information gap also made it more difficult for subsequent official explanations to displace rumors in the public consciousness. Trust in the integrity of leaders is no longer best maintained by remaining silent until all the facts are collated. Instead, the better course of action is to clarify quickly and honestly what is known and what is not. *Neither age nor rank should be used as an excuse for not understanding the new reality of digital media, which offers essential tools that anyone aspiring to lead in the 21<sup>st</sup> century must master.*

Learning from its past mistakes, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) switched in 2008 to social media and

Web tools “to provide timely and accurate information related to disaster preparedness response and recovery; provide the public with another avenue for insight into the agency’s operations; and engage in what has already become a critical medium in today’s world of communications.”<sup>16</sup>

Despite this intention, the agency did not immediately capitalize on the available tools during the aftermath of a devastating tornado that struck Joplin, Missouri, in May 2011. It was a local mother and daughter who led the way by setting up a Facebook page about the disaster, which gained 49,000 “likes” within 48 hours and, conversely, helped to inform FEMA of what was going on. When the Weather Channel began broadcasting images of the devastation posted on Facebook and Twitter, FEMA took note. “That was the

first really good information that I was able to see that really started to quantify how bad this was, well before any official reports or requests for assistance came through,” said FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate in a follow-up interview.<sup>17</sup> The agency has now begun to monitor hashtags<sup>18</sup> on Twitter to help it track how storms are developing.

Information technologies and networks, just like risks, transcend boundaries and can facilitate collaborative responses to risks. New media are also largely democratic, allowing the public to engage in conversations directly with decisionmakers as well as sharing on-the-ground information and expertise. Leaders have an armory of new media tools at their disposal and need to determine which platform is best suited to communicate in a particular crisis to bridge the physical distance to



DOD (Shane A. Cuomo)

U.S. Airmen, members of Japan Ground Self-Defense Force, and various Japanese civilian agencies load water hoses at Yokota Air Base to be used at Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant, March 2011

society. The challenge remains how to convey the right message, sometimes in less than 140 characters, but there is no denying this is an important avenue to rebuilding trust.

### Effective Collaboration

Communication in itself is of limited value unless it leads to meaningful collaboration. Lessons learned from Hurricane Katrina showed that the processes for unified management, regional planning, and coordination were found severely lacking. The Federal Government did not, according to a White House report, “address the conditions of a catastrophic event with large-scale competing needs, insufficient resources and the absent functioning local governments.”<sup>19</sup> The report concluded that “effective incident management of catastrophic events requires coordination of a wide range of organizations and activities, both public and private.” This message appears to resonate with Jane Harman, the director, president, and chief executive officer of the Woodrow Wilson International Center

*all stakeholders, from government departments to private businesses and academics, need to be involved in dealing with crises to ensure the strengths and capabilities of all the respective parties are used effectively*

for Scholars. Speaking at a World Economic Forum discussion on risk in Bangkok in 2012, Harman argued that there was a need to “lash up the private and public sectors, and use the ingenuity and the inventions of the private sectors effectively across the globe.”<sup>20</sup>

One example of public-private collaboration that seeks to build risk resilience

is the King County Healthcare Coalition in Washington state, which received the Outstanding Partnership Award at the 2012 National Homeland Security Conference in Columbus, Ohio. This alliance includes hospitals, healthcare providers, and representatives from critical infrastructure, public health, law enforcement, and the private sector, with the aim of creating relationships before an emergency strikes to allow for a more effective response.<sup>21</sup>

The use of joint task forces is another example of an important—if challenging—channel for collaboration. In Japan, Joint Task Force Tohoku brought together ground, air, and maritime units from across the armed forces, proving effective in its emergency response. During Hurricane Katrina, Joint Task Force Katrina was created, which coordinated about 14,232 Active-duty personnel. As a joint task force comprised of Active-duty personnel, it was a good example of communication and coordination. However, the same cannot be said for the cohesion between this task force and the National Guard forces. Here, a fragmented deployment system, lack of an integrated command structure, and equipment interoperability exacerbated the existing challenges.<sup>22</sup>

All stakeholders, from government departments to private businesses and academics, need to be involved in dealing with crises to ensure the strengths and capabilities of all the respective parties are used effectively. A collaborative, cooperative relationship will foster innovation and help to restore trust by tapping into the abilities of different sections of society. Trusted networks of experts provide a valuable resource for bolstering confidence in leadership. For example, in the United Kingdom, the government’s chief scientific advisor provided

crucial advice to the government during the 2009 swine influenza outbreak and the 2010 volcanic ash incident, while also encouraging all big government departments to recruit scientific advisors. Leadership has become more dispersed, taking advantage of the relationships and collaborations that exist outside traditional hierarchies.

America's commitment to the security of its people, allies, and partners means that it has to face multiple threats and risks. These range from international terrorism and the spread of deadly technologies to economic upheaval and a changing climate. The dependency, interdependency, and co-dependency of threats and risks, however, increase the complexity of the environment in which they exist. Hence, interdependence means not only that our fates are intertwined, but also that through such relationships, some autonomy is lost. The disasters in Japan and the United States took place in a world of great interdependence—a world in which individual prosperity is inextricably linked to global prosperity, security can be directly challenged by developments across an ocean, and actions are open to unprecedented scrutiny.<sup>23</sup> New forms of leadership are emerging to deal with these trends, leadership that empowers individuals to make decisions so society is better able to bounce back from a crisis.

As the examples gleaned from the tragedies of Katrina and the Japanese earthquake show, leadership must be capable of adapting to the unexpected, of tapping into the power of new media, and collaborating in an agile way across sections of society. By better leveraging the brains, power, and resources available in public and private sectors, innovation can be fostered and resilience to threats built up.<sup>24</sup>

Learning from the past, the new narrative for leadership should look forward and leverage opportunities to forge cooperative approaches among nations. Each event that is experienced is an opportunity to challenge organizations to reexamine well-worn practices and beliefs and spark organizational action. It can highlight weaknesses as well as knowledge and skill deficits, while also pointing out the need for innovation and change. "And although this path will have new challenges, facing such adaptive challenges is what leadership is all about, and indeed it will be one of the greatest opportunities of this century," concluded Laura Quinn and Ellen Van Velsor.<sup>25</sup> Leaders do matter, but leadership matters more as great leadership capability endures over time and can evolve to ensure that it is adapted to the environment. Lessons learned from crises need to be constantly revisited so they remain relevant in a fast-evolving world. **PRISM**

## Notes

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<sup>2</sup> *World Disasters Report 2010: Focus on Urban Risk* (Geneva: International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, 2010).

<sup>3</sup> Campbell Robertson, "Smaller New Orleans After Katrina, Census Shows," *The New York Times*, February 3, 2012, available at <[www.nytimes.com/2011/02/04/us/04census.html?pagewanted=all](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/04/us/04census.html?pagewanted=all)>.

<sup>4</sup> Ronald A. Heifetz, Alexander Grashow, and Marty Linsky, *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World* (Boston: Harvard Business School Publishing, 2009).

<sup>5</sup> *Global Risks 2012* (Geneva: World Economic Forum, January 2012).

<sup>6</sup> *Official Report of the Fukushima Nuclear Accident Independent Investigation Commission*, The National Diet of Japan, July 2012.

<sup>7</sup> Dave Ulrich and Norm Smallwood, "What Is Leadership?" in *Advances in Global Leadership, Volume 7*, ed. William H. Mobley et al., 9–36 (Bingley, UK: Emerald Group Publishing Limited, 2012).

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> *Global Risks 2011* (Geneva: World Economic Forum, January 2011). This report defines *resilience* as the ability of a system to reorganize under change and deliver its core function continually, despite the impact of external or internally generated risks.

<sup>11</sup> *Global Risks 2012*.

<sup>12</sup> *Official Report of the Fukushima Nuclear Accident*.

<sup>13</sup> *The Federal Response to Hurricane Katrina Lessons Learned* (Washington, DC: The White House, February 2006).

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> "Use of Social Media Tools at FEMA," Federal Emergency Management Agency, 2009, available at <[www.fema.gov/news/newsrelease.fema?id=49302](http://www.fema.gov/news/newsrelease.fema?id=49302)>.

<sup>17</sup> Adam Mazmanian, "Of Hurricanes and Hashtags: Disaster Relief in the Social-Media Age," *National Journal*, June 3, 2012, available at <[www.nationaljournal.com/tech/of-hurricanes-and-hashtags-disaster-relief-in-the-social-media-age-20120603](http://www.nationaljournal.com/tech/of-hurricanes-and-hashtags-disaster-relief-in-the-social-media-age-20120603)>.

<sup>18</sup> A hashtag is the pound (#) symbol; it is used to mark keywords or topics in a Tweet. It was created organically by Twitter users as a way to categorize messages.

<sup>19</sup> *The Federal Response to Hurricane Katrina*.

<sup>20</sup> "East Asia 2012—Increasing East Asia's Risk Resilience," World Economic Forum, 2012, available at <[www.youtube.com/watch?v=oF4Eordmczg&feature=youtu.be&noredirect=1](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oF4Eordmczg&feature=youtu.be&noredirect=1)>.

<sup>21</sup> Eric Holdeman, "Health-Care Coalition Ensures Service During a Disaster," *Emergency Management*, July 24, 2012, available at <[www.emergencymgmt.com/health/Health-Care-Coalition-Service-Disaster.html](http://www.emergencymgmt.com/health/Health-Care-Coalition-Service-Disaster.html)>.

<sup>22</sup> *The Federal Response to Hurricane Katrina*.

<sup>23</sup> *National Security Strategy* (Washington, DC: The White House, May 2010).

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Laura Quinn and Ellen Van Velsor, "Global Responsibility: What It Takes to Get It Right," *Leadership in Action* 29, no. 6 (January/February 2010), 8–13.

# Risk Management of Future Foreign Conflict Intervention

BY GORDON WOO

**R**isk is a concept that is universal in its common everyday usage. It is simply an expression of the potential for a given action to lead to a loss of some kind. But risk also has a specific and precise technical definition among professional risk analysts. For this community, risk is the combination of the probability of an event and its consequences. Awareness of the consequences of various actions or events is patently necessary for informed decisionmaking on public safety. If there is a core meltdown of a nuclear reactor, there will be a massive release of radioactivity. Even if this were contained within the nuclear plant, the public trauma would put pressure on shutting down the nuclear industry, as has happened in Japan. This key paradigm, which has been highlighted in the risk literature for more than a half century, shows that awareness of the probability of an adverse event should also be important for decisionmakers. For unless the probability of a core meltdown is demonstrated to fall below some extremely low tolerance threshold, the risk to the public would be unacceptable despite the energy supply benefits.

The earthquake and subsequent tsunami-induced disaster at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant on March 11, 2012, was a stark reminder that the residual risk of a core meltdown is not so low as to be purely academic. Yet it was after a fire at a first-generation nuclear facility in Northwest England in 1957 that the basic probabilistic principles of risk acceptability were originally developed for application to the nuclear industry. For public endorsement of nuclear power generation, the regulation of the nuclear industry requires that the probability of a serious nuclear accident must be extremely low. Regrettably, the aging 40-year-old Fukushima plant was designed and constructed before the use of probabilistic methods became widespread. Its design basis was deterministic, corresponding to what was perceived to be the maximum credible seismic shock. The notion of a deterministic design basis presupposed that this maximum level of earthquake could be determined accurately, which has proven to be too optimistic.

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Since the 1970s, the ideas of probabilistic risk assessment have spread from the nuclear industry to the safety-critical chemical, oil, and gas industries, and to critical rail, sea, and air transport infrastructure. In the late 1980s, facilitated by desktop computer power and motivated by poor underwriting loss experience, the ideas started to permeate the insurance industry for catastrophe risk management.<sup>1</sup>

Increasingly, over the past several decades, these ideas have interested government organizations.<sup>2</sup> The underlying rationale for an explicit probabilistic definition of risk is that it improves risk management, which is a key part of any organization's strategic management. An organization should make the effort and provide the resources to address the diverse risks associated with its activities. This involves identifying the risks and treating them to the best advantage of the organization, whether governmental, financial, commercial, or industrial.

*an organization should make the effort and provide the resources to address the diverse risks associated with its activities*

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Whereas risk has been a central concept for thinking about nuclear safety issues for half a century, its relevance for thinking about national security has only emerged since the end of the Cold War, and especially since 9/11.<sup>3</sup> Specific, clearly identified threats, such as those once posed by the former Soviet Union, might be addressed as both certain and large in scale. These have been replaced by pervasive uncertainty over the sources of insecurity, which correspond to a complex range of different risks. The management of these diverse risks aims to contain or curtail security issues before they emerge. As with nuclear risks, prevention is best.

The classic post-9/11 paradigm for insecurity risk management is the Western intervention in Afghanistan, aimed at preventing Afghan territory from continuing to be exploited as a terrorist safe haven. The premise for such intervention is that it is riskier not to take military action. However, lack of clear danger to the homeland makes the link with national security more tenuous and speculative, and makes it harder to establish legitimacy and gather public support for military operations. Public support may not be necessary for interventions; those in Kosovo and Sierra Leone were met with public indifference. However, elected politicians take on an extra burden of responsibility if they decide on intervention without an adequate democratic mandate.

Another reason for adopting risk management concepts in security thinking is the recognition that risk management is a continuous process, lacking the definitive end point of conventional war campaigns. Wars are no longer winnable in the sense that the adversary is permanently off the battlefield. Thus the defeat of the Taliban in 2001 was not the end of post-9/11 Western involvement in Afghanistan—it was just the beginning. Following withdrawal from Afghanistan, an isolationist stance might seem attractive. However, as harsh a reality as this may be for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), because of the interconnectedness of global geopolitics, Western nations cannot isolate themselves from conflicts in the developing world. Rogue states may become havens for international terrorism or organized crime, as well as sources of unwelcome and destabilizing refugee flows.

On the positive side, other military interventions in East Timor, Sierra Leone, and Kosovo have achieved a measure of success

sufficient to encourage Western engagement in future humanitarian military missions. For any past Western intervention, a retrospective risk analysis of the pros and cons of the action affords insight into the complex process of decisionmaking under extreme uncertainty and how decisionmaking might have been improved. For any future intervention, prospective risk analysis of the pros and cons of the action could help to shape decisions on the appropriate response. But these would have to take account of national financial constraints.

### Financial Realism

Holistic risk management requires that due attention be accorded to the complete spectrum of risks to which an organization is exposed. The pioneering economic theorist Adam Smith wrote, "The first duty of a sovereign is that of protecting the society from the violence and invasion of other independent societies."<sup>4</sup> However, the cost of such protection is an obvious constraint. He added, "In a civilized society, as the soldiers are maintained altogether by the labor of those who are not soldiers, the number of the former can never exceed what the latter can maintain." National security cannot come at such a high military price that the nation's economic well-being is placed in jeopardy and its future capacity to fund military expenditure is weakened.

In the United States, the Government Accountability Office produces an annual list of risk management issues in the U.S. Government, including in the Department of Defense. As explained in the Quadrennial Defense Review, "Defense strategy requires making choices: accepting and managing risk is thus inherent in everything the Department does. Although difficult, risk management is central to effective decision-making and is

vital to our success." The report recognizes the stark geopolitical reality that "Allies and both international and interagency partners are critical to success in meeting today's security challenges. Overseas, the inability or unwillingness of international partners to support shared goals or provide access would place additional operational risk on U.S. forces and would threaten our ability to prevail in current or future conflicts."<sup>5</sup>

*the Government Accountability Office produces an annual list of risk management issues in the U.S. Government, including in the Department of Defense*

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Of special significance among U.S. foreign defense alliances is the one with the United Kingdom (UK), which has closely supported the United States militarily in the Afghanistan and Iraq campaigns, and played a key NATO role in ousting Muammar Qadhafi in Libya. In the 2010 UK National Security Strategy,<sup>6</sup> the top priority of Her Majesty's Government was "protecting our people, economy, infrastructure, territory and way of life from all major risks that can affect us directly, and prioritizing actions beyond our borders to reduce the likelihood of a specific risk affecting the UK." In times of economic weakness and national indebtedness such as those that prevailed after the property boom and banking collapse of the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the first priority in the Western world may well be restoring economic growth and reducing unemployment. Alongside this priority would be the defense of the homeland from attack by another state or from terrorists, state-sponsored or otherwise. Less of a national priority would be intervention in future foreign

conflicts on humanitarian grounds, unless national security was demonstrably at stake.

On an economic level, a risk perspective may make it harder to justify expenditure on future operations than would be the case if a state were confronted with a clear threat. Serving as a global police force may be affordable in prosperous economic times but would be difficult to justify in times of economic hardship. But decisions on intervention are never clear-cut and straightforward. Inaction may alter the regional geopolitics, reduce Western geopolitical influence, and precipitate a cascade of further conflicts. Turmoil and instability could lead to ethnic cleansing, civil war, and a large flux of refugees seeking new homes and livelihoods outside the affected region.

*-serving as a global police force may be affordable in prosperous economic times but would be difficult to justify in times of economic hardship*

## Geopolitical Instability

The world is as far from being in a stable political equilibrium as ever in the past. Many countries are intrinsically prone to instability in that their boundaries do not conform to any obvious visible geographical logic; for example, river, lake, sea, or mountain. Some countries were artificially created by imperial powers, with citizens having natural loyalties at both substate and suprastate levels. Syria is a notable example of such an artificial country, which has only been maintained through harsh military rule by the Ba'ath Party and the authoritarian family leadership of Hafiz and son Bashar al-Asad, who have suppressed widespread opposition across the whole

spectrum of Syrian society. The resentment of the majority Syrian population to minority rule by the political elite has led to several rebellions. A major insurrection in the early 1980s was brutally put down by Hafiz al-Asad. At that time, the question of Western intervention in the internal affairs of Syria never arose because Syria was a Cold War client state of the Soviet Union. Despite close ties between Russia and Syria that would resist any move toward United Nations (UN) military intervention, the direct involvement of Western powers to support a Syrian rebellion was an option from the start of political unrest.

Country by country, it is possible to identify factors that render a current state of political stability precarious. The fragmentation of a nation into independent smaller states may occur peacefully through the democratic process, but it may also be pressured by separatist movements that reinforce their claims for independence with acts of terrorism or threats of civil war. But any fragmentation increases the cumulative length of international borders, and so enhances the opportunities and excuses for international conflict. One of the pioneers of quantitative war research, Lewis Fry Richardson, investigated the propensity for conflict between neighboring states as a function of the length of their common frontier.<sup>7</sup> Where the smaller states have different ethnic, religious, or cultural traditions, outbreaks of hostilities may be quite common and severe. This was the case in the Balkans. After Josip Broz Tito's presidency of Yugoslavia, the communist Balkan state descended into a spasm of violent political turbulence including ethnic cleansing and horrendous war crimes, which forced prolonged and costly NATO intervention.

Much as a libertarian may abhor tyranny, the human rights repression of a subject

population by an authoritarian leadership may diminish the prospect of territorial partition or civil war, as with Yugoslavia in the past. In modern times, China has prioritized national sovereignty and geographical integrity above all else, being fearful of a recurrence of the calamitous provincial rebellions that brutally punctuated its history in previous centuries. Accordingly, in the UN, China stands with Russia resolutely against external military intervention in the internal affairs of states under even the most reprehensible dictatorial rule.

### Future Instability

The Cold War has ended, and the threat of nuclear destruction has receded. But in its place is greater political instability within countries when rulers are unseated, either by force or by popular uprising. The classic act of destabilization is a sudden military coup. The problems that a coup may cause for Western powers are exemplified by the West African state of Mali, where a military coup took place in March 2012. The opportunity to further their separatist aims was seized by nomadic Tuareg insurgents, allied with Islamists tied to al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and trained by Afghan and Pakistani militants.

The president of neighboring Niger, which has its own Tuareg population, has warned that if AQIM establishes a territory in Mali, it will claim territory across the whole of Africa and will try to reach into Europe. No Western government needs reminding that any foothold by al Qaeda may become a terrorist safe haven for attacking Western interests.

Rather like a virus, militant antidemocratic movements prey on vulnerable hosts to spread. Alternatively, internal rivalries between factions in a liberated country may trigger a bout of prolonged internecine violence, which

may be exploited by terrorists, and further raise the prospect of external intervention. Recognizing the limitations of the UN in roles other than peacekeeping (where there is a peace to be kept), the intervention of NATO or its individual partners in a foreign conflict should always be an option.

*in the UN, China stands with Russia resolutely against external military intervention in the internal affairs of states*

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As shown by the use of Facebook in the Arab Spring, modern electronic tools for communication and information dissemination can rapidly fuel dissent movements and provoke and inflame collective mass mob violence with little warning. Political demonstrations can lead to rioting and confrontations with law enforcement officers, which may escalate to serious street violence and urban warfare. As if the current global political situation were not unstable enough, the inexorable growth in human populations in the developing world, coupled with incremental climate change, is forging an environment for increased conflict over land usage and water resources, as well as over civil rights of repressed populations.

### The Precautionary Principle

The precautionary principle is often cited to assure the public, in environmental risk situations where decisions have to be made under great uncertainty, that its safety is paramount. In the absence of absolute proof of harmful potential, action may still be taken to eliminate a possible danger. Enshrined in environmental legislation, the precautionary principle was appropriated by the George W. Bush administration to matters of security

and introduced as an argument for regime change. Anticipatory self-defense is reflected in the Bush declaration, “If we wait for threats to fully materialize, we’ll have waited too long.”<sup>8</sup>

Adopting the precautionary principle, the price of safety may be expensive when the potential forgone benefits are fully taken into account. The money spent on the Iraq War in both the United States and United Kingdom could have brought substantial domestic social benefits. This has encouraged a Berkeley law professor, Daniel Farber, to introduce the so-called  $\alpha$ -precautionary principle. The concept of  $\alpha$ -precaution is aimed at avoiding the worst-case scenario that dominates practical application of the precautionary principle. It is more nuanced and involves precaution against losing the possible benefits of the best-case scenario. The user decides on the value for the optimism-pessimism weight parameter  $\alpha$ , balancing the worst and best cases.

*as evidenced in the overthrow of Saddam Hussein in Iraq, regime change can be a blunt and costly security tool*

According to Farber, the range of this weight parameter might be narrowed “by using empirical evidence showing how individuals approach decision making in situations characterized by ambiguity, or through experience over time that might allow officials to develop norms about the appropriate  $\alpha$ .”<sup>9</sup> The kind of situation Farber has in mind includes the use of nanotechnology, which offers potentially substantial societal benefits. Right now, guidance on the choice of the weight parameter is rather vague, except that it is intuitively a numerical gauge of optimism versus pessimism.

As evidenced in the overthrow of Saddam Hussein in Iraq, regime change can also be a blunt and costly security tool. In accord with Farber’s  $\alpha$ -precautionary principle, a more nuanced approach would be appropriate before forcible regime change is again countenanced. Interestingly, Farber himself has suggested a 90 percent optimism-pessimism weight parameter  $\alpha$  in this political context;<sup>10</sup> that is, there would have to have been 90 percent confidence that Saddam had weapons of mass destruction for regime change to be sanctioned. This might be coined the “Berkeley doctrine,” being far less hawkish and cautious than the extremely risk-averse Dick Cheney “1 percent doctrine”: threats with even 1 percent likelihood must be treated as certainties. The stark disparity between individual confidence levels for justifying military intervention shows the value in a systematic risk management framework within which momentous decisions on national security are made, for example, halting the Iranian nuclear bomb program. This framework would explicitly and methodically account for the internal politics of Iran and the will of the populace for avoiding internal chaos.

Crisis situations, whether in the affairs of multinational corporations or nation-states, call for effective risk management. Where financial resources for handling crises are abundant and crises are comparatively infrequent, a short-term planning horizon may be adequate. Crises are dealt with as and when they materialize, with financial resources drawn from contingency funds. However, where resources are limited and crises are liable to proliferate, risk needs to be actively and systematically managed over a longer term.

Concerning foreign affairs, the destabilization of Arab dictatorships through popular

uprisings has increased the pressure for Western intervention in support of democracy. This has been happening at a time of deep budget cuts in the military across the Western alliance. The heavier military burden placed on the United Kingdom and France in the NATO campaign in Libya in 2011 might not have been politically sustainable in 2012 in the midst of a severe eurozone crisis and double-dip recession.

To meet the challenge of managing the risk of future foreign conflict intervention, what is required is a systematic approach to risk management of the kind that has been extensively developed over the past several decades for global catastrophe risk management. Within this methodology, scenarios for political unrest would be considered for all conflict zones, and approximate estimates made of the frequency and severity of conflicts. This allows future decisions on the extent of conflict intervention to be properly risk-informed and assessed, subject to the tight practical constraints of military and financial capability.

As an example of the way forward, the 2010 UK strategy review placed risk assessment and management methodology at the heart of British security and defense policy. A range of security threats and challenges were categorized and prioritized, befitting a struggling economy incapable of affording resources to cover every conceivable eventuality. Those threats perceived as combining high likelihood with high impact include an international military crisis involving Britain, a major accident or natural hazard, a cyber attack, and international terrorism.

### Risk Matrices

With a country facing multiple sources of risk at any given time, some ready visualization of their characteristics would be instructive

for decisionmakers. A risk matrix is a graphical means of representing the two principal attributes of a risk: its likelihood and its consequence. The size of the matrix can vary according to the resolution required. Figure 1 is a simple 6 x 5 matrix with “Likelihood” grades ranging downward from almost certain, to highly likely, to likely, to realistic possibility, to unlikely, to remote. Across the

*a risk matrix is a graphical means of representing the two principal attributes of a risk: its likelihood and its consequence*

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matrix rows, the “Consequence” grades range from insignificant to minor, to moderate, to major, to very significant. For any particular threat, its risk profile may span several grades of both likelihood and consequence. An example of a risk that is a realistic possibility and considered significant is a major influenza pandemic. A tornado strike on a town is an example of a risk that is highly likely with moderate consequence.

### Consequence Analysis

With any extreme risk, the potential ramifications of a major initiating event lead to a proliferation of subevents that generate a complex event tree of possible consequences, direct and indirect. A simple graphic illustration of a tree is shown in figure 2. At each node, represented by a black dot, the actual path is indicated by a solid line, while hypothetical alternative paths are indicated by dashes.

In the worst catastrophes, an initiating event instigates a chain of consequences rather suggestive of Murphy’s Law—whatever bad eventuality may happen does happen. The task of a risk analyst is to construct the principal



Figure 1. Risk Matrix

	Consequence				
Likelihood	Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Very significant
Almost certain					
Highly likely					
Likely					
Realistic possibility					
Unlikely					
Remote					

branches of an event tree to capture the key dynamics of what may result following an initiating event. For example, when Hurricane Katrina struck the gulf coast in August 2005, the force of the accompanying storm surge caused breaches in the New Orleans levee system, which led to deaths, massive flooding, property and infrastructure loss, a breakdown in law and order, looting, and a host of other problems.

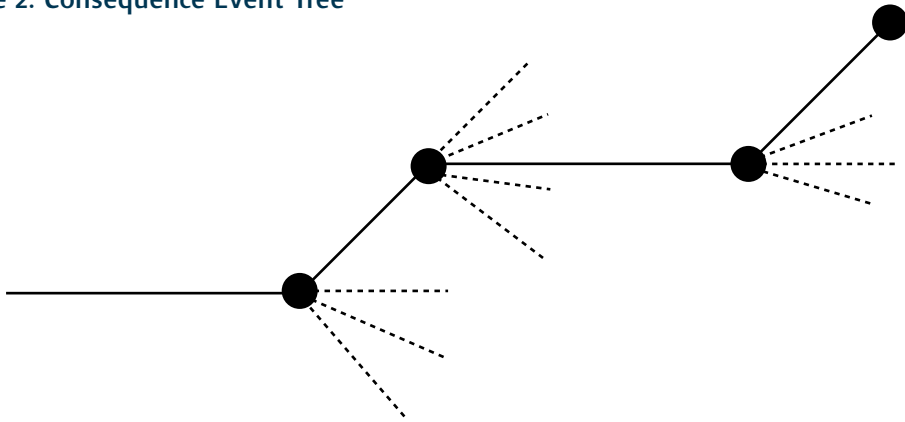
When looting broke out soon after U.S. troops entered Baghdad in 2003, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld remarked that “stuff happens.” So it does. But it should not come as a major surprise that what is perceived to be the most likely outcome does not actually materialize. This is what risk management is about. A risk assessment for Gulf Coast hurricanes is not a matter of civic officials reaching a consensus as to what is most likely to happen.

Instead, risk assessment has to explore a broad range of possible outcomes that is inclusive of the considerations of a wide range of views.

Of special importance is the requirement for a risk assessment to encompass pessimistic as well as optimistic views. In August 2005, Mayor Ray Nagin delayed the mandatory evacuation of New Orleans hoping that Hurricane Katrina might weaken or change direction so that would not be necessary.<sup>11</sup> Earlier, the director of the National Hurricane Center, Max Mayfield, had warned him that the gulf coast, and New Orleans in particular, were in grave danger. Both positions were tenable and would be reflected in a comprehensive risk assessment.

Given the large number of possible consequences, and the diverse range of views as to their occurrence, a risk analyst has to be prepared to deal with an event tree with

Figure 2. Consequence Event Tree



a proliferation of branches. Once the loss implications of the different branches have been assessed, it may be possible to prune the event tree of branches that are comparatively inconsequential, except that a risk analyst always has to watch for indirect, latent unintended consequences.

### The Law of Unintended Consequences

The English word *disaster* has its origins in Latin, meaning “an unfavorable aspect of a star.” Except for astrologists, disasters are no longer perceived fatalistically as predetermined. Yet the term *Act of God* is still used in insurance contract vernacular to describe a natural hazard event. As any hazard analyst knows from experience, forecasting the consequences of a natural hazard event is extremely challenging. An earthquake can cause a rockslide that can dam a river, which can cause flooding. At its best, consequence assessment is a recursive, chess-like exercise in depth of thinking. Anticipating all the consequences of an act of God would require an infinite mind. Following Hurricane Katrina, the Federal Emergency Management Agency provided the homeless with mobile shelters

that turned out to be injurious to their health for toxicity reasons.

For a man-made disaster, originated by an intentional act of man, malevolent or otherwise, the inherent randomness in the evolution of events precludes foreseeing exactly

*at its best, consequence assessment is a recursive, chess-like exercise in depth of thinking*

what will happen. But just because effects are unintended does not mean that they may not be envisioned through diligent risk analysis aimed at identifying ignorance and error. A potentially more serious problem lies in willful blindness to unintended effects and the subsequent bias this entails.

Within a military context, any campaign is liable to be beset by the law of unintended consequences. Regarding military operations, randomness plays a substantial role in the evolution of high-risk situations. This is reflected in the adage that no plan survives first contact with the enemy. This is why there has to be a series of backup plans, allowing for the

most conceivable operational eventualities. An excellent example of operational planning with foresight of unintended consequences was the May 2011 raid on the compound of Osama bin Laden in Abbottabad, Pakistan.<sup>12</sup> A great strength of the planning process, which contributed to the success of the operation, was its explicit use of risk management techniques. A red teaming exercise explored in detail what could go awry. A number of key likelihood factors were elicited from senior operations staff, including the possibility that bin Laden was not actually there. Also, the negative impact on U.S.-Pakistan bilateral relations was figured in.

### Likelihood Assessment

To locate each identified threat on the risk matrix, it is necessary to gauge its likelihood. The six grades that span the credibility range are: almost certain, highly likely, likely, realistic possibility, unlikely, and remote. Other qualifiers may be chosen, and the number of grades

*in reviewing the past record of foreign conflict intervention, it is instructive to include near-misses*

may be varied, but this happens to be the particular selection of UK Defense Intelligence.<sup>13</sup> This comparatively coarse level of resolution is commensurate with the available data and purpose of a likelihood assessment.

The concept of probability had its origins in games of chance, such as throwing dice, where the odds are objectively defined and may be verified through multiple repetitions of a game. If a player is dubious about the fairness of dice, he can throw them a large number of times to check. But there are numerous

situations that call for an assessment of odds where repetitions are just not possible. Political risk situations are typically one-off, without close precedents, and inevitably there is a significant degree of individual subjectivity in the assessment of likelihood. A merit of quantitative methods for risk assessment is the transparency in explicitly exposing subjectivity and latent bias among political risk analysts.

In probabilistic risk analysis, procedures have been devised for eliciting expert judgments on probability assignments. To minimize bias of any one expert, a panel of experts is customarily convened. This accords with the “Wisdom of Crowds” principle<sup>14</sup>—the average estimate of a number of informed people might be more reliable than that of any one individual. It is important that a panel should encompass the breadth of informed opinion and not be drawn from a particular narrow clique. Calibration techniques also exist to check on the performance of individual panel members, whose opinions may be distorted by subjective biases such as cognitive dissonance.

One of the clear advantages of a methodical approach to assessing probabilities is that their combination can be handled in a consistent and rigorous manner using the calculus of probabilities. Suppose a major political event is contingent on events A and B both occurring and on event C not happening. Then, assuming event independence, the probability of the major political event is the product of the event A and B probabilities, multiplied by the complement of the probability of event C. Psychologist Daniel Kahneman has shown that people are generally not adept at figuring out this kind of mental arithmetic and can easily make basic errors.<sup>15</sup> This makes a formal probabilistic approach more compelling. In this regard, Bruce Bueno de Mesquita

has shown how probability calculus can be applied methodically and used effectively to make better predictions of critical political events than teams of experienced international security analysts can.<sup>16</sup> This is possible where events can be analyzed in terms of contingencies, such as the composition of a ruling elite and the preference and power of individual members.

### Counterfactual Scenario Analysis

In assessing risk for the future, risk analysts use the historical record for validation. Historical disasters tend to be treated statistically as fixed events, although in reality there is a large luck element involved in converting a near-miss crisis situation into a disaster statistic. In August 2011, Hurricane Irene's threat to New York City forced Mayor Michael Bloomberg to order the evacuation of low-lying areas. Fortunately, the hurricane weakened during its approach to New York; otherwise, massive economic loss would have resulted. In reviewing the past record of foreign conflict intervention, it is instructive to include within any historical study a discourse on "near-misses," where opportunities for intervention were considered but ultimately not taken. The forced demise of Qadhafi in Libya has heightened the fears of Robert Mugabe that he might at last be ousted from his assumed life presidency of Zimbabwe. An interventionist may speculate how different southern Africa might have become had this dictator been deposed. A counterfactual analysis of conflict history explores the broad range of intervention possibilities that help define the overall framework for intervention risk assessment.

Despite their significance for hazard assessment, near-misses tend not to be accorded the level of risk perception they

merit: actual moderate loss events are far more memorable than near-miss major losses. But from a scientific perspective, the past is just one realization of a variety of possible evolutions of history that may be analyzed through consideration of a large array of possible counterfactual scenarios, which might have arisen but for chance. In any natural or man-made hazard context, there is a random component equivalent to dice being rolled to decide whether a near-miss becomes an actual disaster. The fact that there may be no observed disaster over a period of time may belie the occurrence of numerous near misses. This may be illustrated using the basic dice paradigm. Suppose a die is rolled every month for a year, and an event is recorded if a six is thrown. Then there is still an 11 percent chance (the twelvefold product of 5/6) of no events occurring during the year.

An intriguing application of counterfactual scenario analysis is to the terrorist plots against the U.S. homeland in the decade after

*a prudent government may manage global conflict risk intervention so as to have resources available to meet the demand for crucial interventions as the need arises*

9/11. For each of these plots, it is possible to estimate the chance that the plot would not have been interdicted, and then the likelihood that, had it not been interdicted, it would have been successful in causing a significant loss. The combined probability is highest for the noninterdicted aviation bomb plots of Richard Reid and Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, and the Times Square vehicle bomb plot of Faisal Shahzad. But there are more than two dozen other meaningful plots to take into account.

Aggregating the probabilities over the entire decade, the expected number of successful damaging plots is about four. This is the effective number of bullets that the United States has dodged in keeping a clean counterterrorism slate since 9/11, and is a numerical measure of the payoff for counterterrorism expenditure.

### Global Conflict Risk Management

Political risk insurers geographically diversify their portfolios of risks around the world so as not to have an excessive risk concentration in any individual region. Accordingly, they have to be adept at the global management of political risks. This involves an assessment of the frequency of major conflicts, and their financial loss consequences. In order to make this assessment, political risk insurers need informed political briefings from around the world, which are received from specialist political risk think tanks and international relations experts.

The regional clustering of political turbulence, such as that induced by the Arab Spring, stresses the robustness of the political risk management of insurers. To ensure solvency, an insurer must have enough resources to pay claims as they arise. One actuarial tool for assessing future ability to pay claims over an uncertain future is dynamic financial analysis (DFA). This involves simulating the loss impacts of a wide variety of future scenarios. Each scenario is associated with a relative likelihood by an expert group of risk analysts. As far as possible, evidence-based methods for the assignments are used. The loss implications of each scenario are evaluated by experienced insurance loss assessment teams. Aggregate loss frequency analysis of the entire scenario dataset makes it possible to estimate the

overall chance of insolvency, which must be low enough to fall below a strict regulatory criterion.

Just as a political risk insurer has to be diligent about having sufficient resources to pay for future claims, a prudent government may manage global conflict risk intervention so as to have resources available to meet the demand for crucial interventions as the need arises. A comparable scenario simulation exercise for this purpose might be named dynamic intervention analysis (DIA).

No insurance risk manager would consider as adequate a plan to pay claims *ex post*, merely on an *ad hoc* contingency basis, without the forward risk foresight of a DFA. Similarly, the adoption of a DIA methodology would assist conflict risk managers in planning ahead for military, civilian, and financial resource demand in a highly uncertain political future. As an example of the insights to be drawn from a DIA, military and civilian resource requirements of manpower and equipment can be better gauged with reference to simulated future conflict bottlenecks. A feature of such bottlenecks is the draining of significant logistical support in just a few key conflicts, requiring an extended call on military reservists.

The rationalist approach to making decisions underlying a DIA has been queried by psychologists like Gary Klein, who has extensively studied the decision actions of U.S. military personnel in the field.<sup>17</sup> But in contrast with short-term battlefield decisions, which require instantaneous reflex decision reactions owing more to trained intuition than to rational thought, long-term planning decisions, with time horizons of years rather than hours, demand careful and considered study and analysis of the kind advocated here.

## Conclusions

To the extent that war has evolved from a battlefield conflict limited in time and space to a continuous exercise in global risk management, Western intervention in future foreign conflicts should be predicated on a duly diligent global risk assessment. As with international economic risk management in general, decisions should not be swayed unduly one way or another by the short horizon 4-year political electoral cycle.

The various pros and cons of military intervention need to be carefully weighed, taking into account constraints of budget and the prospect of further resource demands. Intervention fatigue, like donor fatigue after natural disasters, has to be managed. Reliance on contingency funds to pay for billions of dollars of intervention costs is a practical expedient suited for times of greater economic prosperity and stable military budgets. In harder economic times, such funds may be more urgently needed to relieve the burden of national indebtedness and reduce unemployment.

There are various management approaches to conducting a medium-term risk assessment. A precautionary approach for nonexistential threats may be difficult to support in times of financial stringency. Qualitative approaches involving expert scenario analysis will always be essential for gauging future conflict prospects. But an expedient auxiliary guide to allocating resources for future interventions is a quantitative risk assessment. This will give decisionmakers better insight into the complexities of foreign conflict intervention, in particular a greater depth of vision in the thick fog of uncertainty. **PRISM**

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Gordon Woo, *Calculating Catastrophe* (London: Imperial College Press, 2011).

<sup>2</sup> John Beddington, *Blackett Review of High Impact Low Probability Risks* (London: UK Government Office for Science, 2012).

<sup>3</sup> Christopher Coker, *War in an Age of Risk* (London: Polity, 2009).

<sup>4</sup> Paul Cornish and Andrew Dorman, "Dr. Fox and the Philosopher's Stone: The Alchemy of National Defence in the Age of Austerity," *International Affairs* 87, no. 2 (2011), 335–353.

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<sup>9</sup> Daniel Farber, "Uncertainty," *The Georgetown Law Journal* 99 (2011), 901–959.

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<sup>11</sup> *A Failure of Initiative: Final Report of the Select Bipartisan Committee to Investigate the Preparation for and Response to Hurricane Katrina* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2006), 108.

<sup>12</sup> Peter L. Bergen, *Manhunt: The Ten-Year Search for Bin Laden—From 9/11 to Abbottabad* (New York: Crown, 2012).

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<sup>14</sup> James Surowiecki, *The Wisdom of Crowds* (New York: Abacus, 2005).

<sup>15</sup> Daniel Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow* (New York: Random House, 2011).

<sup>16</sup> Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, *Predictioneer: One Who Uses Maths, Science and the Logic of Brazen Self-interest to See and Shape the Future* (London: Bodley Head, 2009).

<sup>17</sup> Gary Klein, *Sources of Power: How People Make Decisions* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999).



**“The evidence that stabilization programs promote stability in Afghanistan is limited.”**

—U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations,  
*Evaluating U.S. Foreign Assistance to Afghanistan*,  
June 2011

**“ . . . there is little empirical evidence that supports the assumption that reconstruction assistance is an effective tool to “win hearts and minds,” and improve security or stabilization in counterinsurgency contexts.”**

—Paul Fishstein and Andrew Wilder,  
*Winning Hearts and Minds?*  
January 2012

**“If you’re looking at this in terms of counterinsurgency, and trying to partner and plan with the military, the civilians aren’t doing their jobs properly.”**

“U.S. Military dismayed by delays in 3 key development projects in Afghanistan,”  
*The Washington Post*,  
April, 22, 2011

# Stabilization Success in Afghanistan The Challenges Within

BY JOHN ACREE

**T**rigger-happy critics and armchair quarterbacks are quick to disparage U.S. Government efforts to stabilize Afghanistan. Media reporting, recent books, and recurring academic forums often focus on failed efforts and propose unfavorable conclusions about this multifaceted international intervention. Some of the testimony rings true, and that is fair enough, but much that is found in current reviews of the Afghanistan effort goes to print with inconclusive evidence, limited testimony, premature conclusions, and incomplete field data.

Afghanistan is an extremely convoluted environment, and it is certainly true that success is elusive. Using information gained from working and living in Afghanistan during the mid-2010 through 2011 timeframe, this article suggests that several challenges to success are less about mispent resources, weak quality control, poor planning, or bad implementation as many reviewers suggest, but originate rather from interference from the very institutions that originally mandated and touted the effort. It also provides a narration of actual events and exposes five of these challenges: hasty strategic change, disjointed leadership, misunderstood capabilities, sudden resource reductions, and shortened project timelines. The article argues that if decisionmakers allow the programs to proceed as designed and within the parameters of stated counterinsurgency (COIN) doctrine instead of posing these difficult challenges, stabilization efforts can play a formidable role in supporting overarching political and military objectives in Afghanistan. It concludes with a summary case study that to date demonstrates favorable and encouraging stabilization results despite those challenges.

In addition, this article intends to provide more fuel to stoke informed debate about U.S. objectives in Afghanistan and whether future stabilization engagements are wise investments. The intention is to provide essential lessons learned should the United States consider future civilian engagement in these high-risk and unstable environments.

The effort in Afghanistan is complex, and complexity requires patience—the key premise of COIN doctrine. There is growing evidence that stabilization programs in Afghanistan at the field

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and tactical levels can and do work. However, without deliberate and careful planning and implementation and a thorough understanding of stabilization timelines by decisionmakers, failure is probable. Indeed, the focus of

*there is growing evidence that stabilization programs in Afghanistan at the field and tactical levels can and do work*

criticism should more appropriately narrow on the sources of these external challenges, the negative effect they wreak on stabilization operations, and on how they hamper program implementation and delay critical results. It is too early to admit defeat in Afghanistan or to decry the broader stabilization effort, but if U.S. institutions do not accord adequate time for stabilization efforts to take root and grow, they will remain jeopardized and undermined by rushed endstates, persistent misconceptions, and untimely shifts in policy, funding, and strategies.<sup>1</sup>

### **Challenge One: Premature Strategic Shifts**

In a March 2011 briefing before the Senate Armed Services Committee, then-Commander of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) General David Petraeus made several statements regarding his assessment of the effort and resultant progress in Afghanistan: “The achievements of 2010 and early 2011 have been enabled by a determined effort to get the inputs (civilian and military) right in Afghanistan. . . . Getting the inputs right has enabled our forces, together with Afghan forces, to conduct the comprehensive campaign necessary to achieve our goals in Afghanistan.” He then stated:

*With the strong support of the United States and the 47 other troop-contributing countries, ISAF has focused enormous attention and resources over the past two years on building the organizations needed to conduct a comprehensive, civil-military counterinsurgency campaign, on staffing those organizations properly, on developing—in close coordination with our Afghan partners—the requisite concepts and plans, and, above all, on deploying the additional forces, civilians, and funding needed.<sup>2</sup>*

The general’s assertions sounded convincing at the time. The U.S. civilian surge, which consisted of increased financial and human resources, was well under way by late September 2010. Hundreds of civilians were in training or already deployed to District Support Teams, Provincial Reconstruction Teams, or the U.S. Embassy in Kabul. Proposed funds from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) 2010 Afghanistan budget, including a 2010 supplemental budget increase and requested funds for 2011, were going through the various budget machinations of congressional notifications, authorizations, and obligations. The amounts under consideration were impressive. The USAID Stabilization Unit managed a project portfolio encompassing distinct civilian-military counterinsurgency programs and whose budget tallied hundreds of millions of dollars. The 2010 stabilization budget totaled more than \$490 million, and the 2011 budget request had swollen to \$720 million.<sup>3</sup> The USAID/Afghanistan mission proposed annual and supplemental 2010 budgets were the largest annual budget draft requests by a USAID country program ever—almost \$4 billion.

However, COIN practitioners know well that success involves more than sufficient resources. Time is also required for operation success. The need to respect the COIN tenets of *plan*, *prepare*, and *execute* is critical. When reviewing what some argue was a successful COIN operation during the Vietnam War, it is obvious that to realize positive effects from COIN efforts will require great patience and an uncommon cohesive effort from the civilian and military ranks. As noted in Field Manual (FM) 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, the Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS) program was implemented during the Vietnam War in May 1967 and by January 1973, when CORDS formally ceased operations, “pacification had largely uprooted the insurgency from among the South Vietnamese population.”<sup>4</sup> Though the overall effort in Vietnam did not achieve military success, FM 3-24 gives CORDS much credit for pacifying the insurgency in South Vietnam. It required almost 6 years.

CORDS also benefited from a unified civil-military structure under one leadership chain, with qualified and flexible leadership, a working relationship with the host government, and sufficient resources provided during an adequate timeline. Yet in March 2011, while General Petraeus was thanking the Armed Services Committee for its support toward the COIN effort in Afghanistan, a proposed reduction of civilian inputs was already well under consideration and would soon greatly undercut the “inputs right” and “unified effort” Petraeus thought he had obtained. As he concluded his March testimony, Petraeus noted his concern that “Levels of funding for our State Department and USAID partners will not sufficiently enable them to build on the hard-fought security

achievements of our men and women in uniform.”<sup>5</sup>

In late October 2010, 1 month into fiscal year (FY) 2011 and 5 months before the Petraeus brief, the USAID program office director in Kabul informed the various USAID technical offices, including the Stabilization Unit, that Washington had directed mission management to prepare for significant funding reductions for 2011. This meant that USAID program officers who managed activities currently under implementation and/or planned for implementation must plan for an across-the-board funding cut of at least 65 percent. The stabilization budget plunged from the \$720 million request for 2011 to a request for \$256 million—a reduction of \$464 million in 1 year.

The point here is not to pass judgment on that decision but to reveal the sudden shift in USAID assistance strategy at a crucial point in the U.S. surge effort and detail the abrupt budget reductions as one of the major external challenges to stabilization mentioned in this article. Some Afghanistan observers and foreign aid critics no doubt applauded this decision, particularly as it related to the debate on the effectiveness of large aid budgets and stabilization programs. In their Tuft’s University report “Winning Hearts and Minds?” Andrew Wilder and Paul Fishstein counter the assertion that large aid projects (and budgets) promote security objectives in stabilization and COIN contexts.<sup>6</sup> The authors argue that “Pressure to spend too much money too quickly is not only wasteful, but undermines both security and development objectives” and that “powerful career and institutional incentives often contribute to quantity being prioritized and rewarded over quality.” These findings undeniably applied in part to the

Afghanistan case: certain Washington-based USAID senior staff, ISAF military commanders, and State Department officials regularly demonstrated their naïve understanding of stabilization and urged implementing partners to spend rapidly and in large amounts. However, the draconian budget reductions of 2011 were not due to trepidations about large budgets, rapid spending, or poor performance. Washington shifted its focus from a robustly funded civilian COIN support operation and a hard-driving stabilization effort to a “transition-centric” approach for different reasons. Concerns inflamed by Washington’s changing political environment, escalating budget

*certain Washington-based officials regularly demonstrated their naïve understanding of stabilization and urged implementing partners to spend rapidly and in large amounts*

deficits, growing antiwar populism, upcoming 2010 U.S. national elections, and a war-weary U.S. constituency were arguably among the major factors influencing the funding reductions. Guidance on how to make those cuts strategically and prudently was much less clear.

The strategy to begin planning to transition from stabilization to “something else” was unclear at best and injudicious from a field perspective. Nor was it based on assessments, progress indicators, drivers of instability, or negative impact measurements, and the shift in direction seemed premature. Many parts of Afghanistan were still unstable in the fall of 2010 and prioritized as Key Terrain Districts by ISAF. Military field commanders, especially those in Special Forces conducting COIN operations, strongly supported the deeply resourced civilian participation in the COIN

effort. To make definitive programmatic shifts at this time, before allowing the programs to ramp up to full capacity, did not make sense. Many civilian program staffers implementing stabilization considered the transition mandate irrational based on the criterion of troop and civilian personnel numbers alone. President Barack Obama had announced a 30,000-troop increase less than a year earlier on December 1, 2009, with the majority slated to arrive in the spring and summer of 2010. Increased troop numbers seemed not an indicator of transition, but rather a demonstration that the military surge in support of COIN was finally under way. In addition, USAID continued to hire and deploy civilians to the field; they strove to maintain a 60 percent field-based to 40 percent Kabul-based staff ratio and worked toward establishing a record number of USAID staff in country.<sup>7</sup> Even when a reduction of troops began in correlation with the much heralded “whole of government” transition, one could argue that civilian support levels should increase compensatorily to help maintain a strong assistance effort and avoid activity gaps.<sup>8</sup>

The rapid shift away from stabilization took more than one group by surprise. The reduction of stabilization programming eventually led to a decline in the critical and hard-won civil-military relationship. Brigade commanders and other battlespace owners often viewed civilian stabilization field officers and programs as essential force multipliers—important supplements to the military toolbox to accomplish the mission of the day. With a 65 percent cut in the stabilization effort, many of these newly arrived civilian field officers would now enter the theater with few or no support programs to contribute to the COIN initiative. With the loss or reduction of these additional tools, many of their

military counterparts suddenly viewed USAID field officers as dead weight. Some disaffected military commanders went so far as to refer to them as a waste of everyone's time.

In effect, USAID began to surge in 2009, attained sufficient resource levels in 2010, and pursued a significant recruitment effort in 2011 that would achieve the objectives outlined by General Petraeus: USAID finally "had its inputs right" to support the COIN strategy of the U.S. military. It had them for approximately 6 months.

### Challenge Two: Lack of Unified Effort

As the budget scenario unraveled, it became evident to USAID personnel in Kabul that military commanders and State Department diplomats exhibited a pervasive lack of understanding of institutional constraints on USAID programming, budgeting, and contracting in Afghanistan. Nor did they seem to comprehend what effect these limitations had on the desired civilian response levels in support of COIN requirements. Several incidents surrounding the budget issue demonstrate this unfamiliarity and expose the extraordinary lack of unity among senior leaders in both Washington and Kabul regarding the stabilization effort.

On January 19, 2011 (2 months prior to General Petraeus's March briefing to the Senate Armed Services Committee), the USAID/Afghanistan mission issued an email through its Stabilization Office that informed senior development and field officers in Afghanistan that 2010 and 2011 funding for Afghanistan was delayed until the State Department provided certain guarantees regarding funding integrity. The email urged everyone "to be careful" and stated that "We will have to slow down on programming temporarily [to avoid the total depletion of existing funds] while we wait for

the budget to come in to avoid depleting all the funds. Please do consult at local levels with your provincial and district managers so you are unified in your approaches with your local stakeholders, task forces, and [regional] platforms during this temporary slowdown."

On January 25, 2011, the USAID/Afghanistan mission prepared an action memo that informed the State Department's director of U.S. Foreign Assistance of the funding issue and requested approval of an early release of funds for Afghanistan to relieve shortages anticipated by the Stabilization Office. This memo underwent a daunting clearance process that required 26 signatures and it informed senior officials at USAID/Afghanistan, the U.S. Embassy in Kabul, USAID/Washington, and State Department/Washington of the funding situation.

Action memo notwithstanding, by March 2, 2011, 13 days before Petraeus's briefing to the Senate Armed Services Committee, the lifeline funding for new or extended stabilization programs remained frozen. At a regularly scheduled video-teleconference briefing among the five regional Senior Civilian Representatives,<sup>9</sup> three U.S. Ambassadors, and other senior leaders in Kabul, the Stabilization Unit addressed the following agenda item: "Stabilization Program Operations—Washington Centric: Status of Mission Request for Early Release of FY 2011 Funding Budget and Procurement Impact." On cue, the USAID Stabilization Unit provided the teleconference participants with a brief presentation and explanation based on the following summary of the budget issue:

*Given current projected burn rate estimates, USAID's stabilization programs have enough funding to carry programs through late May and June [2011]. Once USAID/*



*Afghanistan receives the requested funding contained in the FY 2010 Supplemental, the FY 2011 “early release” tranche, and the full FY 2011 funds, our stabilization portfolio will be fully financed through the end of calendar year 2012. The Mission has directed all program managers and implementing partners to continue the implementation of existing programs and grants. The Mission is also exercising prudent oversight of stabilization projects.*

In other words, USAID had the programs and plans in place, but the disjointed funding requirements that the State Department and Congress requested had hamstrung the agency. The discussion following the Stabilization Unit’s presentation did not proceed amicably, particularly from the southern region’s perspective. Kandahar Province in the South constituted the key battlespace for military and civilian stabilization efforts; military commanders there had made it clear that USAID’s stabilization programs were critical force multipliers to their COIN efforts in the region. Although the other regions accepted the stabilization information brief without much comment, Regional Command–South (RC-S) was not satisfied. The Senior Development Officer in Kandahar rightfully raised concerns that continued delays in stabilization program funding would result in a “catastrophic failure” for the civilian and military effort there. The concern was not new; several conversations between the Senior Development Officer and the Stabilization Unit in Kabul occurred prior to the video call and USAID had taken the issue to Washington. To everyone’s frustration, the issue remained unresolved.

Hearing of this looming crisis, two Ambassadors present at the teleconference

in Kabul became incensed. Apparently, this was the first time they were made aware of this funding delay—a delay caused by the same State Department that employed them—and the dire consequences predicted by RC-S. Perhaps they had erroneously thought that the State Department had provided Congress with the required information, which it had not, or that Congress had already disbursed the 2010 supplemental funds, also untrue. Either way, after a heated exchange among the participants, the two officials concluded that this was USAID’s blunder. One Ambassador insisted that USAID should have requested resources from a special State Department fund to supplement the programs under discussion to prevent any program delays.<sup>10</sup> USAID reiterated that it had adequate resources and would not close any programs. (The issue was the Washington delay, not funding.) The Ambassadors insisted that USAID provide them with more information; this information had already been given to them and their offices via the January 19 email and January 25 action memo from the Stabilization Unit.

In a briefing memo released later that evening for the Ambassadors’ perusal, USAID again explained the funding situation, the status of its stabilization programs, and the actions taken to resolve the issue. In addition, USAID included an attachment that explained that funds appropriated for Afghanistan in the FY 2010 Supplemental Appropriations Act were currently undisbursed pending a report by the Secretary of State to Congress and stated that funds for Afghanistan:

*may be obligated only if the Secretary of State reports to the Committees on Appropriations that prior to the disbursement of funds, representatives of the Afghan national, provincial or local*

*government, local communities and civil society organizations, as appropriate, will be consulted and participate in the design of programs, projects, and activities, and following such disbursement will participate in implementation and oversight, and progress will be measured against specific benchmarks.*<sup>11</sup>

The apparent lack of understanding by senior civilians of the U.S. Government budget process and the sudden realization of the negative effect the disbursement delays have on USAID programs is remarkable. When one considers the various misunderstandings and misgivings exhibited by senior officials during this brief exchange, one can begin to understand the seriousness of the challenge posed by the lack of unity and solidarity needed for civilian support to COIN.

Six days after the combative video-teleconference, the Senior Civilian Representative from RC-S reiterated its concerns in a memo sent to Kabul and declared that the commander general in the South believed that USAID was not fully supporting the military.<sup>12</sup> The frustration was understandable, but the focus of the frustration and the blame were misdirected. As of December 2010, USAID had disbursed \$82.9 million of stabilization program funds in support of the South's COIN effort and had plans to disburse an additional \$32.6 million once funds became available—an exceptional amount for one region and significantly more than originally budgeted. Rather than blaming USAID, one might have argued for a more results-oriented approach in joining the USAID effort back in January to pressure Washington to release the funds.

In addition to misunderstanding the root cause of the problem, the RC-S platform

displayed an erroneous understanding about USAID's stabilization intent. The memo stressed the importance of the USAID-implemented "cash-for-work" programs that "provide a viable alternative to fighting-age males who otherwise may be enticed to support insurgent activities for lack of other economic opportunity." This assumption might have some merit, but no evidence supports the claim, nor was it the program's objective. USAID designed stabilization

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programming, including income generation programs, to link citizens with legitimate state structures and create conditions for extending governance and service delivery improvements—the link being the objective, not the number of employed men. The military's concern was about the total number of employed men as its indicator of success; consequently, RC-S predicted "catastrophic failure" should income generation programs decelerate and unemployment figures rise.

A second key factor exposing a lack of unity was the gap in a whole-of-government approach to USAID participation in stabilization planning and the decisionmaking processes. USAID/Afghanistan provided instructions to stabilization field staff and implementing partners in January to consider possible program contingencies in preparation for future funding delays, understanding that State Department bureaucrats and Members of Congress require time to finalize the requisite

legal and regulatory actions to disburse funds. Why this warning did not translate into contingency plans or contribute to USAID's pleas to Washington for early funding release is unclear. Secretary Hillary Clinton stated in May 2010 at the Brookings Institution, "One of our goals coming into the administration was . . . to begin to make the case that defense, diplomacy and development were not separate entities, either in substance or process, but that indeed they had to be viewed as part of an integrated whole and that the whole of government then had to be enlisted in their pursuit." The RC-S military leaders complained in March that USAID was "letting down" the military effort in the South when in fact USAID was doing all it could to get additional funding.

This example of communication breakdown was not exceptional. State Department and military officials demonstrated poor understanding of the U.S. Government budget process and USAID contracting mechanisms regularly. The fact that two State Department Ambassadors claiming to control U.S. foreign assistance efforts in Afghanistan were either misinformed or uninformed of the department's congressional funding requirements in Afghanistan is no less stunning than the U.S. military claiming that USAID was closing programs or letting them down in March when they were made well aware in January of the congressional/State Department funding delays. In addition, the Ambassador's suggestion that USAID could "borrow" funds from the State Department, or, as suggested in the March 8 RC-S memo, that USAID should "borrow" funds from other USAID programs, indicated a lack of clarity regarding civilian funding regulations and statutory contract authorities.<sup>13</sup> USAID stabilization programs took pride in the

flexible nature of their activities; they adjusted and responded more rapidly to parameter shifts than most USAID development programs. Their adaptability was limited, however, because U.S. Government legal authorities still governed contract and grant mechanisms. It was not a "cash and carry" system; strict budget management, control, and approval processes regulated the flow and expenditures of taxpayer dollars. To manage funds outside the regulations would be illegal.

When one considers this knowledge gap among senior civilian and military leaders about the programs they claimed to control, should one be surprised that reviewers continue to publish reports and studies critical of the U.S. effort? Although military and State Department officials often repeated the importance of the unity of command concept and emphasized Secretary Clinton's whole-of-government model in frequent PowerPoint presentations, its application was far from perfect and leaning rapidly toward dysfunction.

### Challenge Three: Loss of Ownership

As stated earlier, Wilder and Fishstein argue in the Tuf's report that spending too much too quickly can be counterproductive.<sup>14</sup> The argument was borne out through various reporting priorities of several stabilization activities in 2010–2011, but not by design or intention from USAID program officers. The military and State Department exerted strong pressure on USAID to push forward lockstep with military actions and to adjust rapidly to shifts in battlespace priorities. This pressure forced USAID implementers to often forgo essential needs assessments and skip proper monitoring and evaluation exercises in the interest of time and to maintain high project "burn rates" as indicators of success.<sup>15</sup>

Nonmilitary actors constitute a key component of successful COIN operations *if* decisionmakers allow civilian professionals to participate fully and equally in the implementation process from the early planning stages to the closeout of field actions. Many examples from the USAID Stabilization Unit's project portfolio demonstrate this value despite some misconstructions and faulty visions set forth by leadership. However, a broad reality check reveals a more lucid understanding of a civilian's limitations as it evolved in Afghanistan during the surge and can help explain why civilian efforts were sometimes not able to perform fully in concert with military actions.

*The Reality of Security.* Project implementers in Afghanistan face a lengthy and varied list of challenges, not the least of which is security. The insecure and fluid kinetic environment certainly impedes government civilian personnel from doing their jobs, but so do U.S. Embassy security restrictions.<sup>16</sup> In the field, government civilians depended mostly on military assets and force protection for security within the perimeters of life support compounds and during project site visit movements. Understandably, military transport assets often bumped, delayed, or canceled civilian air and land movements to clear manifests for military priorities and randomized field program planning and monitoring. In addition, military commanders often used criteria differently from the Embassy to measure the level of security in any given area. Battlespace commanders frequently complained about the lack of USAID programs and civilian staff in areas deemed secure by their troops, but not supported by the more comprehensive assessment required by U.S. Embassy security.

But how far should the security bubble extend? It would be inappropriate to criticize the State Department's security office for doing a difficult job—keeping Chief of Mission personnel alive—particularly since they do that job well. Nevertheless, the restrictions placed on personnel movement, even within and near the compound grounds of the U.S. Embassy, were stifling. This dilemma—how to maximize personal security but at the same time allow

*although military and State Department officials often emphasized Secretary Clinton's whole-of-government model, its application was far from perfect and leaning rapidly towards dysfunction*

development professionals to do their job in support of COIN operations—remains unresolved. It also constitutes a repeated finding in program audits that unfairly criticize USAID for its lack of field monitoring and project site reviews in Afghanistan. Wilder and Fishstein correctly recommend that aid money “should only be committed when it can be spent in an effective and accountable manner.”<sup>17</sup> This implies that project funding levels and timelines need to be synched with implementation capabilities, including a thorough understanding of civilian access, movement, security restrictions, and expectations regarding physical presence.

*The Reality of Civilian Readiness.* As the 2010 military campaign trundled into 2011, the demand for civilian presence and resources expanded at a rate beyond the State Department's capability to supply them. Despite raised voices from Kabul, the personnel systems at USAID and the State Department in Washington could not produce new arrivals

in the numbers or with the appropriate experience levels to match the military's advances. As ISAF regularly increased the number of approved District Support Teams, Key Terrain Districts, District Development Programs, Village Stabilization Platforms (VSPs), and numerous other priority areas for action, the demand for civilian staff to fill in behind kinetic operations increased exponentially and outstripped supply. In addition, many civilians arriving in country had no prior experience with USAID programs and contracts, conflict environments, or civil-military relationships. To compound matters, inexperienced civilians often deployed to critical field positions without adequate time for training and preparation. Over time and in some areas, military personnel lost confidence in civilian support as a reliable force multiplier because the civilian resources consistently came up short.

*The Reality of Contracts and Time.* The military's urgency to gain ground and expand operations was constant and usually exceeded the civilian capacity to respond or shift geographically. Civilian contractors and implementers could not deftly shift project activities or move rapidly from one priority area to

*many civilians arriving in country had no prior experience with USAID programs and contracts, conflict environments, or civil-military relationships*

another because of time-consuming approvals or contract amendments. With the exception of humanitarian assistance activities and, to some degree, some stabilization grant activities, USAID implementation structures cannot respond adequately to the demands of a kinetic environment. This is a common and mostly

unresolved civil-military issue, as military commanders often know little about USAID's contract models and the time and effort required to issue new contract awards, amend contracts, increase contract activities, or expand activities into new areas not part of an original battle plan or original contract agreement.

USAID programs could support COIN operations as a force multiplier much more effectively by enacting fundamental changes to its business model. This would require a significant shift in State Department and USAID organizational structure and culture—a shift away from its current hierarchical, plodding, and procedure-focused restrictions to a results-focused, independent, and fleet-footed mentality. It would require State Department leadership to consistently seek ways to disentangle the cumbersome complexities of organizational functioning and to empower its people to cooperate and collaborate with, not just criticize, USAID efforts. Without such changes in its organizational approach including changes in security regulations, staffing capabilities, and contract models, USAID will continue to lack the ability to meet demands; therefore, it should not create expectations of arm-in-arm force multipliers in such fluid and kinetic environments.

#### Challenge Four: Resources Reductions

The international development community often debates the validity of nation-building and the size and cost of foreign assistance programs in general. The argument that stabilization efforts are too expensive compared to return on investment is prevalent and has some merit. When one examines the factors that influence the allocation of aid resources and considers the vacillation of political infighting, however, the most compelling



argument against stabilization programs might shift from their cost to their impracticality. The formidable and complex external political challenges associated with carrying out stabilization actions make it difficult to achieve a desired effect.

One such factor is the misinterpretation of budget numbers. As stated earlier, the Stabilization Unit in Kabul managed a number of stabilization projects throughout Afghanistan. The Community Development Program (CDP), Afghanistan Stabilization Initiative, and Stabilization in Key Areas (SIKA) program are examples of multiyear projects that had total estimated costs of more than a billion dollars, so at first glance one could conclude that the portfolio is very large. The reality, however, is that any program analysis, large or small, that operates in a complex

environment must take into account funding factors other than just dollar amounts. Unfortunately, the first question inevitably posed by most military leaders, senior civilian leaders, congressional delegations, and media professionals is “How much money?” The question is understandable, but it reflects inadequate attention to the other requirements of operating USAID programs in a complex environment. The simplistic (and erroneous) assumption is that big dollars equal big programs that equal big success (or big failure).

*Consider the Funding Source.* Some aspects of the Federal funding mechanism, without delving deeply into the convolutions of U.S. budget processes, illustrate why a numbers-based review can lead to distorted assessments of aid effectiveness. First, the underlying Federal funding approval



John Acree

Afghan villagers discuss local needs with development officials



structures are inadequate to accommodate the scope, scale, and pace of the budgetary considerations required to conduct successful counterinsurgency support operations. At the beginning of FY 2011, budget disputes delayed disbursements for Federal Government funding, including funds supporting USAID programs in Afghanistan. Though not a rare occurrence in recent history, the budget delays debilitated program implementation severely in a place that many officials still consider the highest foreign policy priority for the United States. Eventually, Congress passed a series of eight “continuing resolutions” in 2011 that significantly limited USAID’s ability to conduct operations efficiently or to plan rationally.

Subsequently, there was the additional disbursement delay of the 2010 supplemental funds—the very delay that led RC-S to predict catastrophic failure in Kandahar. Without these funds, USAID had to reduce program activity and postpone program startups at a time when the military surge was under way and demands for civilian programs were increasing. No

*underlying Federal funding approval structures are inadequate to accommodate the scope, scale, and pace of counterinsurgency support operations*

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funds, no implementation. No implementation, no results. It is difficult to measure the impact of a well-funded program (on paper) while a dysfunctional fund disbursement process regularly underfunds the program.

USAID correctly distinguishes stabilization programs from classic development programs. This is due in part to the nature of the desired short-term COIN effects. Nevertheless,

even with this distinction, stabilization programs still follow and are subject to definitive U.S. funding and contract management processes. As stated earlier, the Stabilization Unit programs were multiyear contracts and therefore depended on the annual budget process to succeed. Additionally, the programs were not fully obligated. This point is crucial but rarely noted in reports about the Afghanistan effort and the impact—or lack thereof—of COIN and stabilization activities. For example, any critique from 2009, 2010, 2011, or 2012 regarding the CDP, Afghanistan Stabilization Initiative, or SIKAs projects would be incorrect if it stated that USAID has little evidence to demonstrate any significant positive impact of its stabilization programs despite its investment of more than \$1 billion. The funds listed on USAID funding documents might exhibit a budgeted total of the sum, but that certainly does not represent the true (smaller) amount USAID has authorized, obligated, approved, or programmed to date.

Typically, a USAID program has inherent and well-practiced design, procurement, implementation, and closeout phases within the lifespan of the program, with each phase requiring from several months to several years to complete. The same is true with stabilization programming, only within a compressed implementation continuum. One other difference is that short-term stabilization impact gains are expected much sooner than with development programs. As a result, each phase of the stabilization process becomes more susceptible to the fickleness of budgetary and political realities, especially if results from a compressed timeline have not yet met expectations. This, in turn, can delay or interrupt a program’s implementation and decrease its responsiveness, flexibility, and overall impact

on beneficiary populations. In 2009, USAID considered stabilization a fundamental goal of its efforts in Afghanistan and submitted requisite funding appeals. In 2010, some of the funding arrived, with additional supplemental funding requested. In 2011, USAID ordered budgets slashed by more than 65 percent, and, to worsen a bad situation, the disbursement of the FY 2011 funding did not occur until the end of that year. By the time Congress and the State Department completed their budget wrangling and General Petraeus declared that he had the “inputs right” to move forward, Washington declared stabilization over. The new phase: transition.

### Challenge Five: Compressed Timelines and Benchmarks

To assess program effectiveness and impact, one must also consider the significant negative impacts caused by external players who forced disruption of program timelines and short-circuited the stabilization process. USAID was not allowed the opportunity to develop fully its own strategy, project timelines, objectives, and frameworks. Rather, USAID contributed comments to, and then followed the tenets of, an interagency document entitled “The United States Government Integrated Civilian-Military Campaign Plan for Support to Afghanistan [ICMCP].” Originally drafted in 2009, the revised plan drafted in February 2011 declared that the U.S. Government was entering “the era of Transition,” and that to realize that goal, “we must enable our Afghan colleagues to move front and center, and then follow their lead.”

In some respects, the document did provide a unified strategic intent, which was commendable. But in referring back to the “inputs right” testimony of General Petraeus a month

later in March and his aforementioned statement that “ISAF has focused enormous attention and resources over the past two years on building the organizations needed to conduct a comprehensive, civil-military counterinsurgency campaign,” it becomes difficult to deconflict Petraeus’s meaning regarding the new February “transition” edition of the campaign plan. A word search conducted on the February version of the 50-page ICMCP provides zero results for the term *COIN*, yet General Petraeus was a cosigner of the ICMCP along with U.S. Ambassador Karl Eikenberry.

The contradiction between the Petraeus testimony regarding the COIN campaign and the new “transition” campaign plan created confusion between the civilian and military ranks. By their design, stabilization activities in support of COIN do not prioritize capacity-building or sustainability. Washington senior leadership seemingly forgot this fact and joined bellowing critics from the media, Congress, and State Department decrying the stabilization programs’ lack of capacity-building and sustainability as a weakness of USAID’s efforts needing correction. To their credit, some Stabilization Unit implementing

*the contradiction between the Petraeus testimony regarding the COIN campaign and the new “transition” campaign plan created confusion between the civilian and military ranks*

partners did employ implementation models that included some capacity and governance strengthening components where appropriate, but field officers and military commanders rarely requested or expected capacity-building or sustainability efforts as a part of classic stabilization activities. The infighting among

Washington officials, their rush to begin “transition and end stabilization,” and the field staff’s counter desire to finish the stabilization efforts under way unfolded as a classical Greek tragedy, with stabilization playing the lead victim of circumstance.

In April 2011, RC-S representatives traveled to Kabul to participate in a planning conference at the Embassy. As stated earlier, 1 month before the April conference, RC-S issued a memo to USAID stating that the RC-S commanding general expressed his concern that USAID was stopping stabilization employment programs at a critical juncture in the war. Though misinformed about program stoppages, the general’s implications of the importance of stabilization activities in his area of operations were clear. Now his representatives from Kandahar were in Kabul to reiterate his priorities. As the RC-S representative began his presentation entitled “Region Stabilization Approach: Supporting Civilian Stabilization Resources Spring and Summer 2011,” the Assistant Chief of Mission abruptly interrupted the presenter, thanked him for his hard work, and summarily stopped the discussion regarding the RC-S stabilization plan. The Ambassador then stated to the audience that stabilization was finished and that we were now working toward transition. After the conference, the RC-S presenter expressed his astonishment at this news, adding that his commander refused to recognize or even utter the term *transition*.

This incident reflects not only the aforementioned lack of unified effort, but also the imprudent haste of senior civilian leadership to declare stabilization over in Afghanistan and veer sharply into a transition phase that most field personnel agreed was a mistake. What transition meant in terms of operations was unclear; what it meant in terms of timing was

*now*. The pressure to transition came from the top, seemingly driven by the troop drawdown deadline of 2014 announced by the administration. The Embassy’s instructions were clear. Approximately 7 months after USAID expanded operations and assigned personnel into the rapidly escalating list of Key Terrain Districts, District Support Teams, and other military operation sites, stabilization programming was on the chopping block, and transition was in full swing, whatever that meant.

### Overcoming the Challenges: Can It Work?

Despite the challenges impeding stabilization programs in Afghanistan, some activities have met expectations and achieved their intended stabilization results through their fundamental application of coordinated planning, cooperative relationships, unified programming, and appropriate timelines. An example of one such effort was USAID’s participation in the Village Stability Operations (VSO) conducted by elements of the Combined Forces Special Operations Component Command–Afghanistan and Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force–Afghanistan. The Stabilization Unit encouraged and supported engagement with special operations forces (SOF), and the resulting support given to the VSO program throughout Afghanistan is a commendable confirmation that collaborative stabilization operations can work effectively. The following example illustrates how civil-military teams can implement COIN efforts successfully if they follow COIN doctrine, plan early, understand each other, and work together.

The Kunduz/Baghlan (K/B) corridor is located in the northern Afghan province of Kunduz. Before 2009, security was relatively

permissive in Kunduz and Baghlan provinces, although skirmishes were common between and among warlords, tribes, and communities. By 2009, a downturn in security resulted in the region becoming more kinetic and problematic. One driver of instability central to this rise in insurgent violence is partially attributable to the designation and recognition of the K/B corridor as a critical and alternative North Atlantic Treaty Organization supply line.

Beginning in late 2010, USAID, ISAF (including SOF Operational Detachment–Alpha [ODA]) teams, and the government of Afghanistan designed and implemented a stabilization strategy to support COIN efforts in this corridor. Based on the COIN continuum phases of “clear, hold, and build,” and through an established assessment process, USAID identified a set of interventions that supported the Afghan government and aimed at systematically addressing the underlying causes of instability and grievances of villagers living within the corridor. By January 2011, USAID—with support from Afghan Community Development Councils (CDCs) and District Development Assemblies (DDAs), USAID implementing partners, and ISAF—outlined the key areas for stabilization interventions for startup once clearing operations terminated, resulting in the formation of a “stabilization corridor” designated within the K/B corridor. In February 2011, USAID sponsored a joint workshop with the Afghan CDC and DDA cluster chiefs in Kunduz City. The workshop represented a milestone in communication and coordination, as it was the first time in several years that the district and village representatives had a chance to work together due to increased security.

USAID uses a standard approach to implementing stabilization activities. As security improves, field personnel move from more

permissive to less permissive communities, thereby creating a safety zone where implementing partners can work with the Afghan government and the CDCs in relative safety. This bottom-up approach interlocked closely with the VSO methodology to support and promote socioeconomic development and good governance. By working with the ODA teams and within the ODA VSPs, USAID could more effectively provide grants, achieve higher efficiency, and maximize program impacts.

In addition to determining the perimeter of the clearing operation areas in both provinces, USAID worked closely with the Village Stability Coordination Centers (VSCC) in Kunduz and Baghlan, and together with the ODA teams determined the area of influence of each VSP. All VSPs in Kunduz and Baghlan were located and mapped within the stabilization corridor, and by April 2011, USAID Kunduz, VSCC Kunduz, and Special Forces ODA developed a strategic and operational plan for USAID activities in VSPs.

To operationalize the new strategy, USAID funded two community-based stabilization projects: the Community Based Stabilization Grant (CBSG) program and Community Development Program mentioned earlier. CBSG was a 2-year project implemented through three Afghan nongovernmental organizations that worked with the CDCs, DDAs, and other organizations. Conversely, CDP employed a direct implementation model whereby implementers worked with community citizens rather than through the CDCs and DDAs. Through VSO, USAID also determined the parameters of cooperation between USAID implementing partners and the ODA teams, and jointly developed an implementation plan for the VSPs in Kunduz municipality and Baghlan Province. The VSPs in both provinces

were located within the stabilization corridor. Through January 2012, USAID implemented 47 projects with the ODA teams—20 in Kunduz and 27 in Baghlan.

The program in northern Afghanistan will now begin its own transition to something new. USAID will implement the SIKA project and build on progress made in the same areas that were important under CBSG and CDP and, it is hoped, bridge the gap from stabilization to development. The difference will be that the Afghan government, through a regional ministry presence, will take a more active role in identifying community grievances and addressing sources of instability and, in turn, fulfilling the promise of stabilization through good governance. The civil-military relationship will also change. Prior to 2010, civil-military coordination in the North was minimal and USAID reacted to the shaping and holding events of

*the government will take a more active role in addressing sources of instability and fulfilling the promise of stabilization through good governance*

the COIN continuum rather than participating in the process. Today, USAID officers in the North can integrate fully into the VSCC structures in both provinces and are currently visiting the existing, transitioning, and new VSPs.

### **Conclusion: It Takes Time**

Kunduz demonstrates that with time, planning, and strong relationships, civilians can implement COIN-focused stabilization activities in Afghanistan. Yet even in Kunduz, one still restrains optimism, as it is too early to claim success or measure impact. The next 2 years are critical in the North, and the threats

to stabilization programming remain. Tough questions require answers. Will SIKA receive adequate and timely annual resources to finish the work and complete the stabilization process? Will security restrictions allow for activity access, civilian movements, proper activity management, and impact assessments? Will new or rushed transition strategies allow time for SIKA to solidify gains? Will troop replacements and reductions affect the working environment and allow longer term development to replace stabilization in the build phase of COIN?

From a broad perspective, this article asserts that the external challenges of rapid strategic change, disjointed leadership, misunderstood capabilities, drastic resource cutbacks, and unrealistic timelines adversely affected stabilization programming in Afghanistan during the critical 2010–2011 timeframe. When analyzing the effort, reviewers must consider the crippling impact that these factors had on program implementation; to ignore them while searching for impact data and conducting activity reviews would do a great disservice to the dedicated civilian and military professionals who are performing difficult and dangerous jobs. The intent of this article is to inform, not criticize. It aims to illustrate how the power of civilian stabilization operations can significantly enhance COIN efforts if those in control recognize and attenuate certain critical factors and threats to implementation. The international community, including the U.S. Government, would be wise to address these challenges to stabilization operations and tactics as they develop future foreign policy strategies.

As the future of Afghanistan unfolds, reviews, audits, and evaluations of assistance programming must be robust, thorough, and technically sound. Recognizing this, the

USAID/Afghanistan mission committed sizable resources to conduct the Measuring Impact of Stabilization Initiatives project, which began in May 2012. Implemented through a third-party contractor, its mission is to collect, synthesize, and analyze data at the district, provincial, and regional levels to track high-order stabilization trends, and to help inform USAID and Afghan government future stabilization practices in preparation for transition to a classical development environment. One can hope that it will include a thoughtful consideration of the impact of external challenges on stabilization operations, such as those presented here, and help provide a blueprint of an enhanced, informed, and synchronous approach to future stabilization efforts. **PRISM**

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> For the purpose of this article and in the Afghan context, civilian stabilization programming in support of counterinsurgency is distinct from development programming. The overall stabilization objective is to create conditions that promote sustainable links between communities and legitimate government structures in order to foster stability and establish conditions for medium- and long-term development. Stabilization is the precursor to development; its objective is to provide the platform to allow appropriate long-term roles for state service delivery—and development—to occur.

<sup>2</sup> Statement of General David H. Petraeus, commander, U.S. Forces in Afghanistan, International Security Assistance Force, before the Senate Armed Services Committee, March 15, 2011.

<sup>3</sup> Figures originate from internal United States Agency for International Development (USAID)/Afghanistan budget exercise documents and are not final. Funds identified for the Stabilization Unit's programs were mostly Economic Support Funds, just one of many funding sources available for Afghanistan foreign assistance.

<sup>4</sup> Field Manual 3-24, *Counterinsurgency* (Washington, DC: Headquarters Department of the Army, December 2006), 2-12, 2-13.

<sup>5</sup> Petraeus, March 15, 2011.

<sup>6</sup> Paul Fishstein and Andrew Wilder, "Winning Hearts and Minds? Examining the Relationship between Aid and Security in Afghanistan," Feinstein International Center, Tufts University, January 2012.

<sup>7</sup> USAID's goal at the time was to reach a total of 387 staff in country, making the Afghanistan Mission the largest in the world.

<sup>8</sup> Initial phased troop reductions were scheduled to begin in July 2012 and accelerate through the remainder of the year.

<sup>9</sup> For Afghanistan operations in 2011, the country has five regional commands (RCs): RC-South, RC-North, RC-East, RC-West, and RC-Southwest.

<sup>10</sup> Subsequent inquiries into the existence of a special State Department account proved the suggestion unfounded.

<sup>11</sup> Public law 111-32, 2009 Supplemental Appropriations for Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Pandemic Flu, SEC. 1004 (a). The terms and conditions of sections 1102(a), (b)(1), (c), and (d) of Public Law 111-32 shall apply to funds appropriated in this chapter that are available for assistance for Afghanistan.

<sup>12</sup> To quote the memorandum, "RC-South Commanding General . . . believes that USAID is letting 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division down at one of the most critical junctures in the war effort. His field commanders report that USAID funded cash-for-work programs are stopping and large numbers of young men will soon be left without employment."

<sup>13</sup> Although some USAID funds are fungible, the procedure is not easily completed or rapid and often requires congressional notification. In addition, most USAID programs were waiting on the supplemental funding. Borrowing funds from other existing programs distresses the lender program and causes harm elsewhere.

<sup>14</sup> Fishstein and Wilder, 69.

<sup>15</sup> In Afghanistan, the term *burn rate* referred to a measurement of dollars spent during a specific time, usually monthly. Many considered a higher burn rate better than a lower burn rate and often mistakenly prioritized a high burn rate as a measurement of successful project implementation.

<sup>16</sup> As opposed to "contractor" civilians who were less restricted on freedom of movement and access issues.

<sup>17</sup> Fishstein and Wilder, 69.





Sons of Iraq members recite oath during validation ceremony in Kirkuk Province, Iraq, 2008

# Reconstruction Leaders’ Perceptions of CERP in Iraq: Report Overview

BY STUART W. BOWEN, JR., AND CRAIG COLLIER

The Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction (SIGIR) has accomplished a number of audits and inspections over the past 8 years that focused on the Commander’s Emergency Response Program (CERP). To complement those previous oversight efforts, SIGIR recently conceived and produced a special report entitled “Reconstruction Leaders’ Perceptions of the Commander’s Emergency Response Program in Iraq.” This report was based on a SIGIR-developed and -administered survey of unit leaders in Iraq who had first-hand experience using CERP. The survey provided a plethora of new and revelatory data, allowing deeper insights into the effects of CERP use in Iraq.<sup>1</sup>

A wide range of reconstruction personnel responded to the survey. Along with former U.S. Army battalion commanders (the primary CERP users), we surveyed former U.S. Marine Corps battalion commanders, State Department Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) leaders, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) PRT members, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) officials. Taken together, these groups constitute the primary U.S. Government bodies responsible for the nomination, execution, and subsequent monitoring and evaluation of almost \$4 billion in CERP projects accomplished during Operation *Iraqi Freedom*.

The CERP survey asked:

- the extent to which commanders used CERP and the time required to manage CERP projects
- the outcomes commanders tried to achieve with CERP and the relationship between intended outcomes and the types of projects to which funding was dedicated
- the measures of effectiveness commanders used to assess whether projects were meeting intended outcomes and the perceived efficacy of projects executed at different times and in different areas

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- the effectiveness of coordination among commanders, their higher headquarters, and other U.S. Government agencies involved in stabilization and reconstruction
- the degree of fraud and corruption in CERP projects.

Of the 390 survey responses received, 194 came from Army battalion commanders, 14 from Marine battalion commanders, 27 from officers from USACE, 128 from State Department personnel (including 28 PRT leaders), and 27 from USAID employees. The breadth of this civilian and military cohort ensured a wide array of testimony about the effects of CERP projects in Iraq.

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There is no simple answer to the question “Was CERP a success in Iraq?” But survey data did reveal much about CERP’s actual use and usefulness. The open-ended comments that respondents included yielded particularly sobering insights into the challenges associated with executing stability and reconstruction operations in a nonpermissive environment.

### The Use and Usefulness of CERP

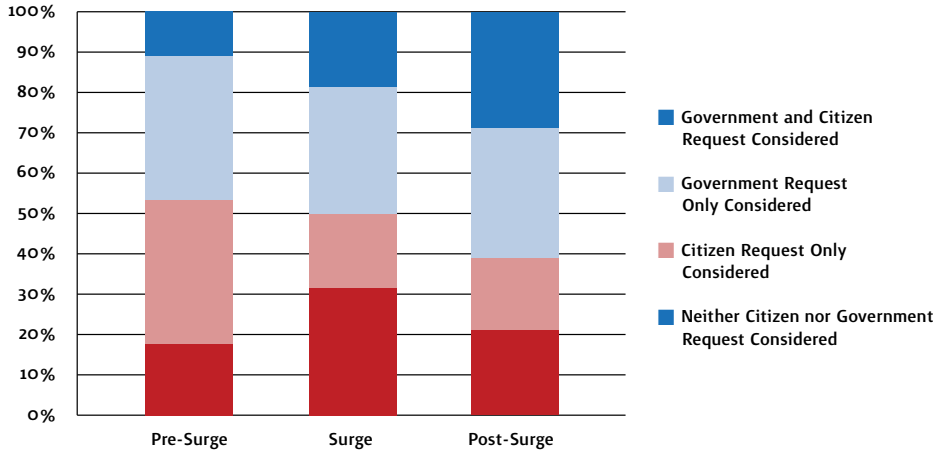
Commanders used CERP in Iraq chiefly to increase employment and improve economic development, reduce violence, improve government capacity, and create goodwill toward coalition forces. Some used it for reconciliation among Iraqi sectarian factions. Many commanders noted that, regardless of project type, their ultimate goal in the use of CERP

was to reduce violence and, hence, casualties. Several commanders cited “building relationships” as another desired outcome, although that was not one of the authorized uses of CERP in the “Money as a Weapons System (MAAWS)” handbook.

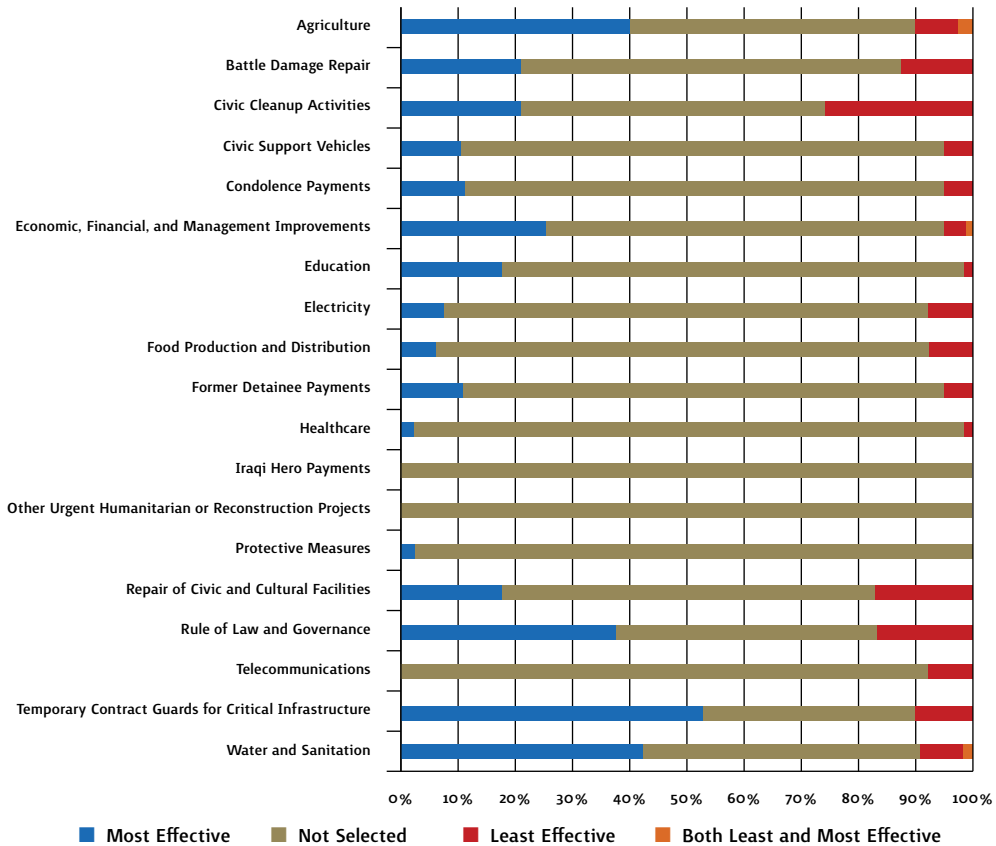
Several survey respondents criticized the poor engagement by CERP planners with the Iraqi government and local populace (see figure 1). One commander noted that “too many unwanted projects were done with no [government of Iraq] buy-in or [operations and maintenance] funding to sustain the project after completion.” Another was similarly critical, observing that “too much money was thrown away on American good ideas, as opposed to Iraqi real needs.” Survey data provided an evidentiary connection between the degree of local involvement and project effectiveness. That is, for 9 of the 19 different CERP project types surveyed, there was a significant relationship between commanders’ use of government or citizen input and the perceived effectiveness of the project.

Commanders generally found CERP to be a useful tool in their arsenal for combating the insurgency, protecting and improving the lives of Iraqis, and fostering good Iraqi governance. Of the 19 categories of CERP projects, the most effective was the over \$300 million used for the Sons of Iraq program (somewhat disingenuously lumped under “temporary contract guards for critical infrastructure” in order to be considered a legitimate use of CERP), followed by water and sanitation and then agricultural projects (see figure 2). Civic cleanup activities were rated the least effective. Most of the categories received mixed responses. For example, while about 22 percent considered “battle damage repair” effective, another 12 percent considered it ineffective.

**Figure 1. Percentage of Commanders Ranking Iraqi Government and/or Iraqi Citizen Requests as Among the Most Important Considerations When Nominating CERP Projects by Time of Deployment**



**Figure 2. Battalion Commanders' Evaluations of CERP Project Effectiveness by Project Type**



### Measuring CERP Effectiveness

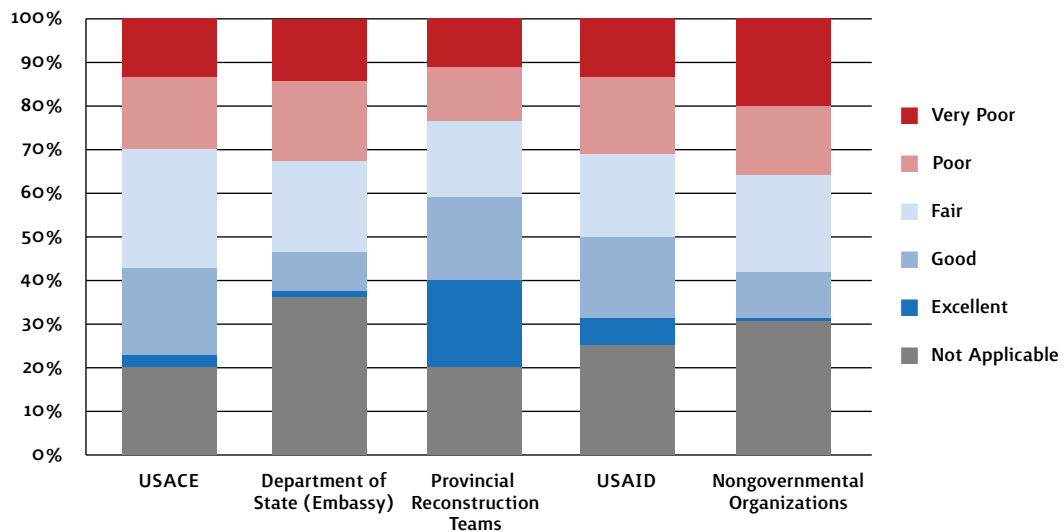
Between 30 and 40 percent of battalion commanders used general levels of violence as the chief metric for a CERP project’s success. For instance, “CERP is a critical tool for commanders on the battlefield . . . [and] imperative for security of U.S. forces” was a typical comment. One-fifth of the commanders considered specific levels of violence against U.S. or coalition forces as the most important indicator of whether a CERP project was successful; about 10 percent specifically considered the level of sectarian violence in their evaluations of project impact.

Not all commanders agreed on the effectiveness of CERP in reducing violence. One commander noted that “[the idea that] Projects/Services alone equates to a reduction of violence and better security is a nonsensical idea.”

### Interagency Coordination

Comments from military and civilian personnel underscored persistent structural impediments to effective coordination between and among agencies. Less than half of the commanders viewed interagency coordination on CERP projects as either good or excellent (see figure 3). About 30 percent of commanders rated their coordination with USACE as poor or very poor, and 32 percent rated coordination with USAID as poor or very poor. One commander’s observation was typical of many responses: “USAID started huge projects and did not supervise the work through to completion. They started projects in areas they were unwilling to go out into and thus did not understand the environment enough to realize they were being taken to the cleaners and in some cases actually increasing the civil violence. Same can be said for USACE.”

**Figure 3. Percentage Distribution of Battalion Commanders’ Assessments of Interagency Coordination Within and Outside the Military**



### Fraud and Corruption

About three-quarters of those surveyed estimated that at least some CERP money was lost to fraud and corruption. Twenty-eight percent said they believed that the amount lost to fraud and corruption equaled less than 10 percent of funds spent; 35 percent estimated that between 10 and 25 percent was lost; 10 percent estimated that between 25 and 50 percent of the money was lost; and 3 percent estimated that more than 50 percent was lost to fraud and corruption. The highest levels of fraud and corruption reported were in Baghdad before and during the surge (see figure 4).

Some commanders perceived corruption as simply the price of doing business in Iraqi culture, while others believed that corruption needed to be fought because it significantly impeded U.S. goals. There was general agreement, however, that corruption in Iraq was endemic. “Corruption is an integral feature of Iraqi society and politics,” wrote one

commander, going on to say that “Battling corruption in the Iraqi system is a Sisyphean task. . . . It was generally understood and accepted as common practice.”

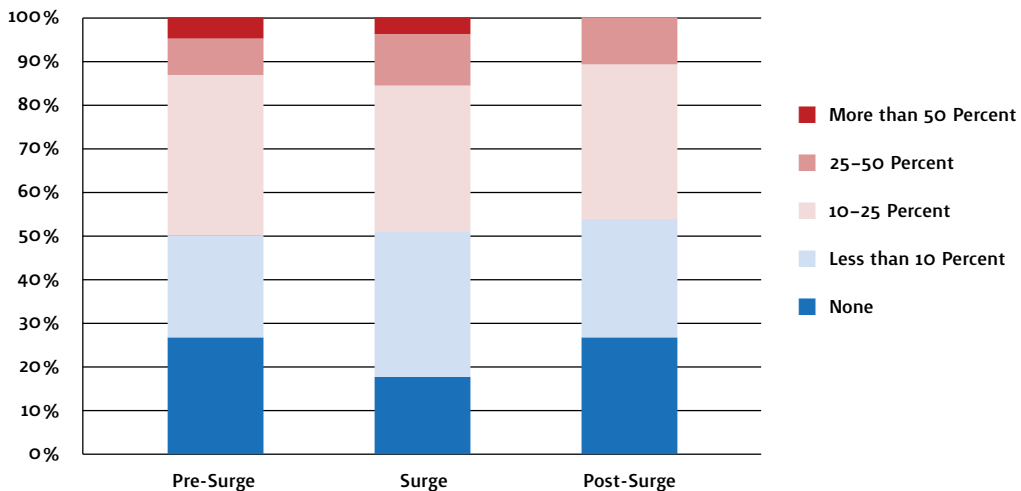
Several respondents believed that CERP project funds had been illegally diverted to benefit insurgents. A commander who served in Diyala Province claimed that “There was substantial evidence that the local authorities (Government/Security and Military Forces) were stealing right off the top. Additionally, [Iraqi] governors were offering insurgents money that was to pay for CERP activities to NOT attack certain CERP-funded programs.”

### Lessons

Based on the broad range of experiences reported by those who responded to the CERP survey, SIGIR identified 10 lessons for consideration.

1. Reduction in violence can be a useful and manageable tool for measuring CERP effectiveness. Reducing violence was the

**Figure 4. Percentage of CERP Funds Lost to Fraud and Corruption by Time of Deployment**





primary motivation behind most CERP projects, with an improvement in security the most frequently used metric for determining success.

2. Insufficient metrics and poor project selection complicate CERP effect on capacity-building. Where the reported CERP project goal was to increase government capacity, respondents provided little evidence of a causal connection between what battalion commanders were trying to accomplish, what they spent money on, and the outcomes achieved. If the intent of a project is something other than force protection, CERP managers should ensure the use of metrics that yield measurable results regarding the project's effect.

*reducing violence was the primary motivation behind most CERP projects, with an improvement in security the most frequently used metric for determining success*

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3. CERP projects can strengthen relationships with the host country. CERP was useful in Iraq in strengthening relationships between U.S. forces and community leaders. Of note, using CERP for relationship-building is not a purpose mentioned in MAAWS.

4. Limiting CERP's overall programmatic scope produces a more manageable program and better outcomes. Projects are more likely to be successful when fewer projects are implemented, projects are smaller in scope, and the projects can be completed quickly. This is consistent with SIGIR's previous recommendations to match the size, scope, and number of projects to a unit's ability to provide adequate oversight.

5. Involving national and local governments in project selection increases project success rates. Iraqi governmental support for

CERP projects increased the likelihood of success. Iraqi government involvement was important not only to ensure that Iraqis would find the project useful but also to improve the chances that the Iraqis would sustain it. Of note, battalion commanders who reported involving local Iraqi government officials in selecting projects found lower levels of corruption.

6. Insufficient interagency integration in planning and execution limits CERP effectiveness. The lack of coordination among reconstruction agencies limited unity of effort, reducing the efficacy of the overall reconstruction plan. Military and civilian leaders commonly criticized their counterparts for insufficient oversight.

7. CERP projects should be executed in secure zones. Poor security conditions limited oversight, management, and monitoring of projects. Although security is a prerequisite to ensuring the completion and continued monitoring of reconstruction projects, many were implemented in areas that were insecure. This needlessly strained manpower and physical resources, thus limiting the degree of project success.

8. Fraud and corruption within CERP limit program effectiveness. Fraud and corruption were endemic in Iraq. Some respondents viewed this reality as simply the cost of doing business, but others saw it as a significant impediment to U.S. objectives. Respondents' descriptions of corruption embraced a broad variety of circumstances, ranging from outright bribery (such as government officials taking money) to more complex fraud (such as contractors colluding to inflate bids). Although not as widespread, fraud on the part of Americans in Iraq was acknowledged by some respondents.

9. Capping the financial size of a CERP project increases the likelihood of its success and can reduce fraud. Focusing efforts on projects that are smaller in size and scope can reduce levels of fraud and corruption.

10. Poorly monitored CERP projects can cause a loss of funds to insurgents. Poorly managed reconstruction funding can also result in funds ending up in the hands of insurgents.

## Conclusion

The SIGIR survey yielded a wide range of opinions on CERP, stretching from enthusiastic support to sharp criticism. One battalion commander stated that “As a method of facilitating non-lethal efforts coupled with lethal targeting of the enemy network, I believe CERP changed the outcome of the battle for Iraq.” At the opposite end of the spectrum, another noted, “Fellow Soldiers lost their lives pursuing ill-conceived and poorly managed schemes to improve the lives of Iraqis. Repeating this model in future wars will stand out as our nation’s biggest failure.”

When asked what metrics the Embassy used to measure effectiveness, a PRT member responded: “This question is laughable. The Embassy had NO idea what we were doing. We might as well have been on the dark side of the moon. This is understandable as they had to feed the Washington beast every day.” An Army battalion commander similarly observed: “Division Headquarters? Didn’t know they ever left the FOBs [forward operating bases]!”

The complete set of survey responses amounts to a rich repository of useful insights about CERP from those who worked closest to the sharp end of stability and reconstruction operations in Iraq. We have posted all of the responses (edited where necessary to

protect respondent anonymity), along with the full text of the special report, on our Web site. Future leaders interested in improving the effectiveness of stabilization and reconstruction missions might be able to distill further lessons from the survey’s results. **PRISM**

## Note

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<sup>1</sup> The full report is available at <[www.sigir.mil/publications/specialReports.html](http://www.sigir.mil/publications/specialReports.html)>.

U.S. Army (Kerry Solan)



Sentry with 3<sup>rd</sup> U.S. Infantry Regiment passes Tomb of the Unknowns at Arlington National Cemetery

# The Human Toll of Reconstruction During Operation *Iraqi Freedom*: Report Overview

BY STUART W. BOWEN, JR., AND CRAIG COLLIER

The Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction (SIGIR) recently released a special report entitled “The Human Toll of Reconstruction or Stabilization Operations during Operation *Iraqi Freedom*.”<sup>1</sup> Through this review, SIGIR sought to determine how many people—U.S. Servicemembers and civilians, third-country nationals, and Iraqis—were killed while participating in activities related to the rebuilding of Iraq’s infrastructure and institutions.

Our report reviewed personnel deaths caused by hostile acts between May 1, 2003 (the declared end of major combat operations in Iraq) and August 31, 2010 (the conclusion of Operation *Iraqi Freedom*). We found that during this period at least 719 people lost their lives while performing stabilization and reconstruction operations (SRO) missions, including 318 U.S. citizens, 111 third-country nationals, 271 Iraqis, and 19 others of unknown nationality. In addition, at least 786 people were injured; there were also at least 198 reported kidnappings of Iraqis and third-country nationals who were performing reconstruction- or stabilization-related missions.

For this study, SIGIR examined all available sources of information on casualties in Iraq, seeking to determine what losses occurred during SRO missions. We looked only at those personnel who died under hostile circumstances, excluding those killed by accident, suicide, homicide, or natural causes.

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The sources reviewed included classified and unclassified information from the Departments of Defense (DOD), State, and Labor; the individual military Services; the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE); the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID); contracting companies working on SRO tasks; and open-source data. We found that no integrated database tracking such casualties existed and that the agencies used differing accounting methods to track losses, which made arriving at a reasonably precise number exceedingly difficult.

For the purposes of the review, we postulated two ways a person could be considered to have been killed while engaged in SRO activities: the context of the casualty was inherently reconstruction (for example, a Civil Affairs soldier or a civilian assigned to a reconstruction contracting office); or the casualty occurred during an SRO-related mission (for example, an infantryman visiting a project or a civilian meeting with a government of Iraq official). Casualty reports from Iraq commonly did not

distinguish cause of death, complicating the assessment process. “Killed while performing a combat mission in Anbar Province,” for example, might be the extent of available information, without further notation as to whether the loss occurred during an SRO-related mission.

We divided SRO-related deaths into three subcategories:

- infrastructure and governance
- police training and development
- national-level security force development.

Infrastructure and governance included all projects addressing the civil reconstruction of Iraq or the development of its civil society. Police training subsumed all activities aimed at building up Iraq’s civil law enforcement capacity. National-level security force training embraced efforts to establish the Iraqi army, national police, and other federal security organizations. Table 1 summarizes the number of SRO-related deaths by these categories.

**Table 1. Deaths Related to Reconstruction in Operation *Iraqi Freedom* (May 1, 2003–August 31, 2010)**

	<b>Infrastructure and Governance</b>	<b>Police Training and Development</b>	<b>National-level Security Force Training</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>U.S. Military</b>	119	97	48	264
<b>U.S. Civilians</b>	35	16	3	54
<b>Third-country Nationals</b>	107	4		111
<b>Iraqis</b>	240	22	9	271
<b>Unknown</b>	12	6	1	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>513</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>719</b>

As table 1 indicates, most of those killed on SRO missions were working to rebuild Iraq's infrastructure and government institutions (71 percent). Another 145 (20 percent) died while training the Iraqi police, with 61 (8 percent) killed working to develop the Iraqi Security Forces.

Given the evident database weaknesses regarding casualty tracking in Iraq, the numbers in table 1 amount to what should be viewed as the minimum level of losses incurred during SRO missions. As noted, records detailing military and civilian casualties frequently lacked sufficient information regarding the nature of the mission at the time of death, and open-source information proved only occasionally helpful as a gap-filler. In addition, USACE could only provide detailed data from May 2006 to August 2008 for casualties suffered by contractors working on USACE-supervised projects.

Due to these informational weaknesses, we were unable to identify the casualty context for just over 1,000 Servicemembers. Death records for third-country nationals and Iraqis were even weaker. The limits imposed by these accounting shortfalls prevented us from concluding, with any certainty, exactly how many people died while engaged in the reconstruction and stabilization of Iraq; the actual number is most certainly higher than the 719 identified.

### **Military Casualties**

Over 20 percent of the 4,409 U.S. military casualties in Iraq were nonhostile deaths (see table 2).<sup>2</sup> Of the 3,479 hostile deaths, 3,376 were killed after major combat operations ended on May 1, 2003. SIGIR could only confirm the cause of death for 2,359 of the hostile deaths (70 percent). Of this complement, we

identified 264 persons who were killed while performing a stabilization or reconstruction mission (11 percent).

Not surprisingly, Army personnel accounted for most (2,535) of the hostile deaths that occurred during the time period we examined. Marines accounted for 851 deaths. We determined the missions for 1,840 of the Army casualties (74 percent) and 436 of the Marine casualties (55 percent), finding that 234 Army personnel (13 percent) and 21 Marines (5 percent) were killed while performing SRO-related activities. Far fewer Navy and Air Force personnel were involved in Iraq reconstruction programs and projects; four Sailors and five Airmen lost their lives while on SRO-related missions. Table 3 summarizes these findings.

### **Civilian Casualties**

At least 455 civilians—including U.S. citizens, third-country nationals, and Iraqis—were killed by hostile acts while working on SRO programs or projects in Iraq. SIGIR identified 321 American civilians who died in Iraq of all causes. We could identify the missions at the time of death for 220 of them. Table 4 shows that 54 of the 220 American civilians killed in Iraq lost their lives while performing SRO-related missions (25 percent). The majority of U.S. civilians killed in Iraq while on reconstruction missions were contractors, most of whom were working in the infrastructure and governance areas (25). Another 16 civilians were killed while training the Iraqi police, and 3 were killed while training Iraqi national-level security forces.

Through information provided by USAID, USACE, the Army, previous SIGIR inspections, and open sources, SIGIR identified at least 111 third-country nationals, 271 Iraqis, and



**Table 2. Total U.S. Military Casualties in Operation *Iraqi Freedom* (May 1, 2003–August 31, 2010)**

Casualty Categories	Army	Navy <sup>a</sup>	Marines	Air Force	Total
Killed in Action	1,918	62	664	29	2,673
Died of Wounds <sup>b</sup>	610	1	187		798
Died While Missing in Action	3				3
Died While Captured or Detained	4	1			5
<b>Total Hostile Deaths</b>	<b>2,535</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>851</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>3,479</b>
Accident	413	19	121	13	566
Illness	72	9	6	5	92
Homicide	23	4	7	2	36
Self-inflicted	180	4	37	2	223
Undetermined	9	2			11
Pending <sup>c</sup>	1	1			2
<b>Total Non-hostile Deaths</b>	<b>698</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>930</b>
<b>Total Deaths</b>	<b>3,233</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>1,022</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>4,409</b>

<sup>a</sup> Navy totals include Coast Guard.

<sup>b</sup> Includes died of wounds where wounding occurred in theater and death occurred elsewhere.

<sup>c</sup> Pending means final category to be determined at a later date.

**Table 3. U.S. Military Casualties Related to Reconstruction or Stabilization in Operation *Iraqi Freedom* (May 1, 2003–August 31, 2010)**

	Infrastructure and Governance	Police Training and Development	National-Level Security Force Training	Total
Army	113	87	34	234
USMC	2	10	9	21
Navy	4			4
Air Force			5	5
<b>Total DOD Uniformed Killed in Action</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>264</b>

**Table 4. U.S. Civilian Deaths Related to Reconstruction in Operation *Iraqi Freedom* (May 1, 2003–August 31, 2010)**

	Infrastructure and Governance	Police Training and Development	National-Level Security Force Training	Total
<b>DOD</b>	1			1
<b>State Department*</b>	6			6
<b>United Nations</b>	2			2
<b>SIGIR</b>	1			1
<b>USAID</b>				0
<b>Contractors</b>	25	16	3	44
<b>Total U.S. Citizens</b>	35	16	3	54

\* Includes two civilians who were working for the Coalition Provisional Authority.

19 others (whose nationality was unknown) who were killed while working on SRO-related missions in Iraq. Comprehensive data on Iraqi SRO-related deaths were impossible to obtain, but of those we could identify, many were working as interpreters for U.S.-managed projects. We believe that there were significantly more Iraqi SRO-related casualties than the available data indicate.

### Lessons and Opportunities for Future Study

Our human toll report offers two lessons for consideration:

- Planners should anticipate that SRO missions conducted in a combat zone will be inherently dangerous to everyone involved—American, foreign, or host nation, military or civilian—and should take steps to mitigate the risk.
- The U.S. Government’s poor data management systems obscured the true human

cost of SRO efforts in Iraq; an integrated system for tracking such casualties should be developed.

The casualty data we collected point to several areas for possible future study:

**Police Trainer Casualties.** The number of those killed training the Iraqi police was more than twice the number killed while training Iraqi national-level security forces (145 vs. 61). The high rate of loss in police training rather than national-level security force training raises a number of questions. Were there more police trainers than other, national-level transition teams? Were police transition team tactics, techniques, and procedures different from other military transition teams that had similar missions? Were treacherous Iraqi police complicit in attacks on police transition teams, as has been suggested in some open-source articles and appears to be happening with some regularity in Afghanistan? Did the location of many police transition teams in

Baghdad and their proximity to the most lethal of improvised explosive devices—explosively formed projectiles—account for the higher casualty rate? Explaining the high number of hostile deaths for police trainers and the disparity in casualties between the two transition team groups is worthy of more extensive review, especially for military police leaders who would most likely have this mission in any future SRO.

**Army vs. Marine Corps Reconstruction Casualty Rates.** The percentage of Army personnel killed while performing SRO missions (13 percent) was more than twice that of the Marines (5 percent). This discrepancy broaches several questions: Were the Marines more effective at managing security in the hostile SRO setting than their Army counterparts? Or (perhaps more likely) were Army units simply engaged in more SRO missions? Was the smaller percentage of Marine casualties attributable to their operating in a somewhat more permissive environment in Anbar Province before their Army counterparts elsewhere in Iraq? Or was the differential attributable to database issues?

**Reconstruction Lives Saved vs. Lives Lost.** U.S. counterinsurgency (COIN) doctrine embraces the assumption that SRO efforts ultimately reduce violence. In Iraq, it was believed that angry local citizens took up arms against both the coalition and the nascent government of Iraq because of frustration with inadequate essential services. According to COIN theory, improving these services would remove a key source of conflict, reduce violence, win the restive citizenry's "hearts and minds," and weaken the insurgency. COIN doctrine also anticipated that putting local nationals to work would cut violence by providing a source of income through SRO projects, which would

make employed Iraqis less vulnerable to insurgent recruitment.

While this report does not address the effect of varying COIN practices, it does confirm the palpable and axiomatic fact that SRO efforts performed in a nonpermissive environment are highly dangerous for all involved. Moreover, we found that some of those local Iraqis we hoped to lure away from the insurgency's recruiting efforts through SRO projects became themselves targets of the insurgents. This raises an important issue: whether some reconstruction and stabilization efforts aimed at reducing violence actually contributed to a temporary up-tick in hostile activity. If they did, how can this unwelcome effect be ameliorated in future SROs?

Out of the last decade of SRO experiences, the Department of Defense has formally embraced stability operations as "a core U.S. military mission that the Department of Defense shall be prepared to conduct with proficiency equivalent to combat operations."<sup>3</sup> Our experience in Iraq proved that stability operations conducted in a nonpermissive environment entail significant risk. How to mitigate that risk is a crucial task future leaders must tackle before the next SRO mission arrives. **PRISM**

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> The full report is available at <[www.sigir.mil/files/lessonslearned/SpecialReport2.pdf](http://www.sigir.mil/files/lessonslearned/SpecialReport2.pdf)>.

<sup>2</sup> Casualty information from Operation *Iraqi Freedom* is available at <[www.dmdc.osd.mil/dcas/pages/casualties\\_oif.xhtml](http://www.dmdc.osd.mil/dcas/pages/casualties_oif.xhtml)>.

<sup>3</sup> Department of Defense Instruction Number 3000.05, "Stability Operations," September 16, 2009, 2, available at <[www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/corres/pdf/300005p.pdf](http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/corres/pdf/300005p.pdf)>.

# An Interview with Richard N. Haass



*Should the Bush administration have been better prepared for the national security threats that were crystallized in the attacks of 9/11?*

**Richard Haass:** Armchair quarterbacks or Monday morning quarterbacks might say so. It's fair to say that mainstream national security thinking at that time did not place that high of a priority on terrorism. It wasn't that terrorism was inconceivable, but the scale of it was seen as modest, so people who were working on these issues were not as focused on it as they ought to have been. It took 9/11 to make clear that the nature of the challenge had changed. Hence the comprehensive response from the Intelligence Community, Homeland Security, [Department of] Defense, you name it. It wasn't just the administration—most of the people working in foreign policy or national security did not approach terrorism or counterterrorism pre-9/11 with anything like the intensity that became the new normal after 9/11. Any criticism you would lodge with the Bush administration, you would have lodged with any other administration, and indeed you probably could have lodged with the field at large.

*Was the Global War on Terror, in your opinion, an effective and appropriate response to the challenge?*

**Haass:** I never much liked the wording "Global War on Terror." A "war" suggested too many things that were unhelpful. First of all, it suggested that the main instruments were military. Not

*Richard N. Haass is President of the Council on Foreign Relations. His forthcoming book, Foreign Policy Begins at Home: The Case for Putting America's House in Order, will be published by Basic Books in spring 2013.*

necessarily. Intelligence is at least as important, as are politics, economics, and other tools. Second of all, war connotes concepts of battlefields. With terrorism, anything and everything could be a battlefield. Also, by definition, we were all combatants. You can't choose just to enlist in the War on Terror or choose to opt out. There's no Canada to go to. I never found the image or the jargon—of Global War on Terror, GWOT—helpful, and to some extent it was unhelpful because of the mindset it created.

*Was there another construct that could have been used instead that would have been better?*

**Haass:** “Campaign, struggle”—words that suggested something larger than the military and traditional battlefield soldiers. I wouldn't have used anything that was narrowly military. I'd have to think about what produced an acronym or something like that. The main thing is that I would have demilitarized, if you will, the framing of the issue.

*But initially, wasn't the U.S. response primarily military?*

**Haass:** Yes and no. The initial effort in Afghanistan, for example, actually had a very large Central Intelligence Agency [CIA] component. What was interesting was how much of the operation was handled by CIA people, in some ways leveraging their relationship with Afghans much more than any large American military footprint. Second of all, the global response was anything but military. It was the big ramping up of intelligence. It was the creation of a much more resilient society. It was efforts to go after terrorist funding. So

again, most of the reactions beyond the narrow battlefield of Afghanistan were actually nonmilitary.

*You've written in your book **War of Necessity, War of Choice: A Memoir of Two Iraq Wars** that there is a distinction between the war in Afghanistan and the war in Iraq. Do you consider that the war in Iraq was a diversion from the war of necessity in Afghanistan?*

**Haass:** Two things. I think more has been made of that than bears scrutiny. One of the criticisms of the Iraq War by those who were against it was that the United States took its eye off the ball. The more I looked at it, I'm not sure if that was true. Yes, some forces were taken out of Afghanistan for Iraq, but just as many forces were inserted into Afghanistan. Second, while a few people in the administration mentioned Iraq in September, October, November, and December 2001, people were not for the most part talking about Iraq. People were focused on Afghanistan. The reasons we didn't do better in Afghanistan were not because of Iraq. Whatever tactical mistakes we made in Tora Bora were not because we were somehow husbanding these forces for Iraq. They were simply tactical mistakes about expecting too much of our “Afghan partners.” I also think that the inclination of the Bush administration not to do more in Afghanistan in 2002 had less to do with Iraq and more to a kind of discomfort if not allergy to doing nation-building in a place like Afghanistan. There was a real sense by Secretary [of Defense Donald] Rumsfeld and others, such as Vice President [Richard] Cheney, that this was not a place to get ambitious. So I actually think if Iraq didn't exist, there was a pretty

powerful argument within the administration that Afghanistan was not a place where a massive investment would likely pay off, which is ironic given that the United States ultimately came to make a massive investment in Afghanistan. In a funny sort of way, some of the skeptics early on will ultimately have their skepticism largely proven right.

*The Bush campaign was explicitly opposed to state-building, and yet, after 9/11, the Bush administration engaged in the biggest state-building project since Vietnam. What role should state-building, stabilization, and reconstruction play in U.S. national security policy?*

**Haass:** State-building plays an inevitable role. In a second, I'll condition my answer. We can't do everything ourselves. We need partners. In many cases, the partners may be willing but aren't able; that's where state-building obviously plays a role. We can't be everywhere, particularly if your struggle is against terrorism, where any place is a potential source of a problem. You need host governments that are willing and able to exercise and meet their sovereign responsibilities. In that sense, state-building gives us partners and makes them less vulnerable. So in that sense, and given the inherent limits of how many places we can do things on scale, state-building makes more than a little sense. Where I think state-building gets you in trouble is in times where we don't look enough at willingness as opposed to capability. And state-building to what? What is the definition of *adequacy*? What is the division of labor? What is it we're asking our partner to do as opposed to what we ourselves are prepared to do? I actually think that over the last decade, we have shifted that balance, and we

continue to do elements of state-building. But we've dialed down the expectation on what they will do, and we've dialed up our role from zero, but we've also dialed down our role from the kind of Iraq or Afghanistan large template. So I actually think state-building makes sense, but only if you've got a partner that's willing, if you're quite modest in what you are trying to build them toward, and you're quite modest in what you're prepared to do. We've gotten into trouble when we have defined our goals as too high at what they need to do and too high for what we're prepared to do.

*There was a lot of talk over the last decade of the need for an expanded civilian capacity by the U.S. Government to take over inherently civilian roles such as town planners (in expeditionary operations). There was discussion of a civilian reserve corps, a civilian response corps. Do you think that that is an idea past its prime, or do we still need that kind of capacity?*

**Haass:** We made a mistake by assigning way too much to the State Department. It was a real misunderstanding of the culture of the diplomatic corps to ask it to play that kind of boots on the ground, local role. That's not what people join the Foreign Service to do. It's not by and large what they are inclined to do or good at or trained to do or experienced at doing. To think that very quickly you could put some of these people in these remote places—without, by the way, adequate security (because all of this depends on having security)—just seemed seriously flawed, and it's not surprising that it's come to naught. A lot of this has to be scaled back. Almost emblematic of that is the Iraq presence. You look at the scale of the Embassy, you look at



the thinking of the civilian presence. No way that's going to happen. We're not welcome in those numbers. We don't have the manpower. We don't have the security. We need some of this function, but it ought to be far more modest, and we ought not to look in the first instance to the Foreign Service to do it. I was one of the advocates of a civilian reserve, and it was very much modeled on the military Reserve. You would have people in our civilian society who were known to have certain capabilities—police officers, firefighters, engineers, language teachers, and people with local languages—who could make societies work. They, like the military, would train up for a couple of months at the outset and then have refreshers maybe a weekend every month, i.e., whatever you needed to develop and to maintain skill levels. These would be people who would then be prepared in the right conditions to go overseas. I would have created a special corps to do that, and I would not have asked the Foreign Service to do it. I would have had a small standing capability, whether located at State or Defense, or you stand up some new small agency that would have that express function. I still think that makes sense even if the overall numbers are probably less or more modest than people were thinking.

*Stuart Bowen, the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, has been advocating for and has written in this journal in favor of an independent agency for reconstruction and stabilization.*

**Haass:** I'm not familiar with that, but that sort of thing makes more than a little sense to me. I also think that there's a lesson in the State Department experience. It's something that I remember learning and then teaching at the

Kennedy School: Whenever you ask an organization to take on a new task, you should be very wary about asking it to take on a task that's more than one step removed from its existing task. You really ought to build on existing culture, existing standard operating procedures, and then you can ask it to do it. What people were asking the Foreign Service to do was multiple steps removed from its culture. That ought to have raised a red flag.

*In November 2005, the Department of Defense issued Directive 3000.05 ["Military Support for Stability, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction (SSTR) Operations"]. It specifically stated that while the military would prefer for civilian agencies to do all these jobs, if they failed to step up to the plate, the military would do it and in fact, in Iraq, they did. Is the military a viable place to retain those kinds of capabilities?*

**Haass:** The short answer is it's a possibility, but at a certain cost. We've only got a military of a certain size, and there are other things that only the military can do, that they are uniquely equipped literally and figuratively to do. You have to ask yourself, do you want them then to take on these other tasks? I also think there's a certain symbolic issue there. At times we want to have a transition, and there's something to be said that we're now civilianizing the American presence. That's another argument for not having the military do this. The military has wars to fight. There are things they can uniquely do. One of the reasons the Bush administration early on was against state-building was because so much of state-building was done by people trained for the military, trained to fight wars, and then we ask them to do a civilian function. If you're

asking people to do predominantly civilian functions, then you probably want to have predominantly civilians doing them.

*The 2002 National Security Strategy of the United States of America made a significant point when it stated that we have as much to fear from weak and failing states in terms of threats to national security as we do from peer adversaries. Do you agree with that assessment?*

**Haass:** I believe that that is one of the characteristics of this world. So much of 20<sup>th</sup>-century history was about powerful states, or to use Henry Kissinger's language, "revolutionary states." They wanted to overturn the international system of the day, whether it was Germany at two points in the 20<sup>th</sup> century or the Soviet Union later on. At the moment I don't see any country out there with a global reach that has those kinds of ambitions. I'm not saying it couldn't happen, but at the moment, there's no 21<sup>st</sup>-century equivalent of a revolutionary Germany or Soviet Union. I'm much more concerned about weak states. I'm also concerned about some strong, medium-size states—North Korea and Iran. They can pose real threats to regional borders with global repercussions. Weak states are what people ought to be concerned about because in a global world, what happens within weak states can have global consequences, whether it is the use of their territory for terrorism or the transit of certain types of materials, be it drugs or nuclear weaponry or disease. Pandemic disease could very well come out of a weak state that doesn't have monitoring or related types of capabilities. Then there is piracy. These are legitimate threats. If states are weak and the challenges sufficient, they can get hijacked.

Lebanon to some extent is a classic weak state that has been taken over by a nonstate actor called Hizballah. Weak states are a real concern in the case of terrorism with a global reach.

*Going back to our discussion of Iraq and Afghanistan, what is your diagnosis of the problems in the interagency process that resulted in so many controversies within the U.S. Government during operations in Iraq?*

**Haass:** The biggest problem was that early on the Defense Department was given the responsibility to oversee the aftermath, and the center, the National Security Council, didn't have proper oversight. For many people in the Pentagon, their approach to the aftermath was driven by assumptions. Well, it turned out that none of those assumptions was correct about how taxing it would be, the kinds of capabilities and tactics that would be required, and the nature of Iraqi society. The problem was to some extent corrected when the White House regained control over policymaking. But up to then, there was a lack of central oversight and the organization that was given responsibility did not go about it in a competent way.

*Now that we're about to leave Afghanistan and many people have already forgotten we were ever in Iraq, what's your assessment of the impact on America's global stature in terms of our ability to influence global outcomes of our engagements in Iraq and Afghanistan?*

**Haass:** Actually, not that great. There is a pattern among people in this field to exaggerate the lasting repercussions of either successes or failures, and it gets to the heart, to some extent, of the credibility argument. You look

at Vietnam, and it was in many ways a defeat, but within a generation the U.S. position in Asia was extraordinarily strong. The United States was the most influential country in the region, still had a tremendous presence in the Pacific, still had a presence on the Asian mainland in Korea. The failure in Vietnam did not set off this enormous geopolitical wave. When it comes to Iraq and Afghanistan, however the United States is perceived, I don't think people around the world, when they get up in the morning and go to their desks or offices in whatever foreign ministry or presidential office, are looking at the United States through the prism of Iraq and Afghanistan. I think they're looking at us through the prism of our economy, political process, or more recent events. They want to see what we are or are not doing about this or that situation in the Arab world or North Korea. In terms of lasting geopolitical consequences, they (Iraq and Afghanistan) drained our treasury to some extent, they drained our military to some extent, and they distracted us. They distorted American national security policy for a decade by placing such a large emphasis on the greater Middle East. They've detracted to some extent from a perception of competence. I'm not saying there's no impact, but I don't see anything happening that couldn't be recouped very quickly.

*Would you include in that our reputation within the Arab Muslim world, specifically in respect to our values—democracy, human rights, those sorts of things?*

**Haass:** Within the Arab Muslim world, there are so many other things that are affecting the way the United States is perceived. For example, how the United States acted in Egypt and Libya, and what we are or are not doing in

Syria or Iran. If you go to Bahrain, they want to know what we're doing about the internal situation in Bahrain. For others it might be the Palestinian issue. All I'm saying is that there are any number of issues out there, and I don't think that somehow these concerns you mention are necessarily dominant in the Muslim world. In Pakistan, these are not the dominant concerns. It's much more what the United States is doing or not doing in Pakistan. Politics is local, and again there is a tendency among analysts to exaggerate the precedential impact of what it is we do and don't do. To me it's slightly reassuring because it means two things. One, even when we make mistakes, we can bounce back from them. Second, we don't have to pour good money after bad simply because people are worried that if we somehow don't see something through as much as some want, that we create a terrible precedent. I'm not saying there's no truth to that argument, but it tends to be exaggerated in that the United States will always have opportunities to act if it wants. Even if it chooses to put a limit on its actions in place A, the United States has opportunities to change perceptions of the United States in places B, C, and D very quickly.

*Do you think that our experience in Iraq and Afghanistan led to a better national integration of the various elements of national power in the Arab Spring, say, for example, in our reaction to Egypt?*

**Haass:** I don't see that as really connected. Iraq and Afghanistan have had some very positive implications for how we think about our engagement militarily in these kinds of situations. As institutions, the military, and the U.S. Army in particular, are great learners. I've always been impressed by that. They are

as systematic at learning as any organizations in American society—very professional, really admirable. The Army and military in general are admirable in the way they train people beforehand and throughout their careers. They learn from successes and failures alike. The civilian sector, both the nonprofit and for-profit sectors, could learn an extraordinary amount from the way the military deals with its people and deals with experience. They've learned a lot of lessons, but I don't think we've been very good at integrating the civilian and military elements of American capability.

The Arab Spring is not a phrase I like. I never use it because it's certainly not lasting for 3 months and it's not obvious to me that it's going to be positive. I tend to be someone who enjoys spring, and I don't think that I'll necessarily enjoy what comes to pass. I prefer words like "upheavals" or "intifada." It's a very different set of diplomatic calculations and it's more the classic set of tensions between often specific interests—economic, security, what have you—associated with regimes that are somewhat authoritarian. They might be to some degree reformist, but they are also somewhat authoritarian and they're challenged from people below. We're not always sure what the agendas are of the people who are challenging them, and we're also not always sure who will necessarily prevail. It is a classic faultline in foreign policy: to what extent does one think about the behavior of countries as opposed to their nature. It's an extraordinarily difficult tactical situation, as we saw in Egypt or as we're seeing in Bahrain, which is how you play your hand when you've got these various moving parts. There's a price to be paid from supporting the governments. There's a price to be paid for moving away from them. I found this difficult strategically and tactically,

but they're different situations than the sort of thing we had in Iraq or Afghanistan.

*How do you think we should be playing it in Syria right now?*

**Haass:** The United States has clear humanitarian interests in stopping the fighting and getting rid of this government, and we have clear strategic interests given its connections with Iran. Strategic and humanitarian interests are often in some kind of competition. Well, here they're actually aligned very closely. On both grounds you'd love to see this regime gone. If there ever was a moment for a diplomatic settlement, it's over, if by that you mean the regime can remain and by-gones will be by-gones. Way too much blood has been spilled. This regime has lost its legitimacy. It's for that reason that I think the diplomatic mission conducted by the United Nations was flawed. The regime needs to go. I don't know how much of it needs to go. Now you can no longer have an Alawite-run Syria. Those days are over. The moment may have existed early on where if there had been a decapitation, a regime change at the top, large elements of a reformist successor regime could have survived, but I think that's over.

Now the political future of Syria is much more wide open and will hopefully be determined by some kind of widespread political participation, so there would be tolerance, a safe place for minorities, and there would not be the politics of vengeance and retribution. One of the reasons that change hasn't happened is that the Alawites aren't persuaded of it. One of the failures so far is that the opposition has not put forward a credible agenda that reassures the Alawites of Syria that they are not going to suffer, to put it bluntly, the same fate

as the Sunnis in Iraq. A minority that had the upper hand is not suddenly going to fall, given their fear not just of becoming disenfranchised but of being physically attacked, losing their homes or their lives, which is what happened to many Sunnis in Iraq. I would put as much emphasis as I could on creating an opposition that would send a credible political message to the effect that there's a place in Syria for all Syrians, and that except for a very narrow layer, there would not be war crimes charges. I would put a great emphasis on that political message. I want to peel away most of the regime supporters, Alawite as well as Sunni, who are behind this regime. I want to up the sanctions. I want to send positive messages of political reassurance; these need to come from the Syrian opposition. I want there to be war crimes threats lodged against people who are helping Bashar al-Asad in a significant way. I want these people to know that they have got to choose and that they have got to move away from him, or they will end up dead or on trial and in prison.

I would be helping the opposition, and I would consider specific, limited transfers of anti-air or anti-armor weapons to select individuals or groups we had confidence in, but all things being equal, arms do not appear to be what the opposition lacks most. First of all, I'm not sure having an all-out civil war will bring forth the kind of opposition we want. I would look for ways through covert operations or military operations to stop arms from reaching the government. I would try everything to prevent that. It would be another sanction, and I'd look for a way to physically enforce it. I would basically do just about everything I could both to create a positive opposition and to weaken and isolate the government. This regime's days are numbered. I don't believe we will want or need to mount

a "Libya operation," which would be problematic given their ability to resist as well as questions of consolidation in the aftermath. I actually think there's a pretty good chance that this will unravel pretty quickly from within if we set up the right context.

*Arms embargo, enhanced sanctions, war crimes at the top layer, no-fly zones, sanctuaries. This reminds me of post-Desert Storm, our approach to Iraq. How would you do it differently from what we did in the 90s in Iraq?*

**Haass:** But Iraq was not at that point; the big emphasis there was not on regime change. The 90s in Iraq were really about containment—to keep Saddam Hussein in his box. It actually succeeded fairly well. In Syria, there will have to be a regime change. I would pointedly go after that.

*Because the regime in Syria today is fundamentally worse than the Saddam regime was in the 90s or . . . ?*

**Haass:** They're both awful in their own way. Ideally, Saddam would have gone sooner. There was a strategic assumption that he would fall in the aftermath of *Desert Storm*, but he survived. But we never gave up on regime change there; as you know, there were various efforts to do so. Regime change was always the most desirable policy, but the fallback was at least containment. The Syrian situation is unsustainable, and we need to look harder at what more we can do to bring about change.

*Going back to process, over the last decade, the homage paid to the whole-of-government approach, the comprehensive*

*approach, the 3Ds, has been virtually religious in tone. In your time in government and since you left government, have you seen any improvements in the way that the government's defense, diplomacy, and development communities work together?*

**Haass:** No.

*Is this due to that perennial problem, parochialism?*

**Haass:** It's hard to generalize. A lot depends on the specific incidents. I don't think it's the kind of thing that lends itself to systemic change. By that I mean—and this administration ended up spending a lot of time on it—there is no bureaucratic change or reform that can solve this problem. You have to bring together the right people, the right policy on individual issues. For example, years ago in the Reagan administration, people from various agencies dealt very effectively with political change in the Philippines. We've had successes in the U.S. Government. I tend not to be the reorganizational type; I don't have that bias. It means having an interagency process that works with talented people. Things worked, for example, under George H.W. Bush, when Brent Scowcroft was National Security Advisor. Certain things worked pretty well, not everything, but certain things worked pretty well without systemic reorganization. There is an American bias toward systemic organization that will "solve the problems." That's an American cultural bias. Whether it's homeland security or intelligence, we tend to move a lot of boxes around and create new layers. I'm not sure that's the way to go about these things. A lot of it is cultural. The fact that data or intelligence

are not always shared cannot necessarily be solved organizationally. It might have to be solved culturally. It might take certain individuals and certain leadership. I'm just skeptical every time I hear about organizational or institutional approaches or fixes. It tends to be too top-down.

*What is your assessment of the Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review?*

**Haass:** I am frankly skeptical that it will lead to significant changes.

*In the recently released Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Defense, there's an indication of a strategic pivot toward Asia and the Pacific. Do you think that is a wise move?*

**Haass:** I'm not wild about the word "pivot." It's too sharp. I think two things. The United States has been overly invested in the greater Middle East, and I do think it has been strategically distorting. The investments both in Iraq and in Afghanistan have been way too big, and our interests did not warrant it. The opportunities there, the dangers there, didn't warrant it. I'm glad to see a slight dialing down or considerable dialing down of the American military presence in the greater Middle East. We'll see what happens with Iran. That could be a temporary exception. All things being equal, the era of a large American footprint in the greater Middle East is over and should be over.

The idea that there will be some dialing up of some U.S. presence in the Asia-Pacific, particularly air and naval, is healthy. It's an enormous theater, and it's the part of the



world where a lot more 21<sup>st</sup>-century history is going to be written. It is the Asia-Pacific that brings together the great powers of this era and vital U.S. interests. This is not reactive; in some way this is more preventive. We ought to be there. I welcome that. I welcome a slight shift in investment toward the Air Force and Navy. The end strength of the Army and Marines will probably go back somewhere close to where they were 10 years ago. We are going to move to a “lighter footprint” in dealing with terrorism and state-building.

The one large exception in the Asia-Pacific is North Korea. That’s one area where I can imagine a large land war. Needless to say, I hope it never happens, but it’s obviously conceivable. So we need to think about it in that context. All things being equal, do I think a slight “rebalancing”—a word I prefer rather than pivot—away from the Middle East toward the Asia-Pacific is healthy? Yes. We have been rebalancing away from Europe for 20-odd years. We probably have one-quarter the American presence we had 25 years ago. That makes sense. We have virtually no fixed presence in Africa and Latin America. That makes sense.

This is a world of great dynamism, where we don’t have any set or predictable foe as we did during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In a funny sort of way, we ought to go back to lots of mobility, perhaps some kind of CONUS [contiguous or continental United States]–based pool of forces that could be dispatched to different places and trained. When the rapid deployment force was first developed, I was in the Pentagon. This is the late 70s, circa 1979–1980. It was a CONUS-based force and it had a global mission. Only when the greater Middle East became this new theater of great concern did the rapid deployment force essentially

go from being a global force to essentially a regional force, which ultimately morphed into U.S. Central Command. I think the time has come to some extent to undo some of that and to make it more what it was, more of a global contingency reserve. We have more air and naval presence in Asia, but essentially if we are concerned about global efforts against terrorism, we ought to be highly flexible. We’re not quite sure what the next scenario is going to look like. In some ways, we need to add flexibility into our ability to deploy.

*So in the current debate between those who advocate for retaining this terrorism-counterterrorism expeditionary capacity and those who argue for antiaccess/area denial, you would say you can’t choose one or the other?*

**Haass:** They’re both right. If we were to choose, we would almost certainly be wrong. History suggests you never want to overload your eggs in a basket, particularly now when there’s so much fluidity in international relations. There’s so much fluidity in history. None of us can sit here and say this is exactly the trajectory of Russia or China or India or Europe or Japan, or whether there will be regime change in Iran or Korea in 5 or 10 years. None of us knows the answers to these questions. We need to build into our forces and into our national security policy in general tremendous adaptability. This is not unlike investment. You wouldn’t want to have a portfolio of all equities or all bonds or all anything else. You want to protect yourself against all sorts of unknowns and uncertainties. The same thing applies to strategy. This is one of the most fluid moments in international relations, so we need to have

tremendous flexibility for strategic reasons and given technological innovation. This is also not a time that you want to make decades-long investments or bets because something may come along in 2 or 3 years that may be really transformative. You want to build in flexibility at this moment in history.

*Can you comment on the process for formulating U.S. national security strategy?*

*Haass:* The government has its own formal process because of Goldwater-Nichols [Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986], and that's of some limited utility. But by and large, governments aren't good, or groups aren't good, at "big think." That's actually a role for outsiders to government. That's what think tanks, people who think strategically, ought to be doing. It's what people do in war colleges. It's what people do on planning staffs. The idea that an interagency committee is going to think of a grand strategy—no, that's not going to happen. Containment didn't come out of a committee. Containment came out of an individual, an extraordinarily talented individual. Ultimately, ideas have to be vetted by governments and internalized by governments. Policies have to be designed and then implemented by governments. But ideas don't by and large come *out* of governments. Ideas come *to* governments. That is, from individuals. It could be an individual in government, but more likely an individual outside of government. That's a much more realistic creative process. [PRISM](#)

# Book Reviews

## ***Advancing the Rule of Law Abroad: Next Generation Reform***

By Rachel Kleinfeld  
Carnegie Endowment for International Peace,  
2012  
281 pp., \$49.95  
ISBN: 978-0-87003-349-0

REVIEWED BY MICHELLE HUGHES

I was given a copy of Rachel Kleinfeld's *Advancing the Rule of Law Abroad: Next Generation Reform* just as I was in the process of trying to codify my own lessons from more than three decades of working in and around conflict countries to restore and strengthen rule of law. Since 9/11, "rule of law" has had a flavor-of-the-month feel to it, and a number of authors have weighed in on the subject. As a practitioner, however, I have found that while most of the current thinking is helpful for advancing academic dialogue and debate, very little is of practical use on the ground.

To my surprise, Kleinfeld's book turned out to be an exception. She has presented a solidly researched, common-sense analysis

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that does not gloss over the complexity of her subject. Her underlying thesis—that power structures and not institutions are the most crucial objects of change—parallels my own experience in the field. She studies the impact of what she refers to as "first-generation" reform efforts and offers the reader a "second-generation" approach for planning and implementing sustainable programs and activities that are contextually and culturally appropriate and genuinely make sense. Her book should be required reading for anyone who contemplates reforming the rule of law abroad.

In 2010, I was asked by the commander of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Training Mission–Afghanistan (NTM-A) to join the military mission as the first (and only, as it turned out) senior civilian rule of law advisor to the policing development mission. The NTM-A leadership at the time was concerned there was no clear vision for the future of the Afghan National Police that connected policing with rule of law. Without a vision, there could be no strategy, and the generals knew that as NTM-A's train-and-equip mission matured, that gap had to be filled.

On my arrival, I asked what I thought was a very simple question: "What do the Afghans need their police to do?" I discovered that no one had asked this of the Afghans themselves. When we finally did, the question triggered a larger effort to understand what "Afghan right" looked like and, furthermore, how NTM-A could translate that understanding into more effective Afghan-appropriate training and leader development.

This type of inclusive, Afghan-focused adjustment is what Kleinfeld would characterize as “second-generation rule of law reform.” She summarizes, saying, “Second-generation rule-of-law reform starts with the actual problems of a country and then looks at which part of the rule of law must be improved in order to address those problems. Reformers consider a society’s sociology to determine reform efforts that locals would support and to locate the best fulcrum for reform.”

She accurately points out that “first-generation reform” tends to focus on altering laws and institutions to make them look more like those in what we generally think of as “rule-of-law countries,” by which she means the United States and European countries. I saw first-generation reform thinking behind almost every rule of law program in Afghanistan, where even the governing National Priority Plan, “Justice for All,” was conceived by international donors and contained a set of milestones that the Afghan government refused to endorse.

Afghanistan may be the most prominent example of first-generation thinking in action, but it is hardly the only one. While conducting a strategic security sector reform assessment in Albania in 2009, I asked the American attorney who headed the prosecution development team why she was training Albanian prosecutors in U.S.-style adversarial techniques when Albania had a civil law system. Her answer? “Our [U.S. common law] system is better.” For 2 years, this chief of party had focused all her efforts on creating an Albanian national-level institution that mirrored the U.S. Attorney’s office in the small southern state where she had previously worked. As Kleinfeld, who also uses Albania as one of her case studies, phrases it, “Too often [reforming] laws and institutions become ends in themselves, altered toward no

clear goal other than modernity.” Rather than focusing on institutional reform for reform’s sake, she argues, second-generation reforms pay greater attention to power and cultural norms. Legal and institutional reforms then become the means to influence these more core challenges that enable adherence to the rule of law.

Kleinfeld requires her readers to do a bit of soul searching as to why we conduct rule of law reform activities at all. She presents a historical perspective on U.S.- and European-led rule of law reform efforts that contradicts some of the conventional thinking about who in our governments should be engaging in rule of law development and why. While it may not have been an intended result, her analysis challenges assumptions that largely exclude the military as a core rule of law enabler.

Viewed through the lens of history, Kleinfeld presents Western involvement in rule of law capacity-building as the evolution from a pragmatic focus on building security, through the relatively recent policy shifts toward frameworks that emphasize democracy and human rights, in order to enable economic growth. Her narrative demonstrates that until the 1980s, most rule of law development was tied to military objectives, whether as part of postconflict stabilization or to address the desire for security against a communist threat. Early practitioners in the rule of law field did not come from the civilian development community that claims ownership of the rule of law agenda today. Instead, they were soldiers, and later, in the post-Vietnam era, cops.

The tension between the goals and objectives of security-focused rule of law development, and the goals and objectives of the democracy and human rights movement, is examined in sufficient detail for the

practitioner to understand and anticipate the necessary relationships, risks, and rewards. Unfortunately, as Kleinfeld points out, current funding authorities, legal restrictions, and practitioner resistance to working with police and militaries increasingly separate security reforms from other rule of law goals, resulting in the lack of strategic thought and coordination that exists across the government today.

Kleinfeld's review of efforts to spur economic growth and market development through rule of law reform raises even more questions about why we are doing what we are doing. Using a multitude of examples both modern and historic, she reminds us that the linkage between the formal commercial aspects of the rule of law and economic development is mostly based on guesses and assumptions that remain largely unproved. She makes a compelling case that the security-focused law and order aspect of rule of law development may be central to the goal of enabling economic growth, whereas the impact of commercial and civil law reform may be negligible.

The real value of any study of rule of law development is what it offers to the practitioner in terms of planning and implementation advice, guidance, and lessons learned. In this regard, Kleinfeld is partially successful. Her practical contributions fall into four categories.

First, Kleinfeld's suggested sequencing is spot on. She starts with identification of the "real" problem, as seen by the local population. In my Afghan policing example above, for instance, when I asked members of the NATO coalition what the Afghans needed their police to do, I was told, "They need to keep the insurgents out of the battlespace." When I asked the Afghans, the answers varied depending on region, rural versus urban, acceptance

of central government authority, and the degree of tribal homogeneity. However, in general, I heard things such as "They need to talk more with their mouths and less with their weapons." Local government officials in particular saw a requirement (and desire) for the police to stop conflicts before they escalated into something that was beyond their ability to resolve. For the Afghans, first-line dispute resolution was seen as both a security imperative and a way to demonstrate that the government could respond to the immediate needs of the governed. Ironically, however, dispute resolution was not part of the basic police curriculum, and there were many in the coalition who questioned why this was a police concern at all. Instead, went the argument, we should be focusing our development efforts on strengthening the formal justice system in order to demonstrate to the Afghan people that a formal system, with which few had any experience or understanding, could address their needs.

Kleinfeld points out that first-generation reformers often talk about the need to "create" demand and tend to focus on institutions they believe need to be improved. The emphasis on creating formal justice systems to address problems that are traditionally handled informally is a good example of this tendency. Second-generation reformers, however, take a locally generated ends-based approach, and work backward to help the locals achieve sociologically appropriate capacity. Sequencing toward an ends-based result requires that a great deal of time be spent on collaborative problem identification rather than direct, quick action, and it does not deliver an immediate result. Kleinfeld illustrates the success of this approach using case studies from Indonesia, and her arguments make sense.

Second, *Advancing the Rule of Law Abroad* contains some of the best discussions on the role of power structures, politics, and culture in rule of law development of any book on the market. This is central to Kleinfeld's thesis, and she addresses the issues with confidence. Her illustrations of the linkages between power structures, power brokers, and formal and informal rule of law institutions will be useful even for novices in the field.

Kleinfeld's third contribution to actual practice is her emphasis on mainstreaming accountability, presented in terms of accountable governance rather than as some sort of discreet technical reform. As I read, I found myself reflecting on the many heated discussions that I have had over the years with military officers, diplomats, and so-called experts who argued that accountability and oversight are things that can be built into a system or institution after the recruiting, training, and equipping is complete or security is restored, and should be treated as separate lines of effort rather than as an integral part of every other program and activity. At that point, they argue, we have the so-called luxury of professionalization, and can work on the "less urgent" qualitative issues of accountability, transparency, and strict adherence to the law. In *Advancing the Rule of Law Abroad*, the theme of accountability permeates both the analysis and the approaches. Kleinfeld uses a great example from Romania to illustrate the success that can be achieved when accountability is a mainstream issue. She demonstrates that upfront, adaptable, and coordinated top-down and bottom-up approaches are not luxuries and can actually work.

Finally, Kleinfeld's analysis of lessons from legal reform is outstanding. She is highly (and rightly) critical of the current default position

among rule of law practitioners that changing a host nation's law is a necessary predicate to rule of law reform. She illustrates a series of lessons not learned in this regard, and points out that while legal change can matter, it must be deployed in conjunction with other tactics focused on and sensitive to the power structures and the culture behind them.

Kleinfeld is less successful when she attempts to craft practical lessons for the use of diplomacy. While her analysis is not necessarily wrong, it is superficial, and her conclusions are vague and somewhat contradictory. Her suggestion, for example, that "It is often preferable that rule of law programs—especially bottom-up programs—not be coordinated diplomatically, but simply consulted" contradicts an earlier conclusion that diplomacy, when it can be used successfully, is a powerful tool. It is difficult to decide whether she sees diplomacy as essential to reform or not, and getting caught up in her own discussion, she overlooks the role of military force as a diplomatic lever. As a result, she loses the opportunity to explore the positive role the military can play as a catalyst for reform and/or the guarantor of governance space in an otherwise unsecure, ungoverned environment.

Rachel Kleinfeld is an important and rational voice in the growing field of rule of law development. One hopes, based on the quality of *Advancing the Rule of Law Abroad*, that she will continue the quest to discover what works and what does not, and, more important, that her analysis will be used to guide the next generation of Western involvement in rule of law capacity-building and development abroad. [PRISM](#)



## *The Art of Intelligence—Lessons from a Life in the CIA's Clandestine Service*

By Henry A. Crumpton

Penguin Press, 2012

338 pp., \$27.95

ISBN: 978-1-59420-334-3

REVIEWED BY NATHANIEL L. MOIR

The nexus of conflict, intelligence, government, and society is perhaps the most complex realm to navigate as a career intelligence professional. To accomplish that feat through distinguished service and then, upon retirement, concisely delineate these intersections through shared personal experience in a publication is a rare achievement. *The Art of Intelligence—Lessons from a Life in the CIA's Clandestine Service* compellingly recounts a critical period of transformation in conflict. It also presents significant analysis and reflection on the failures and successes of intelligence and what should ideally be its symbiosis with policy formulation. As Henry Crumpton demonstrates, the relationship between intelligence and policy is often messy, but it is an increasingly critical key to wise and effective decisionmaking.

As a career operations officer in the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Clandestine Service, Crumpton served in diverse positions and contributed to national security in several pivotal roles. Foremost of these was his experience as a deputy to Cofer Black in the

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Counterterrorism Center, which deservedly constitutes the majority of the book. Prior formative positions, such as serving as an operations officer in Africa and working with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) as the deputy chief of the International Terrorism Operations section, are chronologically presented. These, along with accounts of his upbringing in Georgia, his tenacious efforts to join the CIA, and his development as a career trainee, are recounted anecdotally and with a great deal of humility. Early in chapter 2, "Training," for example, Crumpton writes, "I was the youngest in my CIA Career Trainee class, the least educated, and the least experienced. I had no military service, no foreign language, no graduate degree, no technical skill, and no professional pedigree" (p. 25). What becomes apparent through the course of *The Art of Intelligence* is how Crumpton mobilized his keen self-awareness and strong work ethic to create an evolving and downright fascinating career.

A number of narratives, particularly in chapters 3 and 4, demonstrate how the author developed as an officer by describing the recruitment of sources and collection of intelligence. In one case, Crumpton details how he and a member of the Office of Technical Services conducted an operation in Africa to recover a listening device emplaced to record the conversations of a potential informant. Unfortunately, over the span of 6 months, nothing of use was divulged by the individual, and the device had to be retrieved to close the operation. What follows is a riveting sequence of events. While it makes for great reading and is just one example, Crumpton uses the incident as a mini-case study to explain how both technical and human-based intelligence skill sets form a composite that exemplifies

the most reliable intelligence. In this particular incident, the operation would have failed without integration of both, the lesson being that no single source of intelligence provides everything needed to formulate good decisions, even at small-scale, tactical levels. Such lessons learned through the course of Crumpton's early and middle career demonstrate the cumulative preparation that led to him becoming Cofer Black's deputy and the individual responsible for the CIA's global counterterrorism operations in September 1999. This was a position through which Crumpton would have significant impact as events unfolded in 2000 and 2001.

Established in February 1986, the CIA's Counterterrorism Center was developed in response to the April 1983 bombing of the U.S. Embassy in Beirut and the October 1983 bombing that killed 241 U.S. military personnel, also in Lebanon. Crumpton details the growing importance of the center's mission as the later 1980s, and especially the later 1990s, progressed. Of the six key geographic regions he noted once he arrived, Afghanistan was a particular focus. This, as is well known, was because of al Qaeda's presence in Afghanistan, which provided it with the sanctuary to plan attacks in Kenya and Tanzania in August 1998. The East African attacks also provided Crumpton with further lessons learned regarding the role of law enforcement as practiced by the FBI and limits to how both the CIA and FBI shared information and common operating procedures:

*My disappointment had to do with the FBI's exclusive focus on law enforcement, on capture and indictments of specific criminals for specific crimes. Forward-looking intelligence collection and analysis were almost*

*nonexistent. The FBI sought justice, not prevention. Their information was potential evidence, which they had to protect for the prosecutors to use in courts. The agents, for the most part, could not envision others outside the Department of Justice having a legitimate need for FBI-derived information. Sharing evidence as intelligence was anathema to them (p. 110).*

The differing bureaucratic cultures and the disconnected approach to intelligence between the CIA and FBI were further compounded by disjointed relationships between intelligence agencies and policy decisionmakers. This is notable in Crumpton's frustration with the Clinton administration's failure to address the al Qaeda attacks on U.S. Embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam as acts of war. However, it is notable that Crumpton later discusses how the United States was entering a new type of conflict that was clearly difficult to understand; the confrontation with asymmetric warfare would be further complicated by the decision to invade Iraq.

Returning to the incidents in East Africa, these, as well as the attack on the USS *Cole* in late 2000, foreshadowed problems that prevented the Intelligence Community from stopping the attacks of September 2001. On the other hand, Crumpton provides a balanced look that includes successes, such as preventing the December 1999 Millennium Plot. This event "underscored the importance of understanding Al-Qaeda's plans and intentions as an intelligence collection imperative. This meant penetrating their primary safe haven in Afghanistan" (p. 145). Crumpton then focuses chapters 9 and 10 on Afghanistan, which, along with Gary Schroen's *First In* and Gary Berntsen's *Jawbreaker*, provide perhaps

the most detailed look at CIA operations in Afghanistan from September 2001 to early 2002.

There are few authors able to provide first-hand accounts of meeting with Ahmad Shah Masood prior to September 2001 or Hamid Karzai shortly thereafter, and the portrayals of these and other events are cogent and well written. Furthermore, Crumpton's professional experience and interactions were far-ranging. Concerning technical innovations, he and his close associates have had an impact on equipment used in current operations, both conventional and unconventional. He describes the increased incorporation of Geographic Information Systems into targeting, which in the Intelligence Community is highly significant, and also his involvement with the development of the Predator from a collection platform to a weaponized one with Hellfire missiles. Despite the contentious debate surrounding drones, Crumpton indicates that had this platform contained weapons earlier, Osama bin Laden could have been targeted in the summer of 2000 when he was viewed through the video stream provided by a Predator over Tarnak Farm in Kandahar: "We had Bin Laden in our electrical-optical sights, but we had no realistic policy, no clear authority, and no meaningful resources to engage the target with lethal speed and precision. It was all sadly absurd" (154–155). Despite this missed opportunity and the obvious frustration in Crumpton's narrative, it is possible that had he not taken the next step in his career, many of the important lessons learned from an intense 3-year period (1999–2002) might have been scattered. Fortunately, this was not the case as the publication of *The Art of Intelligence* indicates.

In 2002, Crumpton attended the School of Advanced International Studies at The Johns Hopkins University to examine public policy. Through this experience, due to having time and room to reflect, the analysis provided in *The Art of Intelligence* is thought-provoking and it deserves a wide readership. The author's desire to further expand his education is also demonstrated by another influential individual in U.S. national security, U.S. Special Operations Command's Admiral Bill McRaven, who completed his study, *Special Ops: Case Studies in Special Operations Warfare Theory and Practice*, while at the Naval Postgraduate School. Perhaps there is irony in that Crumpton directly contributed to, and McRaven oversaw, the eventual demise of Osama bin Laden. While perhaps not a direct result of furthering their education, it is likely that their greater contributions to the United States are a result of being afforded time to reflect on how operations and policy must work together to more effectively achieve national security.

*The Art of Intelligence* is a major contribution and, when carefully considered by the reader, it reveals how Henry Crumpton provided both a positive example and a lifetime of dedication to his country. The reflection and analysis the author gives to this, as to most of his recounted operations, demonstrates the book's edifying value. In sum, this may indicate that the art of intelligence itself is learning from experience and having the humility and perseverance to honestly assess and adapt to change not only on an individual level but also on a strategic level as a nation. [PRISM](#)





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