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Syrian boys, whose family fled their home in Idlib, walk to their tent, at a camp for displaced Syrians, in the village of Atmeh, Syria, Monday, Dec. 10, 2012.

# The Limits of Sovereignty
## The Case of Mass Atrocity Crimes[1]

BY GARETH EVANS

S overeignty is like one of those lead-weighted dolls you can never get to lie down. One might have thought that multiple changes in the global and regional landscape had worked in the modern age to limit the salience of the concept. States' *economic* freedom of action has been limited by enormous economic and financial interdependence. Their *legal* freedom of action has been limited by multiple developments in international law, especially international humanitarian and human rights law. And their *political* freedom of action has been inhibited to at least some extent by peer-group pressure to address multiple global-public-goods and global-commons-protection issues. Many of these can only be tackled effectively by cooperative action, involving some subjugation of traditionally defined national economic and security interests to the larger regional or global interests. But, for all that, sovereignty talk, and its close cousin nationalist talk, are alive and well in the Asia Pacific, no less than everywhere else in the world, and maybe even a little more so.

In Myanmar recently I received a volley on the subject from President Thein Sein, who was kind enough to receive me in his palace in Nay Pyi Daw. When I asked him why his country's march toward democracy could not now take in its stride the candidacy of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, I was told that every country's constitutional rules were its own sovereign business, and reminded that the U.S. Constitution did not allow Henry Kissinger to run for President because of his (if not his family's) foreign birth. When I responded that there did not seem to be evidence that anyone in the U.S. ever actually *wanted* to vote for Kissinger as President, he did not seem amused.

My conversations with other regional officials in recent years have left me in no doubt that other countries in South East Asia are no closer than they have ever been to submerging their distinctive national identities in a common ASEAN identity, any more than their counterparts in Europe give greater weight to their EU identity than their own individual sovereign-state identities.

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**Panorama of Photos of Genocide Victims - Genocide Memorial Center - Kigali – Rwanda**

That doesn't diminish the historical importance of either ASEAN or the EU as conflict prevention and economic cooperation mechanisms, but it means that a great deal of room for individual freedom of action is both demanded and enjoyed.

India's decision in July 2014 to single-handedly block a major WTO trade facilitation agreement for domestic "food security" reasons was a major reversion to inward-looking policy, as was China's very recent decision to impose tariffs on coal imports. In both India and China, as well as in Japan, we now have charismatic nationalist leaders – in Modi, Xi Jinping, and Abe – who each tend to use similar national revival rhetoric to spur economic and social reform.

In none of these cases has national sovereignty chest-beating gone quite as far as in Vladimir Putin's Russia, with all its unhappy consequences for Ukraine, but there is a real risk of border disputes between China and its two big neighbours escalating out of control. As Gideon Rachman put it in an article in the *Financial Times* last year, "If we live in a borderless world, somebody seems to have forgotten to tell the Chinese, Japanese and Indians, who sometimes seem obsessed by the demarcation of their territory."[2]

The reality is that sovereignty continues to have powerful traction both psychologically, and in the institutional management of global and regional affairs. Both these points were clearly acknowledged in the report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS),[3] which I co-chaired in 2001. As to its psychological role we said:

> …*sovereignty is more than just a functional principle of international relations. For many states and peoples, it is also a recognition of their equal worth and dignity, a protection of their unique identities and their national freedom, and an affirmation of their right to shape and determine their own destiny.*

And as to its institutional role, we said this:

> …*effective and legitimate states remain the best way to ensure that the benefits of the internationalization of trade, investment, technology and communication will be equitably shared…And in security terms, a cohesive and peaceful international system is far more likely to be achieved through the cooperation of effective states, confident of their place in the world, than in an environment of fragile, collapsed, fragmenting or generally chaotic state entities.*

But for all its important continuing roles, sovereignty does have its limits. The context in which those limits have been most intensely

debated in recent decades has been human rights violations, and in particular the most extreme and troubling of them, namely mass atrocity crimes involving genocide, ethnic cleansing, other crimes against humanity or large-scale war crimes committed behind sovereign state walls – and the doctrine developed in response, "the responsibility to protect" (R2P).  It may be a stretch to describe, as the British historian Martin Gilbert has done, the emergence and evolution of R2P as "the most significant adjustment to sovereignty in 360 years," but it is certainly a fascinating case study of both the reach and the constraints upon sovereignty in the contemporary world.

It may be going too far to suggest, as I confess I often have, that under the Westphalian system, when it came to internal human rights violations, states had so much respect for the principle of non-intervention in each other's affairs, and so little a sense of any limits to their authority, that sovereignty was effectively a "license to kill." Luke Glanville, in his recently published book *Sovereignty & the Responsibility to Protect: A New History*[4] has argued at length that there have always been certain limits to the reach of sovereign states' power when it came to the treatment of their own populations, with a degree of accountability always evident to God, the people, or the international community, or all three.

Certainly in the aftermath of Hitler's Holocaust many more formal constraints on state power in this context came into play, with the recognition of individual and group human rights in the UN Charter and, more grandly, in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; the recognition by the Nuremberg Tribunal Charter in 1945 of the concept of "crimes against humanity;" the signing of the Genocide Convention in 1948; and the new Geneva Conventions of 1949.

But none of these treaty constraints seemed to make much difference when it came to states' willingness in subsequent years to perpetrate mass atrocity crimes, and the wider international community's willingness to treat these gross human rights violations as none of their business, as for example in Cambodia, Tanzania, and East Pakistan. The overwhelming preoccupation of those who founded the UN was not, in fact, human rights, but the problem of states waging aggressive war against each other. What actually captured the mood of the time, and the mood that prevailed right through the Cold War years, was, more than any of the human-rights provisions, Article 2.7 of the UN Charter: "Nothing… shall authorize [intervention] in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any State."

The issue did come to center stage in the 1990s when, following the break-up of various Cold War state structures, conscience-shocking situations repeatedly arose, above all in the former Yugoslavia and in Africa. But no

consensus at all could be reached between those in the global North who rallied to the flag of "humanitarian intervention" or the "right to intervene," and those in the global South who were determined to defend the traditional prerogatives of state sovereignty as they saw them. Overwhelmingly, the many new states born out of decolonisation were intensely proud of their new-won sovereignty, very conscious of their fragility, all too conscious of the way in which they had been on the receiving end of not very benign interventions from the imperial and colonial powers in the past, and not at all keen to acknowledge the right of such powers to intervene again, whatever the circumstances.

This was the environment that drove UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan to make his despairing and heartfelt plea to the General Assembly in his 2000 *Millennium Report:*



The South China Sea contains numerous contested archipelagos over which several states stake conflicting claims of territorial sovereignty, often with varying interpretations of historical events, international treaties, and fishing rights.

*If humanitarian intervention is indeed an unacceptable assault on sovereignty, how should we respond to a Rwanda, to a Srebrenica – to gross and systematic violations of human rights that offend every precept of our common humanity?[5]*

It was in response to this challenge that the Canadian Government appointed the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) to which I have referred, with me as co-chair, whose 2001 report conceived the idea of "the responsibility to protect" as a potential circuit breaker. After a difficult four-year gestation – but, in the context of the history of ideas, still representing a remarkably swift take-up – the core themes of our Commission report were unanimously endorsed at the 2005 World Summit by more than 150 heads of state and government sitting as the UN General Assembly on its 60th anniversary. The new doctrine that was thus endorsed changed the course of the international debate in three main ways.

The first innovation was presentational: re-characterising "the right to intervene" as "the responsibility to protect," and in the process restating the issue as not being about the "right" of any states, particularly large and powerful ones, to throw their weight around militarily, but rather the "responsibility" of all states to act to protect their own and other peoples at risk of suffering from mass atrocity crimes.

The second innovation was to broaden the range of actors in the frame. Whereas "the right to intervene" focused just on international actors able and willing to apply military force, the new R2P formulation spread the responsibility. It started by recognising and insisting upon the responsibility of each sovereign state itself to protect its people from harm; moved from there to the responsibility of other states to assist them if they were having difficulty and were willing to be assisted; and only then – if a state was manifestly failing, as a result of either incapacity or ill-will, to protect its own people – shifted to the responsibility of the wider international community to respond more robustly.

The third innovation was to dramatically broaden the range of responses. Whereas humanitarian intervention focused one-dimensionally on military reaction, R2P involved multiple elements in the response continuum: preventive action, both long and short term; reaction when prevention fails; and post-crisis rebuilding aimed again at prevention, this time of recurrence of the harm in question. The "reaction" element, moreover, was itself a nuanced continuum, beginning with persuasion, moving from there to non-military forms of coercion of varying degrees of intensity (like sanctions, or threat of international criminal prosecution), and only as an absolute last resort recognizing the legitimacy of coercive military force, provided this was consistent with the UN Charter.

There was a fourth innovation of the Commission, which has not yet been adopted formally by any UN body but which nonetheless has become well-embedded in current international discourse. This was to clarify the prudential principles which should govern that last, hard choice. Five criteria were identified as together determining when it might be right to fight: seriousness of the harm being threatened (which would need to involve large scale loss of life or ethnic cleansing to prima facie justify something as extreme as military action); the motivation or primary purpose of the proposed military action; whether there

were reasonably available peaceful alternatives; the proportionality of the response; and the balance of consequences (whether more good than harm would be done by the intervention).

With the 2005 UN General Assembly resolution, R2P was finally, officially, born. The world seemed well on its way, at last, to seeing the end, once and for all, of mass atrocity crimes: the murder, torture, rape, starvation, expulsion, destruction of property and life opportunities of others for no other reason than their race, ethnicity, religion, nationality, class, or ideology. But words on UN paper are one thing, implementation something else. There were political rearguard actions to fight off, conceptual challenges to resolve, and practical institutional changes to make, and all this took time. It took three more years of often-tortured argument about R2P's scope and limits before the new norm first showed its bite in 2008 in Kenya, and another three before it seemed to have finally come of age with its application by the UN Security Council in the critical cases of Côte d'Ivoire and Libya in 2011.

The best demonstration to date of R2P at work in precisely the way intended (at least so far as its reactive dimension was concerned) has undoubtedly been the UN Security Council's Resolution 1973 of 17 March 2011 on Libya, specifically invoking R2P, which, by majority vote with no veto or other dissenting voices, explicitly authorised "all necessary measures," that is military intervention by member states, "to protect civilians and civilian populated areas under threat of attack." Acting under this authorisation, NATO-led forces took immediate action, and the massacre of tens of thousands of civilians feared imminent in Benghazi did not eventuate. If the

Security Council had acted equally decisively and robustly in the 1990s, the 8,000 murdered in Srebrenica, and 800,000 in Rwanda might still be alive today.

The unhappy reality since mid-2011, however, is that this Security Council consensus has not been sustained. As subsequent weeks and months wore on, the Western-led coercive military intervention – which concluded finally only with the capture of Muammar Gaddafi and comprehensive defeat of his forces in October 2011 – came under fierce attack by the "BRICS" countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) for exceeding its narrow civilian protection mandate, and being content with nothing less than regime change, a criticism which had considerable justification. The U.S., UK, and France (the so-called P3) could have made something of the argument that the mandated civilian protection could, in practice, only have been achieved by completely ousting the regime, but made no serious attempt to persuade their Security Council colleagues at any stage – reigniting the old charge that if ever the P3 was given an inch it would take a mile.

This continuing dispute and all the distrust it engendered had, unfortunately, a major impact on the Security Council's response to Syria, where the one-sided violence by the regime was by mid-2011 manifestly far worse even than that which had triggered the Libyan intervention. In the face of vetoes from Russia and China, and continuing unhappiness by the other BRICS members, the Council found itself for many months unable to agree even on a formal condemnatory statement, let alone more robust measures like sanctions, an arms embargo, or the threat of International Criminal Court prosecution. And, save for a humanitarian access resolution negotiated

largely by Australia, that paralysis very largely continues to this day, with the result that some 200,000 people have lost their lives with still no end in sight to the conflict.

But just as any celebration of the triumph of the R2P principle would have been premature after the Libyan resolutions in early 2011, so too would be despair now about its future. There are three reasons for believing that the whole R2P project, with all its implications for the status of state sovereignty, has not been irreversibly tarnished, and that, even for the hardest cases, Security Council consensus in the future is not unimaginable

The first is that there is effectively universal consensus on the basic R2P principles, and a great deal of work going on in practice to give them operational effect, for example through the development in many states, and intergovernmental organizations, of early warning and response mechanisms. Whatever the difficulties being experienced in the Security Council, the underlying norm is in remarkably good shape in the wider international community. The best evidence of this is in the annual debates on R2P in the General Assembly since 2009, even those occurring in the aftermath of the strong disagreements over Libya.

In these debates, the old sovereignty language, which totally permeated the discourse of the global South in the 1990s, is simply no longer heard in this context. No state is now heard to disagree that every sovereign state has the responsibility, to the best of its ability, to protect its own peoples from genocide, ethnic cleansing, and other major crimes against humanity and war crimes. No state disagrees that others have the responsibility, to the best of their own ability, to assist it to do so. And no state seriously continues to challenge the principle that the wider international community should respond with timely and decisive collective action when a state is manifestly failing to meet its responsibility to protect its own people.

Second, the Security Council itself continues to endorse the R2P principle and use its language. For all the continuing neuralgia about the Libyan intervention and the impact of that in turn on Syria, the Council has, since its March 2011 decisions on Cote d'Ivoire and Libya, endorsed not only nine presidential statements, but nineteen other resolutions directly referring to R2P, including measures to confront the threat of mass atrocities in Yemen, Libya, Mali, Sudan, South Sudan, and the Central African Republic, and resolutions both on the humanitarian response to the situation in Syria and recommitting to the fight against genocide on the 20th anniversary



The Genocide Museum at Tuol Sleng prison, Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

of Rwanda. There were just four Security Council resolutions prior to Libya using specific R2P language, but there have been nineteen since. While none of these have authorized a Libyan-style military intervention, together they do confirm that the rumours of R2P's death in the Security Council have been greatly exaggerated. The kind of commitment that has been shown to supporting robust peacekeeping operations in Mali and Central African Republic in particular is very different to the kind of indifference which characterized the reaction to Rwanda and so many other cases before it.

Third, for all the division and paralysis over Libya and Syria, it is possible to see the beginning of a new dynamic in the Security Council that would over time enable the consensus that matters most – how to react in the Council on the hardest of cases – to be re-created in the future. The ice was broken in this respect by Brazil in late 2011 with its proposal that the idea be accepted of *supplementing* R2P, not replacing it, with a complementary set of principles and procedures which it has labelled "responsibility while protecting" or "RWP."

There were two core elements of the RWP proposal. First, the kind of prudential criteria to which I have referred should be fully debated and taken into account before the Security Council mandates any use of military force. And second, there should be some kind of enhanced monitoring and review processes which would enable such mandates to be seriously debated by all Council members during their implementation phase, with a view to ensuring, so far as possible, that consensus is maintained throughout the course of an operation.

While the response of the P3 to the Brazilian proposal has so far remained highly skeptical, it has become increasingly clear that if a breakthrough is to be achieved – with unvetoed majorities once again being possible in the Council in support of Chapter VII-based interventions in extreme cases – they are going to have to be more accommodating. There were some intriguing signs late last year (evident in official roundtables held in Beijing – which I attended – and in Moscow) that the two BRICS countries that matter most in this context, because of their veto-wielding powers, China and Russia, may be interested in pursuing these ideas further. Tensions between the major players are too high at the moment – not least between the Western powers and Russia over Ukraine – for early further progress to be possible, but there is a reasonable prospect of movement over the longer term.

There are bound to be acute frustrations and disappointments and occasions for despair along the way, but that should not for a moment lead us to conclude that the whole R2P enterprise has been misconceived. There is effectively universal consensus now about its basic principles – that there are now unequivocal limits to what sovereign states can acceptably do, or allow to be done, to their own populations. The only disagreement is about how those principles are to be applied in the hardest of cases. Given the nature of the issues involved, it is hardly unexpected that such disagreements will continue to arise, and certainly to be assumed that only in the most extreme and exceptional cases will coercive military intervention be authorised by the Security Council.

R2P is going to be a work in progress for some time yet. But it is my genuine belief that no one now really wants to return to the bad old days of Rwanda, Srebrenica, and Kosovo, which would mean going back to either total,

disastrous inaction in the face of mass atrocity crimes, or – alternatively – action being taken to stop them but without the authority of the UN Charter (i.e., with the consent of the state concerned; with legitimate self-defence being invoked; or direct authorisation by the Security Council). And if all that is so, at least in this particular human rights context, then the proper limits to state sovereignty are very much better understood and accepted now than was the case even just two decades ago. **PRISM**

## Notes

[1]   This article is based on an address to the Australian National University's Research School of Asia and the Pacific Symposium, Landscapes of Sovereignty in Asia and the Pacific, Canberra, 22 October 2014.

[2]   Gideon Rachman, "The Strange Revival of Nationalism in Global Politics," Financial Times, September 22, 2014.

[3]   The Responsibility to Protect, Report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, December, 2001.

[4]   Luke Glanville, Sovereignty and the Responsibility to Protect: A New History, University of Chicago Press, 2014.

[5]   Kofi A. Annan, We the Peoples: the Role of the United Nations in the 21st Century, New York, 2000.

## Photos

A 7th SFG Special Forces medic gives a young boy a coloring book during a meeting with village religious leaders to gain their support and obtain information, Afghanistan 2008

# The Backlash Against Nation-Building

BY DOMINIC TIERNEY

During a meteoric rise, David Petraeus became the champion of the "COINdinistas," or the soldiers, analysts, and policy-makers dedicated to improving the Army and Marine Corps' capabilities at counterinsurgency and nation-building. In 2012, Petraeus resigned as head of the Central Intelligence Agency. His fall from grace occurred for private reasons, but it nevertheless symbolized the decline of the COINdinistas and the backlash against nation-building in the United States. In recent years, American elites and the public have exhibited growing disapproval of the war in Afghanistan, and increasing opposition toward the idea of stabilization operations as a core function of the military.

The backlash against nation-building will significantly shape the coming era of American foreign policy, by heightening the pressure to withdraw from Afghanistan, deterring the United States from involvement in foreign civil wars, and encouraging a shift in military training and planning away from stabilization operations toward conventional inter-state conflicts. Despite the backlash, however, Washington will almost certainly end up nation-building again. And the aversion to stabilization missions may impede the military's capacity to carry out "non-traditional" roles, and heighten the odds of being drawn into a prolonged quagmire.

## COIN-Star

In the course of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the star of the COINdinistas ascended in the U.S. military, as nation-building became prioritized as a central task for the Army and Marine Corps. Nation-building refers to the use of force to construct a state and create order within another country, including: peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance, training of indigenous security forces, counter-terrorism, and counterinsurgency. Nation-building missions can face varying degrees of violent resistance, from relatively manageable organized crime, as in Kosovo, to full-scale guerrilla warfare, as in Iraq and Afghanistan.

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The COINdinistas exhibited many of the hallmarks of a successful political movement. First, they had a canon. In November 2005, Department of Defense Directive 3000.05 established stability operations as a "core U.S. military mission," which should be "given priority comparable to combat operations."[1] The most significant doctrinal work was the 2006 Army and Marine Corps Field Manual (FM) 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, which placed stability operations at the heart of the armed forces' mission, and stated on its first page: "Soldiers and Marines are expected to be nation-builders as well as warriors."[2]

Second, the COINdinistas had a paladin in the form of General David Petraeus. He was the driving force behind FM 3-24, was lionized in three different Newsweek cover stories, and rose quickly through the ranks of the military

and intelligence community to become commander of the U.S. forces in Iraq, head of United States Central Command, commander of the campaign in Afghanistan, and director of the CIA.

Third, the COINdinistas had a major influence on policy. After 2006, the principles of FM 3-24 shaped operational planning at every level of decision-making. The Department of Defense announced a range of initiatives to boost the armed forces' ability to conduct counterinsurgency, including additional resources for the Army, Marine Corps, and Special Operations Forces, and a renewed focus on language learning and advisory capabilities.[3]

In 2007, the George W. Bush administration explicitly adopted the counterinsurgency principles of FM 3-24 as part of the "surge"



Sage Ross

**Protesters march down toward the U.S. Capitol in Washington D.C. during the September 15, 2007 protest against the Iraq War.**

strategy in Iraq, which contributed to a rapid decline of violence in the country.[4] Two years later, in 2009, President Barack Obama nearly tripled U.S. forces in Afghanistan and adopted a more expansive counterinsurgency approach. At one meeting in November 2009, Obama turned to Petraeus and said, "What I'm looking for is a surge."[5] Jennifer Taw described the embrace of nation-building as "the armed forces' most fundamental adjustment since the establishment of the Department of Defense in 1947."[6]

### The Backlash Against Nation-Building

Since 2009, there has been a profound backlash against nation-building as a core function of the U.S. military among officials, political elites, and wider public opinion. Skeptics contend that nation-building in Iraq and Afghanistan has been a debacle, stabilization operations are inherently a Sisyphean labor doomed to fail, such missions must never happen again, and the military should shift its resources and training away from nation-building toward preparation for conventional interstate war.

Opposition to prolonged stabilization missions is a defining principle of Obama's foreign policy. The Obama Doctrine favors precise and surgical operations, including raids and drone strikes, rather than expansive efforts to reorder foreign countries.[7] The president has called for "the end of long-term nation-building with large military footprints," in favor of "nation-building right here at home."[8]

Despite his initial support for the surge in Afghanistan, Obama soon grew disillusioned by the slow pace of change and looked for a quicker exit strategy. In late 2010, the president formed a committee—known informally as "Afghan Good Enough"—to narrow the scope of the mission. The White House decided to remove most U.S. troops by the end of 2014, leaving in place a small successor force of 10,000 soldiers that would be steadily withdrawn by 2016.

### *Opposition to prolonged stabilization missions is a defining principle of Obama's foreign policy*

In January 2012, the administration announced new national defense guidance, marked by a pivot from the Middle East to East Asia, and a transition away from nation-building toward countering conventional threats. The Pentagon declared that the Army: "will no longer be sized to conduct large-scale, prolonged stability operations."[9] In 2015, Obama asked Congress to authorize the use of force against Islamic State but pointedly said the resolution: "would not authorize long-term, large-scale ground combat operations like those our nation conducted in Iraq and Afghanistan."[10]

Leading Republicans have also grown skeptical of nation-building. "I don't want to be nation-building in Afghanistan," claimed John Huntsman, "when this nation so desperately needs to be built."[11] In the third presidential debate in 2012, Mitt Romney said: "We don't want another Iraq, we don't want another Afghanistan. That's not the right course for us."[12]

Within the U.S. military, critics of nation-building have become increasingly vocal. Colonel (Ret.) Gian Gentile, a professor at West Point, argued that a "hyper-emphasis on counterinsurgency puts the American Army in a perilous condition. Its ability to fight wars consisting of head-on battles using tanks and

mechanized infantry is in danger of atrophy."[13] In 2011, former Undersecretary of Defense Jed Babbin described the U.S. military as suffering "COIN fatigue," marked by "stress, doubt and anxiety."[14]

There is a wider backlash in American society against stabilization operations. A strident literature has emerged that is skeptical about the success of the surges in Iraq and Afghanistan,[15] sees nation-building as a distraction from the military's core task of winning conventional conflicts,[16] and portrays the COINdinistas' program as a hubristic plan to manage the international system.[17]

*A strident literature has emerged that is skeptical about the success of the surges in Iraq and Afghanistan, sees nation-building as a distraction from the military's core task of winning conventional conflicts, and portrays the COINdinistas' program as a hubristic plan to manage the international system*

Meanwhile, the American public mood is allergic to sustained nation-building. In 2012, support for the war in Afghanistan hit an all time low of 27 percent.[18] In 2009, 49 percent of Americans agreed that the United States should "mind its own business internationally and let other countries get along the best they can"—the highest figure in over 40 years of asking that question.[19]

Why did the backlash emerge? The current aversion to nation-building partly reflects the stark costs of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Nearly 4,500 American troops were killed in Iraq and over 2,300 American troops have died in Afghanistan. The White House put the financial cost of these wars at about $1.4 trillion since 2001, but the long-term figure,

including obligations to veterans, may be two or three times as high.[20]

In addition, skepticism about nation-building represents a reemergence of the traditional American view that the military's job is to fight and win the country's wars—meaning conventional interstate campaigns. Americans have rarely been enthusiastic nation-builders. Studies show that public approval for nation-building missions is consistently lower than for interventions aimed at restraining the foreign policies of other states.[21]

For many Americans, interstate wars, such as the world wars, feel like righteous crusades to defeat evil. By contrast, nation-building and counter-insurgency are morally murky, and it is not clear who the good guys and the bad guys are. Chasing guerrillas also dredges up painful memories of Vietnam. And in stabilization operations, negative events like bombings are inherently more newsworthy than positive events like building new roads—so if the mission makes the front pages, it's probably for the wrong reasons.

American culture may also heighten popular skepticism toward nation-building. Americans on the left sometimes view stabilization operations as a form of imperialism, which is contrary to the country's anti-colonial pedigree. Americans on the right often see nation-building as a kind of big government social engineering. U.S. soldiers should be toppling dictators, not constructing infrastructure or giving handouts to foreigners.[22]

The U.S. military has also traditionally prioritized conventional interstate war and regarded nation-building operations, including counterinsurgency, as peripheral tasks.[23] According to historian Russell Weigley, the U.S. military has repeatedly battled guerrillas, but each time it "had to relearn appropriate

tactics at exorbitant costs," and viewed the experience "as an aberration that need not be repeated."[24] Conrad Crane wrote, "The U.S. military would rather not deal with [stabilization operations] or would like to quickly hand them off to other U.S. Government agencies or international organizations."[25] After the Cold War ended, for example, stabilization missions were dismissed as "military operations other than war," or MOOTW. The chairman of the joint chiefs reportedly said, "Real men don't do MOOTW."[26]

The current backlash is not a new phenomenon. Historically, U.S. stabilization operations have often triggered a negative domestic reaction. Since the Civil War, the United States has engaged in half-a-dozen phases of nation-building, including southern Reconstruction after the American Civil War, the occupation of the Philippines, the "banana wars" in Latin America in the early twentieth century, Cold War nation-building in South Vietnam and elsewhere, post-Cold War missions in Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, and Kosovo, and the war on terror operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. Strikingly, each phase produced a hostile elite and public response and sentiments of "never again."[27]

## The Wisdom of Restraint

Will the backlash against nation-building, and a reassertion of the traditional preference for conventional interstate war, have a positive or negative effect on American foreign policy?

In several respects, the impact could be salutary. Skepticism about nation-building may encourage caution about initiating military campaigns—especially wading into foreign civil wars. On the eve of conflict, presidents are often overconfident about the success of the mission. In 2003, for example, the Bush administration promised that stabilizing Iraq would be straightforward, but these hopes proved to be wide of the mark.[28] Iraq also reveals that when an administration is set on war, and controls the intelligence data, the media and Congress may provide insufficient scrutiny of the strategic consequences of using force. Therefore, if the backlash against nation-building promotes a more self-critical approach toward war, this would be a significant benefit.

*There are limits—sometimes stark limits—on the degree of order that the United States can impose in a divided and culturally alien society like Iraq or Afghanistan. Creating an effective state is a long and challenging process, and the temporary arrival of a few thousand Americans does not provide a simple short cut.*

In addition, the backlash may underscore the very real challenges of nation-building. There are limits—sometimes stark limits—on the degree of order that the United States can impose in a divided and culturally alien society like Iraq or Afghanistan. Creating an effective state is a long and challenging process, and the temporary arrival of a few thousand Americans does not provide a simple short cut. Indeed, the deployment of U.S. forces may sometimes prove counter-productive by provoking local resistance from foreign traditionalists against the threatening occupier—creating what David Kilcullen calls "accidental guerrillas."[29]

Washington may be able to achieve its core goals in a foreign civil war without using expansive nation-building to create a leviathan state with a monopoly on the legitimate use of force. Many civil wars feature diverse and fluid

relationships between the government and insurgents, in which the regime finds ways to co-exist with rebel factions through formal or informal spheres of influence, or even cooperates with certain guerrilla groups against a common foe. As a result, Washington may be able to live with a messy outcome, where it seeks to manage the degree of harm rather than prohibit the insurgency entirely.[30]

*Historically, conventional interstate conflicts like the world wars have represented the gravest threat to U.S. national security. Prioritizing nation-building over, say, checking the rise of China, could represent a strategically risky trade-off*

Furthermore, the transformation of the U.S. Army and Marine Corps into effective nation-building institutions comes at a price. For one thing, presidents could become more tempted to use the military for stabilization missions, potentially encouraging costly interventions. And by preparing for nation-building, the United States may erode its capacity at other military endeavors.[31] Historically, conventional interstate conflicts like the world wars have represented the gravest threat to U.S. national security. Prioritizing nation-building over, say, checking the rise of China, could represent a strategically risky trade-off.

## A Dangerous Mindset

The backlash against nation-building, however, also produces very real dangers. Elite and public skepticism will not prevent the United States from engaging in stabilization operations—but it may inhibit their success.

In some shape or form, future nation-building missions are inevitable. In 2007, Robert Gates, the secretary of defense, said that unconventional wars were "the ones most likely to be fought in the years ahead."[32] Indeed, U.S. military history is a story of brief periods of conventional interstate war followed by long phases of nation-building. In 1940, the Department of the Navy published the *Small Wars Manual*, which described the Marines' regular involvement in stabilization and counterinsurgency missions. "Small wars represent the normal and frequent operations of the Marine Corps. During about 85 of the last 100 years, the Marine Corps has been engaged in small wars in different parts of the world. The Marine Corps has landed troops 180 times in 37 countries from 1800 to 1934."[33]

By 2008, little had apparently changed. "Think of where our forces have been sent and have been engaged over the last 40-plus years," said Gates. "Vietnam, Lebanon, Grenada, Panama, Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, Iraq, the Horn of Africa and more. In fact, the first Gulf War stands alone in over two generations of constant military engagement as a more or less traditional conventional conflict."[34]

Partly it is an issue of math. The nature of global conflict has shifted away from interstate war toward civil war. The percentage of conflicts that were civil wars rose from 66 percent from 1896-1944, to 79 percent from 1945-1989, and to 87 percent from 1990-2007.[35] In a world where almost nine out of ten wars are civil wars, virtually every military path leads to stabilization operations, including intervening in an internal conflict to combating terrorist networks, contributing to a peacekeeping mission, or launching a humanitarian intervention. Foreign internal conflicts do not always—or even usually—represent a major security

threat to the United States. But globalization has heightened the potential for civil wars to produce ripple effects that impact U.S. interests and values. The collapse of Afghanistan in the 1990s spurred the rise of al-Qaeda and ultimately led to the 9/11/01 attacks. In July 2014 a commercial airliner was shot down during the internal conflict in Eastern Ukraine, escalating tensions between Russia and the West.

Today, in the midst of the backlash era, the United States is initiating new nation-building operations. In 2011, Obama sent military advisors to aid allied governments in central Africa fight the Lord's Resistance Army.

In the summer of 2012, the United States dispatched personnel to Jordan to help deal with the consequences of civil war in Syria, including the flow of refugees. In September 2012, in the wake of the Benghazi attacks, Washington stepped up its program to train Libyan commandos in counter-terrorism.

Even the rare exceptions—conventional interstate wars—often evolve into stabilization missions. Regime change in Afghanistan and Iraq triggered extended nation-building operations. As the so-called "Pottery Barn Rule" holds: *you break it, you own it*.

Washington is also likely to engage in counterinsurgency precisely because it does



Army Specialist Fourth Class Dennis Kurpius

**A Viet Cong base camp being burned in My Tho, southern Vietnam. In the foreground is Private First Class Raymond Rumpa, 1968.**

not favor this type of campaign. Rational opponents will choose guerrilla tactics because they offer higher odds of success. In 2008, Michael Vickers, the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations/Low-Intensity Conflict and Interdependent Capabilities, stated that, "more and more adversaries have realized it's better to take [the United States] on in an asymmetric fashion."[36]

Crucially, the backlash may diminish the odds of success in future stabilization operations. Nation-building and counterinsurgency require a unique skill set. In essence, a civil war is a competition between the insurgents and the counter-insurgents over which side can govern most effectively. Counterinsurgents should isolate the guerrillas from the people by living and patrolling close to the population, building local relationships, and

boosting the legitimacy of the regime. Soldiers may be asked to perform roles far beyond a warrior's traditional purview, including social work, engineering, and teaching. Meanwhile, force should be used with restraint. Indiscriminate firepower can cause collateral damage and recruit more enemies. Variations on these tactics have proved fairly effective in countries as diverse as Malaya, the Philippines, Northern Ireland, and Colombia.

An aversion to nation-building has impaired America's capacity to develop this skill set. As a result, Washington has repeatedly engaged in stabilization operations without adequate preparation. There is a great temptation to ready the country for the kind of wars that the American public, elites, and the military want to fight—conventional interstate wars—rather than the types of conflicts that



Staff Sgt. William Greeson, U.S. Marine Corps

**U.S. Marine Corps Capt. Gus Biggio with the civil affairs group meets with Nawa District Administrator Haji Mohammed Khan at Patrol Base Jaker in Helmand province, Afghanistan to discuss road improvement projects in the district on July 28, 2009.**

are most likely to occur—counterinsurgency and nation-building missions. In 2008, Gates warned against: "the kind of backsliding that has occurred in the past, where if nature takes its course, these kinds of capabilities—that is, counterinsurgency—tend to wither on the vine.".[37]

The United States, for example, fought the Vietnam War in large part as a conventional interstate war, by emphasizing high technology and big unit warfare. William Westmoreland, the U.S. commander in Vietnam, said the solution to the insurgency lay with one word: "firepower."[38]

But these tactics proved disastrous in a complex counterinsurgency operation. One study found that areas of South Vietnam bombed by the United States tended to shift over to insurgent control.[39] The Army thought that with sufficient high explosives it could not lose in Vietnam, but as defense analyst Andrew Krepinevich noted, more likely it could not win.[40]

After Vietnam, the Army largely abandoned training at nation-building for a generation. All the material on counterinsurgency held at the Special Warfare School at Fort Bragg was deliberately destroyed. Instead, the Army focused on planning for a conventional war against the Soviets in Europe. Defense analyst Robert Cassidy wrote that the Army's desire to "expunge the specter of Vietnam" kept it "as an institution from really learning from those lessons."[41] Similarly, during the 1990s, the U.S. military spent much of its time preparing for conventional interstate wars like the Gulf War, even though interventions in foreign civil wars in places like Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, and Kosovo proved to be a far more frequent occurrence.[42]

In 2000, the George W. Bush administration came into office belittling nation-building as armed social work and Bill Clinton-style do-goodery. "Let me tell you what else I'm worried about," said Bush the day before the 2000 election; "I'm worried about an opponent who uses 'nation-building' and 'the military' in the same sentence."[43]

Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld pursued the "transformation agenda," or the creation of a leaner U.S. military with highly mobile ground forces that could win quickly through shock and awe. This sharpened rapier was designed for interstate war and regime change rather than the drudgework of stabilization missions. In a 2003 speech entitled "Beyond Nation-Building," Rumsfeld contrasted the prolonged operations in the Balkans and the resulting "culture of dependence," with America's light footprint in Afghanistan.[44]

The Bush administration's aversion to nation-building led directly to the military fiascos in Afghanistan and Iraq. After overthrowing the Taliban regime in Kabul, the White House resisted any prolonged effort to stabilize the country. A memo sent to Rumsfeld early in the war said that Washington, "should not allow concerns about stability to paralyze U.S. efforts to oust the Taliban leadership… Nation-building is not our key strategic goal."[45] In 2002, there were only 10,000 U.S. soldiers in Afghanistan, along with 5,000 international troops, in a country of around 25 million people. These limited forces meant the Afghan government could not offer basic services or establish the rule of law. The Taliban recovered because there was little to stop them.[46]

Similarly, the Bush administration's skepticism about nation-building undermined the

achievement of long-term political goals in Iraq. Bush sought to remove Saddam without getting bogged down in a drawn-out stabilization operation. As a result, there were too few American troops to stabilize the country, and little or no preparation for the potential collapse of Iraqi institutions and widespread looting. The first U.S. official in charge of Iraqi reconstruction, Jay Garner, described the goal as, "stand up a government in Iraq and get out as fast as we can."[47] Even as Iraq slid into civil war, Washington pursued a hurried withdrawal plan known as "leave-to-win," based on hastily training Iraqi forces, handing over power to Iraqi exiles, and reducing U.S. troop levels from 130,000 to 100,000 by the end of 2006.[48]

*At a time of budget cuts, the ax may fall disproportionately on nation-building and counterinsurgency capabilities. As a result of the backlash, the next major U.S. stabilization mission could feature the unprepared Army of 2003 rather than the more effective Army of 2008*

The "transformed" U.S. military proved ill suited to the complex demands of counterinsurgency. In 2007, Gates said that after Vietnam, "the Army relegated unconventional war to the margins of training, doctrine, and budget priorities." As a result, "it left the services unprepared to deal with the operations that followed: Somalia, Haiti, the Balkans, and more recently Afghanistan and Iraq—the consequences and costs of which we are still struggling with today."[49]

Eventually, at a great price in blood and treasure, the U.S. military became a more effective counterinsurgency force. In 2006, the Army created the Irregular Warfare Center at

Fort Leavensworth in Kansas to institutionalize the lessons of Afghanistan and Iraq. The Center trained dozens of brigade combat teams in the principles of counterinsurgency, helped write army doctrine on irregular war, and collaborated with alliance partners. To create more realistic training programs, the military even hired hundreds of Iraqi-Americans, via the Screen Actors Guild, to act as Iraqi civilians and rebels. These efforts paid a dividend. By 2007, Iraqi insurgents required six times as many bombs to kill one U.S. soldier compared to when IEDs first appeared.[50]

But this skill set may soon be lost. At a time of budget cuts, the ax may fall disproportionately on nation-building and counterinsurgency capabilities. As a result of the backlash, the next major U.S. stabilization mission could feature the unprepared Army of 2003 rather than the more effective Army of 2008.

In 2014, the Army announced that the Irregular Warfare Center would close—even as irregular warfare became the dominant kind of global conflict. Similarly, the Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute (PKSOI) at the Army War College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania was established in 1993, and has faced the threat of closure ever since. Indeed, the George W. Bush administration decided to shut down PKSOI, before changing its mind in the wake of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Despite its tiny budget of around $3 million, in 2012 PKSOI lost several positions to budget cuts. Although in 2015 it is enjoying significant growth, its long-term survival remains uncertain.

Another danger is that the backlash against nation-building may encourage a kind of national post-traumatic stress disorder, with flashbacks to Iraq and Afghanistan, the avoidance of stimuli associated with these

operations, and significant impairment to functioning. Lawrence Freedman wrote that the "Iraq Syndrome" could produce a "renewed, nagging and sometimes paralyzing belief that any large-scale U.S. military intervention abroad is doomed to practical failure and moral iniquity."[51]

For example, the United States may be tempted to end a military operation prematurely, to avoid any possibility of nation-building. In 2011, the U.S. participated in an international mission in Libya that led to the overthrow of Muammar Gaddafi. But Obama was averse to any sustained U.S. effort to stabilize the country. As a result, Libya collapsed into anarchy. In 2014, Obama said, "we [and] our European partners underestimated the need to come in full force if you're going to do this. Then it's the day after Qaddafi is gone, when everybody is feeling good and everybody is holding up posters saying, 'Thank you, America.' At that moment, there has to be a much more aggressive effort to rebuild societies that didn't have any civic traditions."[52]

It is true, of course, that U.S. military failure in a large-scale conventional campaign could be very costly—but it is also extremely unlikely. After decades of investment in interstate war, the United States has a massive advantage over its rivals, and this edge is not about to disappear any time soon. By contrast, debacles in future counterinsurgency campaigns are all too easy to imagine, and as we saw in Iraq and Afghanistan, potentially carry a high price.

## A Multipurpose Army

The United States must prepare for the reality of modern war by forging the military into a tool with a full-spectrum of capabilities—less like a rapier and more like a Swiss Army knife.

We should fashion an adaptable institution that can out-innovate insurgents and terrorists. We should prepare soldiers for the human dimension of war, provide adequate cultural and language training, institutionalize the lessons of Afghanistan and Iraq, and strengthen our capacity to advise indigenous security forces.[53]

These full-spectrum capabilities are not

*We should prepare soldiers for the human dimension of war, provide adequate cultural and language training, institutionalize the lessons of Afghanistan and Iraq, and strengthen our capacity to advise indigenous security forces*

cheap. But they are less expensive than big-ticket hardware designed for interstate war, like the F-35 warplane—the most expensive weapon program in history with a lifetime price tag of over one trillion dollars.

The U.S. military's mission is not to fight and win interstate wars: its task is to protect American security. This may require conventional fighting, or it may necessitate a wide range of other operations. The official "Functions of the Department of Defense and Its Major Components," for example, lists among the Army's core duties: "Occupy territories abroad and provide for the initial establishment of a military government pending transfer of this responsibility to other authority."[54]

Will a full-spectrum military cut against the grain of American culture? Preparing soldiers for a broad variety of endeavors is consistent with the thinking of the earliest Americans. The Founding Generation created what historian Michael Tate called a

"multipurpose army." In the nineteenth century, troops farmed, dug canals, and built bridges, schools, chapels, hospitals, roads, and other infrastructure, including Minot Ledge Lighthouse in Boston Harbor and the Georgetown Aqueduct. Soldiers helped to survey and map the West, produced a rich bounty of maps and other scientific data, operated a telegraph service, delivered the mail, and aided travelers heading west. For decades, the best engineering education in the United States was found at the United States Military Academy at West Point. Zachary Taylor remarked that, "The ax, pick, saw and trowel, has become more the implement of the American soldier than the cannon, musket or sword."[55]

Of course, the world of the Founders is far removed from our own times. For one thing, nation-building in the early nineteenth century occurred within the United States and therefore the benefits were more immediately visible. But the Founders' broad view of a soldier's vocation shows that there is nothing inherently "un-American" or "un-military" in envisioning troops today as nation-builders. In our globalized and interconnected world, America's strategic interests call for a multipurpose army that is able to stabilize foreign lands as well as destroy enemy tyrants.

## Conclusion

Since the Civil War, Americans have traditionally seen soldiers as warriors rather than nation-builders. For a brief period after 2006, the U.S. military's embrace of counterinsurgency looked like a revolutionary departure in doctrine and training. What followed, however, was a Thermidorian Reaction, or a profound backlash against nation-building. In the wake of exhausting campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq, there is a strong desire to return to

America's comfort zone by shifting the focus of training, preparation, and weapon procurement to campaigns against enemy countries.

The backlash may have a positive effect by encouraging wariness about using force. Like all countries, the United States should think before it acts. The backlash, however, will not prevent Washington from nation-building, and it may increase the odds of a prolonged quagmire by impeding preparation for future missions. As we learned in Iraq, there is little point in toppling a dictator if the result is chaos and civil war. Sending American troops into tank battles or aerial duels with defective equipment would cause an outcry. Deploying soldiers in stabilization missions without sufficient training is just as scandalous.

The solution is to embrace the benefits of the backlash while warding off the dangers. The U.S. military should become a highly skilled nation-building institution. And then presidents should employ this tool with great discretion. PRISM

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## Photos

Page 14 photo by Sage Ross. 2007. *Protesters march down towards the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C. (USA), during the September 15, 2007 protest against the Iraq War. Protesters are shown with a variety of signs, including the yellow and black signs of ANSWER Coalition, which organized the event. An estimated 100,000 people participated in the march.* From http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Marching_towards_the_Capital_-_September_15,_2007.jpg licensed under the Creative Commons **Attribution-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported** license. http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/legalcode. Photo reproduced unaltered.

World Food Programme ship The Martin unloads pallets of high energy biscuits at the Freeport of Monrovia, Bushrod Island, Liberia, 15 Aug 2003, during the Second Liberian Civil War. U.S. Marines from 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) secure the area.

# The Art of Strategy Creation for Complex Situations

BY JOHN BLANEY

*"All men can see the tactics whereby I conquer, but what none can see is the strategy out of which victory is evolved".*
*Sun Tzu (c. 500 B.C.)*

Achieving peace and stabilization from complex situations truly is a wicked problem.[1]  Just one subset of complex situations, those having to do with irregular conflict, contains great variation—from peacekeeping or stability operations, to counterinsurgency campaigns, and can morph back and forth from one to another. Complex situations more broadly defined include non-conflict calamities as well, such as natural disasters, and, increasingly, conflict-prevention efforts.  Each case is unique because of a host of important factors—such as history and geography—as well as more dynamic factors like the nature of the crisis, socioeconomic dimensions, power relationships, the external actors involved, governance variations, and differing political situations. Furthermore, operating in permissive environments versus non-permissive ones is an important differentiator when dividing types of complex situations. Non-permissive environments understandably tend to be dominated by security priorities. And, complicating things even more, it is usually a question of how permissive an environment is, not whether it is entirely permissive or completely non-permissive.

The type, nature, and goals of complex situations vary greatly. For example, in situations such as a tsunami or an earthquake, donors provide rapid assistance to substitute for inadequate local capacity. A counterinsurgency or stability campaign, however, usually involves a longer-term commitment with more complex goals, including local institution building, even nation-building, and where local buy-in is much more important.[2]  Because of wide circumstantial variation, there is unfortunately no cookie-cutter strategy, no single paradigm, no set sequencing of actions, nor one formula that will serve as a blueprint for handling such a broad universe of complex situations. Even action sequencing, necessary to address complex situations, inevitably varies. Not even

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the establishment of security as the essential first step of any stabilization sequence, an assertion voiced constantly, is always the correct initial move.

In Liberia in mid-2003, for example, diplomacy moved on the ground to end the war on the battlefield before security was established. The situation changed from violent chaos into something that was still a complex and dangerous mess, but more manageable. West African peacekeeping forces then moved in to separate the combatant parties, secure the ground, and keep the war stopped. Had they tried to move in before battlefield diplomatic actions were taken, the African peacekeepers would have become another combatant party, which is exactly what was expected to happen.[3]

## Non-Linearity of Complex Situations

Not only does correct sequencing of measures vary case-by-case in complex situations, but handling such situations on the ground is decisively not a linear experience. Problems are rarely resolved permanently. They are seemingly solved, but then appear again and again or morph into new problems. In fact, those who try to deal with such complex situations will be doomed to failure if they try to address the spectrum of issues facing them seriatim, that is, one-by-one.

Leaders must multitask and create positive movement along many fronts at once, all of them with differing objectives and timelines. For example, in Liberia, after ending the war, the United States was simultaneously providing large-scale humanitarian relief; trying to keep firefights from restarting the war; planning for the arrival of badly needed United Nations (UN) peacekeepers; securing resources for upcoming disarmament, demobilization,

rehabilitation, and reintegration of combatants; working on returning home displaced Liberians and refugees; striving desperately to somehow restart a dead Liberian economy; supporting an election still 18 months away as later stipulated in Liberia's Comprehensive Peace Agreement, and much more. It was a spectrum effort, conducted by remarkably few personnel. In such complex situations, linear thinking, that moves seductively from war to peace, can be misleading.[4]

## An Art, Not a Science

The key to the art, not the science, but the art, of strategy creation is to design a multi-pronged, simultaneous approach tailored to each individual case, and then be flexible as circumstances change—and they will. All activities affect all others and the overall success or failure of the outcome. Security, of course, has a vital function providing necessary structural integrity to a highly dynamic process.

## Here and There, the Past and the Future

With so much emphasis on the uniqueness, non-linearity, and varying situations, an important dilemma presents itself: how transferrable is the role of doctrine, best practices, and lessons learned from one complex situation to another and from past cases to future ones? After all, this area of knowledge is quite unlike the sciences, such as chemistry. This is about dealing with very different human beings in various contexts and cultures, reflecting many and changing variables. So, doing the same thing in one place, or the same sequence of actions done previously and successfully but in another situation and time, will often yield very different results, and even produce failure.

Is this analysis therefore an expression of nihilism? Not at all, it is rather one of realism. Freedom to conceptualize strategy is crucial, albeit that that process should not be done unschooled or recklessly. Conceptual thought should be tempered, but not bound, by knowledge of doctrine, of the past, and of lessons learned. Doctrine, the study of best practices, and lessons learned are all useful, but only as suggestive guidelines, not as recipes in a strategic cookbook. They will greatly stimulate thinking in creative leaders faced with new complex situations, but they should not be seen as conceptually binding handcuffs. Indeed, the secret ingredient to the art of strategy creation is people—more specifically, smart leaders and their advisers, especially those on the ground who are both trained and able to visualize creatively and holistically when faced with new problems or even seemingly familiar ones, but in differing contexts. Having knowledgeable, interdisciplinary, flexible-thinking, creative cadres is critical. Furthermore, there are some important cognitive guidelines that can help leaders create better strategy. Moreover, systematic review of the architectural elements of strategy can also help ensure success.

## Simplification—an Axiom for Success

Ironically perhaps, one of the most important guidelines when formulating strategies is to make complex situations less complex. One, albeit imperfect analogy, would be to think of complex situations as being like the old game, "pick-up sticks." The winner of this game is the person who can remove all the tangled sticks, one at a time, without disrupting a complex pile of them. In other words, the winner wins by careful simplification of a complex problem.

Although complex situations require simultaneous actions along several fronts, not seriatim like this game, much attention should be given to the guideline of simplification. For example, in wartime Liberia in 2003, peace was never going to be achieved without the exit of then-President Charles Taylor. As that simplification of the situation – Taylor's removal from Liberia – was in process, it then became possible to consider what to do to actually stop the fighting. When a fragile battlefield ceasefire held, a further simplification was pressed home—geographic separation of the three warring armies, with permissive injection of African peacekeepers between them. Later on, Liberia's still dangerous situation was simplified again by the UN disarmament of the combatant parties.

## Causality and Leadership

Moving from complex situations to less complex ones should also help guide leadership methodologies and styles. In truly chaotic situations, causal relationships do not render consistent, logical outcomes. In such circumstances, it may be necessary for leaders to push boldly ahead without knowing precisely what will happen. If the situation becomes calmer, simpler, and more predictable, an effective leadership practice is often to build a web of peacemakers, and play a less unilateral leadership role.[5]

Forming or rebuilding contact groups, working more with allies, non-governmental organizations, and indigenous groups—building a peace web—can all help counter those who seek instability or a return to war.[6] It is not surprising, but unfortunate, that many U.S. diplomats and seemingly other leaders do not alter their leadership styles much regardless of

the changing nature and complexity of the situations they face.

## The Elements of Strategy Creation for Complex Situations

Complementing such cognitive guidelines is a set of important elements to consider when creating strategy for differing situations. Of course, not all of them will apply universally. Indeed a complete list of elements to consider when creating strategy for a particular complex situation has to vary. Nevertheless, the following are some considerations that are fundamental to successful strategy creation in many complex situations.

### 1. Understand, discuss candidly, and frame the real strategic problems at hand

The problems in much of the Middle East and South Asia today for example are a Gordian Knot complicated by religion, schisms within Islam, with the Middle East Peace Process' lack of resolution, nuclear weapons, asymmetrical warfare, terrorism, and energy, as well as with pent-up repression, ethnic issues, national fragility, poverty and much more. Yet, there is often a tendency to under-appreciate the complexity and assess strategic progress on these highly complex, interlocking issues by focusing too much on shorter-term, tactical metrics, prior to engaging in the simplification process discussed above. For example, where are the Taliban's military positions? Were they pushed back by the troop surge? How many leaders of al-Qaeda have been killed? Yes, killing Bin Laden and again pushing back the Taliban were important and heroic actions. These actions, however, are tactical accomplishments, ones that should only be parts of comprehensive country-by-country and regional strategies.

Similarly, the so-called "Arab Spring" countries are in the midst of differing, fluid, and uncertain processes where outcomes are clearly not ending up as democratic as the initiators had hoped. The overall strategic problem for the West in some of these countries may be how best to approach politically, strategically, ideologically, economically, and theologically the rise of political Islam. This approach would include the key issue of pluralism in these societies as well as protecting the range of Western political and economic interests.

But in October 2011, NATO withdrew from Libya after its military successes, seemingly without a clear follow-on strategy in place. What was to come next in Libya? How likely is it that the Libyans will be able to sort out everything themselves? In fact, how many Libyans regard themselves as Libyans and do not affiliate more closely with their tribe or clan? What constructive, coordinated positive roles can foreign countries or organizations play without crossing Libyan perceptual boundaries of cultural hegemony? How are challenges to stability and arms control going to be met in Libya? How clearly defined is the role of the United Nations? How and when will disarmament be conducted? Will security sector reform be properly shaped? How will institutional capacity deficits be addressed? Can outside mediation be injected into unstable situations without being viewed as interference? Will the new Libya permit pluralism? How will economic stabilization (particularly employment) be addressed? And, how can the West best pursue its interests and relations with Libya? All these questions would have been relevant to framing the strategic problem.

A successful strategy must include understanding, candid discussion, and joint framing

of the full set of problems and threats at hand, with whole of government participation. Allies, international institutions and others should be included in this joint visionary process of strategy creation whenever possible. Strategy must also be developed on time, avoiding policy vacuums and event drift. Without strategy, military missions may be victorious, but gains from them risk becoming only tactical successes that are ephemeral.

## 2. "Is the Game Worth the Candle?[7]"

One of the major, unsung reasons the empire of the Soviet Union collapsed is that it was economically broken. Its economic construction was not guided by efficiency, but rather by the Communist Party's obsession for political control over the highly diverse groups of peoples comprising the USSR. Economically, the Soviet Union became chronically and increasingly inefficient. Furthermore, as a command economy, it skewed lavish resources towards its military and space programs. As a result, the fabric of the rest of the Soviet economy was feeble. In the long run, the Soviet Union's economy rusted to a halt and collapsed, despite belated efforts to reform it.[8]

Because of the vast systemic and other differences between the West and the USSR, comparisons must be made with great care. The same is true when comparing the Soviet Union and communist China. However, one thought is particularly nagging. No society has limitless resources (i.e., military, economic, social, and political), not even the United States. Every campaign launched will impact across-the-board on the country undertaking that endeavor. Thus, every country must accurately assess, insofar as possible, the costs and benefits involved in each complex situation—before commitment. Conflict or even

involvement in complex situations can be very costly, is usually longer than anticipated, and often weakens militarily, economically, politically, and socially the fabric of those countries repeatedly addressing such situations.

In some cases, such as going into Afghanistan after 9/11/2001, or America entering WWII after Pearl Harbor, not much time was required considering whether the threshold for U.S. involvement had been met. However, in most cases, the course of action to take is much less clear. Some of the factors to consider are: How important is this situation to U.S. and allied interests? How much capacity is available to deal with the situation, including what is going on or likely to happen elsewhere? How much is commitment likely to cost (e.g., in lives and financially)? Who else will share the burden? What is the capacity of the prospective host country, including people and resources, to help deal with its own situation? What sort of partner will the host country make, and will it struggle and fight well to achieve victory? What third parties are likely to become involved, or be affected, how are they likely to react, and what are the likely consequences? What is the likely duration of the situation, and how and when will it be concluded? What will be considered a win? How will the U.S. and its allies exit? Domestically, how much durable political support is there for involvement?

It should not be assumed that the consequences of U.S. involvement in situations are always estimated beforehand accurately and carefully. In fact, from the American Civil War to Vietnam, and into the 21st century, the duration and costs of resolving wars or complex situations seem to have been chronically underestimated.[9] Although opinions vary sharply on whether each U.S. engagement was

worth its associated costs, the point is that, whenever possible, a better job needs to be done estimating likely total costs and benefits (i.e., military, political, social, and economic) before commitments are made.

### 3. Recognize the importance of the content of any peace agreement and UN resolutions in complex situations

In cases involving conflict and perhaps peacekeeping operations, the contents of peace agreements often determine what intervening outsiders are allowed to do. For example, how much sovereignty has a host country ceded to outsiders in order for them to work through underlying issues or not? How much design and architecture is in a peace agreement to chart the way forward, or are there too many missing pieces? Will there be an interim government established, and for how long? If an election is needed, is it specified? How much capacity will the interim government likely have to move pending issues forward? Is reform of the security sector adequately covered? If the peace agreement involved does not generally chart the way forward, the parties to it will likely find it difficult to make progress and may have a falling out. Incomplete, ambiguous, poorly designed, or even overly specific peace agreements are quite common.[10] Similarly, success or failure in handling complex situations is often determined by the nature and quality of UN resolutions. For example, mandate differences between Article VI and Article VII Security Council resolutions often decide what the international community and its peacekeepers are allowed to do in a host country.



**U.S. Marines behind a tank in South Vietnam as it shoots over a wall. Few have predicted the duration or cost, in blood, treasure, or American values, of armed conflicts throughout history.**

## 4. Embrace the need to capture and maintain momentum

Seldom is stabilization attempted in a benign environment. In fact, the stabilization environment is usually a highly dynamic and perilous one where, initially, those pushing for peace and stability, often led by outsiders, must set the agenda. Surprisingly, this is perhaps the most overlooked element of strategy creation.

If those advocating peace and stability simply wait to see what happens, ceding momentum to others who would undercut a peace-making or stabilization process, control will soon evaporate or shift to the enemies of peace. Leaders must habitually think ahead of the present, sometimes even take risks to keep things on course, and ensure control over the tempo of events. The current, dominant thinking is that local agents – i.e. the indigenous people – should lead the way in the myriad problem-solving actions necessary for stabilization and peace. Yes, local involvement, local buy-in, and, eventually, local ownership are all indeed critical. But, especially in the initial phases of spectrum stability operations, leaders must not stand around and await a consensus among the local counterparts on what to do next.

It should be borne in mind that outsiders usually come into a country, which is thereby surrendering part of its sovereignty, because something is seriously wrong, and the local communities cannot fix it themselves, and they do not have all the answers. If they had answers, outsiders would probably not be there.

It is unfortunate that momentum is not emphasized when making peace as it is when making war or in sports. In particular, programmatic momentum is a big part of securing, controlling, and setting agendas for the future. This point could be illustrated by recalling well-known recent programmatic gaps where positive momentum for stability was lost and even reversed, such as occurred in Iraq after the initial Coalition military take-down of Saddam Hussein's forces in 2003. A positive example, however, will serve just as well. In Liberia in 2003, urged by the U.S. Ambassador (the author), the UN commenced disarmament quickly, even as occasional fire-fights still occurred, knowing that there were not many UN peacekeepers on the ground. Indeed, a serious riot broke out at the first UN disarmament operation in December 2003. There was criticism from armchair pundits in both New York and Washington, even though the riot had been planned by the chains of command of those forces being disarmed, and would have occurred at any time disarmament commenced.

What the critics failed to grasp, however, is the importance of momentum in situations like this one. By launching disarmament quickly, the attention of tens of thousands of armed fighters turned from restarting the war in Liberia to "WIIFM," or, "What's In It For Me?" They wanted money for their weapons, and the first cracks in the chains of command of the fighters appeared. Although the UN's Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (DDRR) program had to be suspended for a time, some seven thousand AK-47s were collected by the UN during this first outing. Ultimately, total DDRR participation topped 106,000 soldiers from three armies.

Tactically, it was awkward and somewhat risky to start DDRR so fast, but strategically, doing so was a critical and decisive action that kept up momentum for peace and stabilization. As disarmament continued, the U.S. in

particular was already focused on the next "D," that is, on "Demobilization." Due to funding limitations, the UN could provide only a short period of de-programming of the fighters, and there was much reason to worry about thousands of ex-combatants swirling around on the streets with no future. Nobody believed that all the weapons were being turned in, and so there was palpable fear that ex-fighters would re-arm, go on "Operation Pay Yourself," and eventually restart the war.

The U.S., however, had readied a novel jobs program, modeled after the U.S. Civilian Conservation Corps of the 1930s. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) implemented the idea rapidly, hiring tens of thousands of ex-fighters from all three armies, and mixing in some other Liberians who had never fought. They got $2 a day and were sent off throughout Liberia, fixing the roads they had mortared, the bridges they had just blown up, the health clinics they had burned down, and much more. Furthermore, by giving the ex-fighters something concrete to do, a job, and some hope, particularly until more UN-led reintegration programs could kick in, they were gradually co-opted, and the grip of their old chains of command further diminished.

Similar accounts could be given about programmatic and other measures taken to assure sustainment of momentum during rehabilitation, reintegration, and security sector reform (SSR) operations. Sustaining momentum is not just a nicety. Pauses are literally deadly.

## 5. Make the state's achieving a genuine monopoly of force a centerpiece of strategy

Long ago, Max Weber defined the state as, "a human community that claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory."[11] For many reasons, the nation-state of the 21st century is now under greater pressure as the world's primary form of social organization, including its ability to achieve and maintain a monopoly of force. Weber's definition and emphasis is even more important in the 21st century than it was when he wrote it. To normalize, or even just stabilize, the state must have a genuine monopoly of force in order to proceed along a number of critical trajectories leading to stability and eventual normality. Real security sets the stage for institutional capacity building, economic growth and development, societal acceptance and advancement, and is indispensable for the establishment of national sovereignty and legitimacy and all that that conveys.

Among the modern tools available to achieve that monopoly of force in complex situations are DDRR or DDR programs, SSR, cleaning up internal arms and munitions caches, and minimizing exogenous destabilizing interference. Of course, disarming any segment of the citizenry implies a solemn and perpetual obligation to protect those who are disarmed and, therefore, made defenseless. To be clear, the goal should be to disarm the entire citizenry and make the state free of militias of any sort. Of course, fanatics, religious or political, will rarely allow themselves to be disarmed and view perpetual warfare as their goal. For them, continuation of the struggle is success collectively, and martyrdom is success individually. There will likely be no DDR solutions for such groups. They may have to be eliminated, as part of achieving the state's monopoly of force.

It does not follow, however, as is often voiced, that the last insurgent has to be put out of action before any DDR is possible. That is

an unfortunate example of linear thinking. DDR may well be possible in more benign parts of a state where the population can be protected. In fact, how likely is identifying and neutralizing remaining insurgents going to be if everyone is allowed to retain arms?

In that regard, a particularly irritating and common assertion, from Bosnia to Afghanistan, is that disarmament of the populace is impossible because the people have a long history and culture of bearing arms that precludes any such action. In the 21st century, this usually translates into the populace having an inalienable right to own for their "protection" one or more AK-47 rifles. Such argumentation is specious. The AK-47 is not some sort of hunting rifle or defensive weapon. It is history's most prolific assault rifle, an inexpensive and deadly firearm. It is a conventional weapon of mass destruction. There is no lengthy history of the AK-47. It was developed in the Soviet Union by Mikhail Kalashnikov around the end of World War II. In other words, it was invented within living memory.

What happens to lasting stability when the state does not achieve and retain a genuine monopoly of force? Generally, the failure to achieve that monopoly enormously complicates the achievement of stability and normality in countless ways. Examples abound, but, for the sake of illustration, consider Iraq. By late 2007 there had been heroic progress against hard-core extremists and insurgents in Iraq, yet today quite clearly the Iraqi state still does not have a monopoly of force. That is true not only because insurgency continues, and is much exacerbated by the emergence of the Islamic State in recent months, but also because there were no significant DDR programs in Iraq, and little if any limitation on incoming weapons from abroad.

So, where does that leave SSR and other fronts where momentum has to be created and maintained? How does a policeman tell people to move their cars out of the middle of the road when they likely have AK-47s and rocket-propelled grenades? How can there be sustainable and widespread development and institution building when armed, ethnically based militias are intact, extorting and menacing? How does government have enough political cohesion and legitimacy under such circumstances to make key but tough decisions, illustrated so dramatically by the strained Iraqi internal debate on a long-term U.S. military presence, which ultimately led to the departure of U.S. troops, and the recent descent into renewed conflict? How do you prevent external



Afrah, an Iraqi Army basic trainee, yells "clear" to let trainers know she is finished clearing her AK-47 assault rifle during live weapons training at the Jordanian Royal Military Academy, Jordan, during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

meddling from countries like Iran when guns and more advanced weaponry are pumped regularly across borders, jeopardizing Iraq's achievement of a monopoly of force and its sovereignty? What are the prospects for political institutions and the rule of law mediating and controlling multi-ethnic Iraq, when there has been no significant disarmament of the populace?

Tactically, the difficult fight against hard-core extremists, or insurgents, might suggest supporting or arming vigilante militias or ethnic groups, as has been done in some countries. But if done, what are the strategic, longer-term trade-offs involved, that is, for achieving national cohesion in such loyalty-shifting societies, which often have not achieved orderly successions of power? Does building up ethnically based armies or police forces really enhance long-term stability and national identity, even if they initially help suppress insurgents? Good guns are really hard to get back or control once they are passed out. Remember what happened when the Soviet Union collapsed. Weapons from its impoverished military-industrial complex were subsequently sold worldwide. Even in just causes, consider how hard it is going to be to retrieve the weaponry of Libya, including huge stockpiles "liberated" from Muammar Gaddafi's depots. Whole arsenals have already found their way to global arms markets. The coup in Mali, fueled by Libyan weaponry, was just the beginning.

Outside countries should think harder before taking extreme actions that support shorter-term objectives, such as those of counterinsurgency, but, in turn, make the longer-term mission of attaining sustainable peace, legitimacy, state sovereignty and normalization much tougher and more complex to achieve— or simply impossible. Monopoly of force is a bridge to the future, and it must be fairly complete, strong, and lasting.

## 6. Design sequencing with "boots on the ground"

In the words of Woody Allen, "Ninety per cent of life is just showing up."[12] Designing a good game plan while leading from afar is much more difficult, and usually there is no valid reason in the 21st century for trying to do so. Such an observation probably seems like nothing more than common sense, which indeed it is. Surprisingly, however, trying to design and run operations "long distance" is still common. Look, for example, at NATO in Afghanistan, which was so reluctant to adopt a command forward approach. Despite the efforts of so many brilliant electronic innovators and the fervor of younger generations for computers of all sorts, virtual reality will never beat being there.

## 7. Internationalize the problem whenever possible

A multitude of new problems is emerging in the 21st century, with not enough old ones having been put to rest. In fact, this backlog of unresolved situations and issues should be one of the major concerns of this era. Problems are deferred or warehoused, almost frozen, but few are resolved or age well over time. For example, the rapid growth of multilateral peacekeeping operations is worrisome, with many of them existing for many years.[13]

At least 40 nation-states are deemed fragile or worse.[14] From just an economic perspective, the 21st century is proving to be a huge challenge for many countries, even the U.S. Meanwhile, the total costs of societal defense in modernity—of trying to protect nation-states from irregular warfare and terrorism,

weapons of mass destruction, cyber-attack, and a host of other internal political and economic challenges—are astronomical. Particularly for those many countries struggling to develop or those just trying to stabilize and protect themselves, the contemporary reality is that it is much easier to tear down than to build up.

In these days of problems growing like hydra's heads, with few of them dispatched permanently, better internationalization of complex situations should be sought whenever feasible. Certainly, more burden-sharing during this era of austerity is one strong reason to seek more multilateral approaches to new and old complex situations. Just as compelling, however, is the need to sustain the political will necessary to engage across so many problems simultaneously, and for increasingly longer periods. Having partners helps. For

example, Liberia was judged to be the worst place in the world in 2003 by The Economist.[15] Stopping the war and bringing Liberia back from these depths was a Herculean task, many years in duration, and is still continuing. It was accomplished by the coordinated involvement of many countries and organizations. An active International Contact Group for Liberia (ICGL) was led by the EC Commission and Ghana, as well as a World Bank-led donors group. Africans provided much of the political muscle, including leadership of the formal peace process and involvement of several heads of state. A very significant role was played by West Africa's regional group, ECOWAS, and its vanguard peacekeeper deployment into Liberia (i.e., ECOMIL). Liberia's new government and non-governmental organizations, as well as former



LCPL NATHAN E. EASON, U.S. Marine Corp

A UN plane taxis at Roberts International Airport in Liberia to assist relief effort.

combatants and the general population, can also share in the near-miracle of Liberia's escape from hell and ongoing recovery. And, finally, the UN, and especially its mission in Liberia (UNMIL), provided an indispensable follow-on peacekeeping force, which was also the centerpiece and main organizer of many sustained post-conflict operations. The UN and UNMIL in particular deserve a lot of credit for giving Liberia the chance to emerge as potentially one of the greatest turnaround stories of this century.

The U.S., of course, played a role, providing more resources than any other single country, and occasionally took the lead in the peace process. The point here, however, is that this success was not a U.S. unilateral operation. Moreover, had it been only a unilateral effort, success would have been unlikely. The U.S., after all, was deeply engaged in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the idea that the U.S. would have pulled Liberia up by itself, especially at that time, is far-fetched. In sum, the steady political will and shared leadership emanating from a number of countries, groups, and individuals, foreign and indigenous, all on behalf of Liberia, have proven to be synergistic, sustainable, and even inspirational.

Of course, every case is different, and often there will be no way to emulate the multilateral winning approach on Liberia. In particular, navigating the UN is politically tricky. Even when successfully done, the UN is often slow to act. It also rarely forces peace on the ground, and sometimes barely maintains it. There will likely be future circumstances when the U.S. must act without UN support or approbation, but, even then, experience suggests recruiting as many allies, coalition partners, and others as possible when undertaking such future endeavors.

## 8. Achieve and assess local buy-in

One of the main lessons of the Vietnam War was the importance of winning, as it was called then, "hearts and minds." Somewhat paradoxically, as argued previously, it is also important not to lose momentum and become paralyzed awaiting impossible local consensus on what has to be done. Often there is no way to completely resolve the inherent tension between achieving local buy-in and retaining reasonable momentum and control of events. Both are critical elements of strategy creation and both must be weighed over and over again. In some cases, local buy-in initially may have to be given less emphasis but, even so, must be kept carefully in mind from the beginning.

In fact, assessing the potential for local buy-in should be done carefully before becoming involved. No amount of training and equipping of local forces will succeed without spiritual local buy-in. Indigenous forces, institutions, and the population must be willing to fight for their cause while respecting human rights. Sincere, not rented, local partners are indispensable. If at any time sufficient local buy-in is judged impossible to achieve, prudence suggests avoiding entanglement or speedy withdrawal.

What to do in order to improve local buy-in will always vary depending on the situation. In general, populations tend to support those that offer them the best alternative. Keeping inflated expectations in check, and meeting promises that are made, also encourages local buy-in.

## 9. Create jobs, jobs, jobs

Being an insurgent is a job. If you are a teenager, poking at dirt with a stick and someone

offers you an AK-47—that's an upgrade! A young insurgent can then loot the things he has dreamed of, often raping and pillaging without bounds. Poverty breeds insurgency. And, even after peace is made, unemployed ex-fighters are like living nitroglycerin.

According to the Central Intelligence Agency, after more than a decade of Western military and civilian presence, and hundreds of billions of dollars invested, Afghanistan's roughly 40-percent unemployment rate in 2006 moved only slightly to about 35 percent by 2010.[16] The failure to sufficiently improve employment in Afghanistan amounts to a strategic error. Amazingly, the labor pool for the Taliban and others to cheaply recruit insurgents is still intact. Even in complex situations where there is no insurgency, economic factors, especially high unemployment, often are the crux of the problem, or part of it. Significant job creation can do a lot to resolve rather than warehouse serious societal differences, as the international financial institutions know well. Early multilateral efforts in this area can result in cost-effective conflict prevention.

## 10. Worry about the rule of law, fight impunity and corruption, and build honest policing capacity

These interrelated problems are usually the most enduring ones but are absolutely essential to address. Often, they are swept under the rug in order to achieve local cooperation on shorter term or counterinsurgency objectives.

But, how can successful SSR be done within the framework of a horribly venal government? How long will trained police stay honest in that environment? Will newly created armies stay loyal when their salaries are skimmed or when they see their own government officials stealing rapaciously?

The international community had to deal dramatically with these issues in Liberia—a deep sea of corruption by the end of the rule of Charles Taylor in 2003. Yet, rather than ignore this host of extreme corruption and rule-of-law problems, a program of de-toxification was created to start to free Liberia from its kleptocratic binging. The heart of the effort was known as the Government Economic Management and Assistance Program (GEMAP). GEMAP was a tough, externally led, dual signature financial control system that tracked Liberia's resources and began the process of making reasonably certain that Liberia's income would be spent on Liberians, not stolen. As testament to the program's efficacy, the elected government of Liberia volitionally decided to retain the GEMAP system for years after it came to power in 2006 in order to facilitate greater financial transparency.

Of course, corruption anywhere in the world is only ameliorated, not eliminated. Important cultural differences and sensitivities must be kept in mind. Generally, however, corruption complicates and deepens the entire range of stabilization problems, whereas progress against corruption is welcomed by most and helps make strategic progress more feasible across-the-board. In sum, dealing with corruption, building rule-of-law institutions, including honest policing capacity, and attacking impunity are all extremely important for lasting strategic success. These areas must not be avoided, but included, in strategy creation and throughout operations on the ground. Regarding corruption as hopelessly endemic is a common and gutless excuse for inaction, which allows the cancer of corruption to weave

its way throughout the entire body of a strategy and eventually kill it.

Unfortunately, it must be noted that most of the parliaments of the world do not want to fund SSR, including reforming police forces needed to help address rampant local corruption. The constituents of many elected Western officials do not like to have funds spent on creating foreign armies or police forces. There is no easy answer to this political problem.

### 11. Show me the money

Leaders have the responsibility to punch away vigorously in order to try to get enough resources to design programs that can actually be executed and culminate in strategic success. In particular, leaders in the field should be careful not to allow piecemeal budgeting from afar to create pseudo-strategy on the ground. Sound strategy can create budgets, but budgets alone can never create sound strategy.

Plans that can never be resourced are worse than nothing at all because they take attention away from that which is possible. Particularly in these austere times, determination of what is realistically needed for success should be made initially, and periodically thereafter. If nothing like the proper means is going to be provided for addressing a complex situation, it is likely a mistake to become involved or to stay engaged.

### Conclusion

In sum, these 11 elements of strategy creation for complex situations are not meant to be inclusive of all factors to be considered. For example, the matter of achieving internal whole-of government collaboration is also critical. So is the process of selecting exceptional leaders for development and implementation of tailored strategies, especially those able to lead on the ground. These issues, however, deserve their own separate and more complete treatments. Although more elements could obviously be added, it is hoped that those facing new complex situations in the future will find this set of elements useful for strategy creation.

The unique character of complex situations defies a single cookie-cutter approach, resists uniform sequencing, cannot be dealt with linearly, is not always predictably responsive to logical approaches, and often requires strategy adaptation or even reversal in midstream. These differing contexts often make direct transference of doctrine and past experience difficult, but new strategic conceptualization will be greatly enhanced by appreciation of previous lessons learned. Many factors must be considered when formulating multipronged successful strategies that anticipate and endure inevitable change. The quality of the art of strategy creation for complex situations will depend upon having creative, trained leaders and advisers. Those who can visualize holistically, implement tenaciously, adapt rapidly to the new, while drawing upon the old, will fare best.

The elements of strategy creation that have been suggested, like paint colors, should receive careful consideration and blend. Even they, however, cannot capture the universe of possibilities. The composition of each new, successful strategy will be a unique combination and a work of art. PRISM

### NOTES

[1] The CogNexus Institute posts on its website, http://cognexus.org/id42.htm, a typical definition of a wicked problem: "A wicked problem is one for which each attempt to create a solution changes the

understanding of the problem. Wicked problems cannot be solved in a traditional linear fashion, because the problem definition evolves as new possible solutions are considered and/or implemented. The term was originally coined by Horst Rittel. Wicked problems always occur in a social context—the wickedness of the problem reflects the diversity among the stakeholders in the problem.

[2]  See Civil Power in Irregular Conflict, edited by Kramer, Dempsey, Gregoire, and Merrill, CNA, January 12, 2010.

[3]  In mid-2003 the West African group of countries, known as ECOWAS, initially deployed into Liberia small vanguard units as part of its "ECOMIL" force. ECOMIL played a key role in stopping the fighting and helped set the stage for the departure of then-President of Liberia, Charles Taylor. A few months later, United Nations peacekeepers arrived to further stabilize Liberia. Years earlier, ECOWAS deployed a force into Liberia known as "ECOMOG," which quickly became a combatant party. In 2003, had ECOMIL become a combatant party, the fighting likely would have continued indefinitely as a four-way struggle—that is, the forces of Charles Taylor, the fighters from two separate rebel armies (i.e. LURD and MODEL), and ECOMIL.

[4]  The QDR in Perspective: Meeting America's National Security Needs in the 21st Century: Final Report of the Quadrennial Defense Review Independent Panel, Stephen J. Hadley, William J. Perry, et al. United States Institute of Peace, page 36.

[5]  See David J. Snowden and Mary E. Boone, "A Leader's Framework for Decision Making," Harvard Business Review (November 2007). The extrapolation of this work to complex stabilization situations has been made by the author, based upon earlier experiences, and does not necessarily represent the views of Drs. Snowden and Boone.

[6]  See Steven Goldsmith and William D. Eggers, Governing by Network, (Washington, DC: The Bookings Institution Press, 2004). The extrapolation of this work to complex stabilization situations has been made by the author, based upon earlier experiences, and does not necessarily represent the views of Messrs. Goldsmith and Eggers.

[7]  The original quotation is probably: "The candle is not worth the game." This may be an old French saying about the merits of playing a card game by candlelight.

[8]  For an eyewitness account, see Blaney and Gfoeller, "Lessons from the Failure of Perestroika,"

Congressional Quarterly, Volume 108, Number 3, pp. 481-496. 1993.

[9]  The initial conscription for the Army of the Potomac was just three months, which reflected the widely shared expectation that the Civil War (1861-1865) would not last long. In the early days of Vietnam, the prevailing Washington view was that it would take only a matter of months for the U.S. to win the war.

[10]  See Interim Governments Institutional Bridges to Peace and Democracy, edited by Guttieri and Piombo, United States Institute of Peace, Washington, DC, 2007.

[11]  See: Weber, Max, "Politics as a Vocation," From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology. Hans Heinrich Gerth and C. Wright Mills, editors and translators (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958), p.77.

[12]  Although President George H.W. Bush used this same quotation as well, Allen's exact words to columnist William Safire may have been "Ninety percent of success is showing up."

[13]  A good place to see the impressive totality of ongoing "Multilateral Peace Operation Deployments" is the map of them produced by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute at http://www.sipri.org.

[14]  See, for example, Ensuring Fragile States are not Left Behind, Summary Report—February 2010, The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Figure 2A, page 3.

[15]  "The World's Worst: Liberia ," The World in 2003, report published by The Economist, November 2002.

[16]  CIA World Factbook, accurate as of February 19, 2010.

## Photos

Page 34 photo by Bettman/CORBIS. 1968.  *U.S. Marine Congregate in back of tank, on residential street, which fires over an outer wall of the citadel.* From https://www.flickr.com/photos/97930879@N02/9837092363/ licensed under the Creative Commons **Attribution 2.0 Generic** license. https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/. Photo reproduced unaltered.

Refugees of the fighting in the Central African Republic observe Rwandan soldiers being dropped off at Bangui M'Poko International Airport, 19 Jan 2014. U.S. forces were dispatched to provide airlift assistance to multinational troops in support of an African Union effort to quell violence in the region.

# Golden Opportunities for Civilian Power

BY RICK BARTON

The United States needs a united, affirmative agenda for conflict response in the 21st century. As the complexity and impact of far-flung conflicts grows, we must respond both effectively – to help countries resolve the top issues driving violence – and strategically – providing the right tools only when cases are ripe for our help.

While state-on-state violence has declined, today's conflicts are more varied. They erupt faster, with a greater ease and diversity of violence, under less control of political elites. Popular revolts are expanding, driven by emotion and commitment and spread by narrative resonance and all manner of media, often fueled by neighborhood meddling. Where the 20th century saw large conflagrations that killed nearly a hundred million people, the 21st century has started with hundreds of smaller, less ordered, yet fear producing events that kill dozens on most days and create a broad sense of insecurity. Overt attacks from within a region may no longer be necessary because of the ease of reach into other countries to promote conflict. These aspects of crisis are emerging at a time when the American people are looking for alternatives to the kind of interventions we saw in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The Obama Administration has recognized this evolving dynamic and sought a constructive, forward looking U.S. role without overstating either our capabilities or our truthful understanding or commitment. Marked by admirable restraint, recent U.S. approaches have included supporting allies, leading international efforts, galvanizing multilateral responses, insisting on neighborhood ownership, initiating regional capacity building, as opposed to taking direct action. In the past six years, the U.S. has featured customized responses: direct air support in Libya; Iraq and Afghanistan draw downs (with adjustments); threats, negotiations, and now bombing in Syria; support for the French in Mali; UN burden sharing in the Central African Republic (CAR); driving the discourse in South Sudan; plus insisting that rapid change in places like Burma and Senegal include peace processes for long simmering ethnic and regional conflicts.

Addressing these conflicts requires a fresh optic, sharper focus, and new tools. As messy as these situations may be, the U.S. must be more effective. Despite years of efforts, the U.S. government still does not have an inter-agency response process characterized by a common

*Ambassador Rick Barton was the first Assistant Secretary of State for Conflict and Stabilization Operations.*

understanding of the situation, well-defined missions, clear priorities, agile responses that put a premium on local ownership from the outset, and the ability to move resources within the bureaucracy to those most capable of executing a plan. Somehow, our best efforts keep adding up to less than the sum of the parts.

Despite our shortcomings the United States still has a golden opportunity: others still look to the U.S. to provide sober guidance and thoughtful support; we have learned a great deal; American ingenuity remains a world force; and there are obvious changes to be made. While our history of industrial sized mega-embassies, tens of thousands of soldiers, and sprawling intelligence operations from Vietnam to Afghanistan has dismayed many

Americans and others, the U.S. is capable of early, catalytic action focused on local ownership that seeks political and social impact. It does not take billions of dollars or hundreds of deployed personnel. Rather, by adapting our best practices and overcoming our reflexive responses, we can deepen our understanding of these situations and choose the wisest way forward.

## Changing Conflict, Changing Response

According to the Economist Intelligence Unit, 65 countries (43 percent of those studied) were at a high or very high risk of social unrest in 2014. Compared with five years ago, 19 more countries are now in the high-risk categories. That includes two-thirds of the countries in the Middle East-North Africa region.[1]



Magharebia

**Tuareg Azawad rebels advance south towards Mopti in Mali, Jan 2012.**

Each place is unique, but some new features are emerging. We see officially sanctioned political violence threatening to surge out of control (as in Kenya, Nigeria, or Bangladesh); emerging political movements that are unknown to their potential allies (the Arab Spring); and factions whose local campaigns carry outsized impact (the Lord's Resistance Army or Boko Haram). Of course, faster communications and transportation have sped up the competition.

Why do these places and conflicts matter? Instability inevitably threatens our allies, entire regions, and our homeland. These countries are potential or actual trading partners, home to markets of more than two billion people. Global power vacuums have a way of attracting terrorists or incubating longer-term problems. Moreover, U.S. leadership in the world is premised on engagement. As Secretary Kerry repeats, "I can tell you for certain, most of the rest of the world doesn't lie awake at night worrying about America's presence – they worry about what would happen in our absence."[2]

At home, public opinion has shifted away from support for foreign interventions. A December 2013 Pew Research Center survey showed that 52 percent of Americans say the United States "should mind its own business internationally and let other countries get along the best they can on their own." Just 38 percent disagree with that statement – the most lopsided outcome in nearly 50 years of measurement. Fifty-one percent say the United States does too much in helping solve world problems.[3]

Consider, however, that these polls take place after a decade of war that produced mixed results. Few hold up the extraordinary, military-dominated efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan as a model for how we should approach conflict, or our engagement with the world. Vast intelligence operations have focused on terrorism to the exclusion of critical local knowledge. Fortress-like embassies and armored caravans deny diplomats rich country experiences. And, the development community is focused on areas such as health and food where it can make measurable impact, sometimes regardless of those programs' connection to broader, more political priorities.[4]

These dynamics have left our national security apparatus with a series of recurring problems: First, we do not know places or people as well as we should; second, we develop competing analyses of the problems they face; and as a result, without a common understanding, we cannot make prioritized choices about how to respond.

If you don't know where you are, what's going on or where you're going – you've got a problem. In other words, our many good efforts and programs did not add up to a magic formula for addressing conflict. We have heard many calls for reform[5], perhaps most notably from the government itself. The 2010 Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review notes:

> *For the past two decades, the U.S. government has recognized that U.S. national security depends upon a more effective approach to fragile states. Yet we have struggled with how to understand these challenges and how to organize our civilian institutions to deal with them. … Many of the capabilities and skills we need for conflict and crisis prevention and response exist at State, USAID, and other federal agencies, but these capabilities are not*

*integrated and focused on the problem in a sustained way.[6]*

One important recommendation of the QDDR was the creation of a new State Department Bureau for Conflict and Stabilization Operations (CSO) in early 2012. At the heart of CSO was a recognition by the Obama Administration, then-secretary Hillary Clinton, and Congressional advocates of all parties that State has a *unique convening authority* only exceeded by the White House. To the extent possible, it is preferable for issues to be advanced to their fullest at the country level, where the Ambassador is clearly in charge, while at the same time with State's inclusive, integrative involvement of others in Washington where the authority and "country team" feeling is much less refined or evident.

To move ahead on such a significant reform agenda in a change resistant environment requires clear direction, organizational team building, cultural adaptation, and improved performance. CSO set out on an ambitious "proof of concept" first year by making clear that it would be most valued if it made a difference in one or two places that truly mattered to the U.S., developed the trust and respect of others, and worked in an innovative and agile way. In close cooperation with the regional bureaus, many others, and each in-country Ambassador, the initial focus was on Kenya's election related violence, Syria's early war, Honduras' destabilizing society-wide homicide explosion, and Burma's potential for peace. Another dozen situations were addressed, but 80 percent of the new Bureau's efforts were directed at the four major engagements.

Carryover work in Afghanistan and South Sudan was rapidly scaled down and making

choices became part of the new culture. At every opportunity, CSO encouraged the earliest possible convening of all active parties and pushed an organizational view that it would be the bureau that "was most likely to help others succeed."

In order to generate liquidity in a tough budget environment, the Bureau closed two of its three offices in the Washington area, reduced staffing, recaptured unobligated funds from earlier appropriations, renegotiated a series of interagency agreements, streamlined operations and built a new leadership team. Progress has been real. Over 20 ambassadors have welcomed CSO in their countries, analysis became more rigorous, creativity expanded, alliances with seven like-minded countries blossomed, teams grew stronger, and results were felt in several nations.

## The Golden Opportunity

"After a decade of war, it has never been more clear that diplomacy can be the transformational tool that shapes the world according to our values,"[7] stated Secretary Kerry. If conflict prevention and response are core missions for the State Department and USAID, how do we make that a reality?

In every conflict country, we face a full spectrum of challenges. The default response for all of us – the affected countries, other donors, and the United States – is to ask, "What can we do?" Many assume that the United States can address these problems, and that because we have the capacity, we should.

The more appropriate question is, "What is most needed?" With too many priorities, it is difficult to link programs to each other and to deliver on a broader strategy for success. In most places, there are two or three difficult issues that are essential to stability. Often they

are political, not technical, and require a highly integrated effort by every part of the U.S. government.

A familiar critique of our involvement in Afghanistan pointed out two competing visions within the U.S. government. One that we were going to build a viable democracy; and the other, that we are there to fight terrorism. President Obama brought new focus to the situation in 2009, but by that point, we did not have a common agreement on the main issues that needed to be resolved nor a shared plan to address them.

## Golden Rules

What are the key lessons of our past responses to conflict? What has worked, and how must we respond better? In our practice, we are seeing the emergence of three golden rules:

## #1 – Build a common understanding of the place, people and challenges.

We need deep, grounded, balanced, joint, independent analyses of the places in which we work. We must build broader networks in government, civil society, among women, youth, businesses, religious and minority groups, at both the state and local levels to get a richer picture and check our biases. We must examine situations holistically and not limit the range of issues examined (for example to our favorite, well-funded concerns). Our information must be analyzed through a conflict lens to seek out the root causes of friction, the positive and negative actors, and the actions that may spark violence or set a course toward peace. We must uncover what the situation requires of us in order to make a political impact.



Demonstrators in Cairo hold up 4 fingers as a symbol of solidarity with the victims of the destroyed sit-in protest known as Rabaa, which means four or fourth in Arabic. 23 Aug 2013

We have to expand our analytical framework. There is a natural instinct to think that "because I worked in Angola, I am smart about the Congo (DRC)." The political culture of the DRC may be more like Haiti, and Angola more like Serbia than like their African neighbor. We also need to look at cross cutting themes like religion and youth, and make sure that the issues at play on the ground are not filtered through our preferred optics, such as terrorism, narcotics and humanitarian threats. We have to look beyond familiar partners and established leaders to "silenced majorities:" people who seek fair governance and economic opportunity but don't like the ruling elites or the traditional opposition and may lack an incentive to engage or even have a real fear of speaking out.



Pierre Holtz

**Demobilized child soldiers in the Central African Republic**

We must build on capital-based, government-centric political reporting by assuming risk and pushing "expeditionary diplomats" into the field to drill deeper into local dynamics and broaden our network of influencers. Earlier, more extensive on the ground political engagement often leads to greater understanding and improved analytics, plus broader contacts and context. If we wait until a crisis is clearly a threat to our interests, we may be too late to influence favorable local change. So much comes back to our understanding of the place, people, and problem.

We can reach beyond the interagency to bring together academics, international experts, diaspora, and civil society voices to develop agreement on the priorities of each case. With this information, all of the actors can forge a common understanding that identifies the most important dynamics fueling instability.

We must also bring new tools to the task of traditional diplomacy. For example, we can now integrate on-the-ground analysis with polling, big-data modeling, computation, and simulation to track violence trends, identify underlying patterns and causes of conflict, and forecast scenarios to predict outcomes, pairing diplomatic insights with bigger-picture analysis. Crunching large volumes of data can challenge conventional wisdom. In Nigeria, CSO used trend analysis to show that persistent violence in the oil-rich Delta region is nearly as pervasive as in the Boko Haram-threatened north. With the vast majority of Nigeria's government funded by Delta oil revenues, the return of widespread violence in the South would be an equal threat to stability.

Capturing a range of information and then using game theory to model systems and test the outcomes of different scenarios is

another area of inquiry for CSO. Using such techniques, a joint U.S. government team provided useful insights on the sequencing of issues to the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, and to planning for safe corridors and spaces in Syria.

In each case, CSO sought to translate analysis of conflict dynamics into actionable and prioritized policy and program options. Especially where traditional approaches face constraints, it is possible to add fresh perspective, conduct deeper analysis, and develop innovative solutions. Why do all this? Without this comprehensive understanding of what is happening in a place, the U.S. risks going in with a pre-cooked narrative and therefore an ineffective solution. CSO's job is to make sure that the U.S. is jointly answering the question of what is most important, as opposed to what is most available or familiar right now.

#### #2 - Focus on strategic priorities.

Having reached a common understanding of the situation, we can then strategize on how to address the challenge. Where and when do we need to act in order to make a difference? Kenya's 2007-08 election left more than 1,000 dead, displaced hundreds of thousands and set back Kenya's vibrant economy. A recurrence of such violence around their 2013 election would have done even more damage to the country's image and growth. The country was already home to many development programs and multiple Kenyan efforts to address the underlying issues from the earlier violence. Still, when asked, "What do you think is the most important problem facing your country at this time?' Kenyans typically responded, "Election-related violence and our inability to respond effectively." What more could the United States do on this issue in the short

term? Together, State and USAID agreed that two hot spots needed particular attention: the Rift Valley and the Coast. At the time, the U.S. assistance portfolio in Kenya was about $800 million, much of which went to fighting HIV/ AIDS.

In the Rift Valley, although USAID had strong democracy and governance programming motivated by the need to help address root causes of the 2007-2008 violence and to prevent a recurrence in the next election, the heads of all the programs wanted to do more. We asked them about their roots in the community. The horticulture program worked with 4,000 farmers; the AIDS program visited 220,000 households a week; and other programs had comparable reach. CSO found that the U.S. could build on these programs and direct their efforts toward conflict prevention even as they addressed their daily demands.

In the Rift Valley and Kisumu, sites of some of the worst violence in 2007 and 2008, the U.S. Embassy supported a Kenyan-led initiative called "Champions of Peace," composed of 26 Kenyan organizations, including churches, youth groups, and women's alliances. They mobilized thousands of citizens across ethnic lines to distribute voter education materials, counter political manipulation, strengthen early warning and response, and support constructive engagement with political actors.

In Coast Province, where Kenyans expressed deep frustrations with land rights and security, the United States supported a Kenyan-led early warning network to strengthen linkages between government, security forces, and civil society. Additionally, we worked with local police to improve community relations and bolster their prevention and response capabilities.

Rather than bring in Americans to support these efforts, CSO identified local partners and moved quickly to support them in the months before the vote, building on existing USAID models. CSO hired more than 100 Kenyans for up to six months through implementing partners and local NGOs – plus hundreds more volunteers – to work through the election. Employing Kenyans made strategic and economic sense, given their unmatched understanding of local dynamics.

The conflict prevention campaign to support Kenya's electoral season had a different profile than most aid efforts. Focused on the paramount political challenge, it engaged 16 interagency conflict specialists for just over a year with half of them in hot spots beyond Nairobi. The funding streams combined USAID's medium-term election preparation and conflict mitigation programs with agile, short-term aid that moved within weeks. Deaths from election-related violence were about 20, or a 98 percent drop from five years before.

Credit goes to Kenyans for a largely peaceful campaign, and the long-term efforts put in place by U.S. assistance agencies, bolstered by additional short-term analysis, funding and personnel.[8] By focusing on what mattered most at just the right moment, the United States offered some American ingenuity and an affirmative way forward to a worried population.

### #3 - Take catalytic action.

Indigenous ownership is the first step of peaceful, democratic change. However sincere America's commitment, success depends on local people caring more than we do. In most cases, it is instructive to look at where our local partners have invested money and time. When they are willing to expend their own resources, including national or local funds, or the time of their leadership, projects have a greater chance of success.

Syria is a good example. We had a wonderful embassy and ambassador in Damascus, but then had to suspend operations. A revolution erupted from places we did not expect with a surprising spontaneity and speed. We did not know the leaders, who were similarly disconnected from each other. In such a complex and dynamic environment, how do you find and empower the right actors and increase their chance of success? Though many groups stepped in to address a horrific humanitarian situation, empowering the civilian opposition was an explicitly political problem that required a completely different kind of initiative.

One of the main tasks during the first 18 months of the conflict was to get to know the Syrian opposition. Our interest was in expanding our familiarity and then helping them to be more capable today for tomorrow. Working from Turkey, the United States began a non-lethal train-and-equip program that introduced us to 2500 leaders at every level. This work grew into a unified U.S. effort, the Syria Transition Assistance Response Team (START), that coordinated all lines of non-lethal assistance to the opposition from the United States and brought international partners as well. At CSO alone, more than 1,500 people were trained and provided more than 12,000 pieces of non-lethal equipment in the first year. More importantly, we now know those people, have a sense of who is most capable, and found ways to build on their work.

The activists the U.S. worked with come from diverse sectarian, ethnic, and regional backgrounds. The equipment State and USAID

provided includes satellite phones, laptops and mobile Internet, and training on how to use these items securely. In opposition-held territory, our training focused on civil administration and inclusive governance, including strategic planning and communications, civil-military relations, negotiations, and mediation.

Through these networks of opposition councils, the U.S. and its allies have been able to address some essential political and social needs. In Aleppo, local policing arose as a major concern. Citizens there would prefer moderate local police to a justice system driven by outside extremists. By sending stipends of about $100 per month to some 1,300 local police, the U.S., UK, and Denmark helped retain police who had defected from the Assad regime on the job and provided a bulwark against extremism. As importantly, by getting two international partners to join the program, CSO sustained it at a high funding level without asking more of the U.S. taxpayer.

The U.S. also helped to develop a network of independent media in a place that has never had it before. With modest assistance, Syrians established 11 independent radio and two TV stations that cover 80 percent of the pre-war population. CSO found and amplified a promising local effort that now provides vital safety information, news, and an independent check on the claims of all sides in the conflict. With this support Syrians are able to develop and broadcast their own programming.[9]

What unites these disparate lines of effort is their overt political purpose. Our support helped civilian opposition leaders inside Syria unify their efforts, connect to the international community, exercise civilian control over armed groups, and provide services to people in liberated areas. At a time when stopping

aerial bombardments by the Assad regime was not possible, this assistance gave our Syrian allies their best hope.[10]

Other countries face different challenges but offer a similar potential role for the United States. Honduras has the world's highest murder rate along with daunting public perceptions of corruption and impunity. To help change the narrative of runaway crime and government inaction, the U.S. Embassy began a partnership with a new Honduran-created coalition of non-governmental organizations

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including religious, youth, and civil society groups, the Alliance for Peace and Justice (APJ). In short order APJ grew into a nationally recognized and respected voice on security reform and government accountability. The coalition regularly engages with the President of Honduras and other policymakers, and is shaping national grassroots awareness on security and justice reform issues. APJ advocacy was instrumental in achieving first-ever public hearings by the Honduran congress with top law enforcement, prosecutorial, and judicial leadership to discuss accountability and security reform. To complement this work, the Embassy helped the Honduran government bring in high-ranking law enforcement officials from nearby countries to conduct an

audit of its Public Ministry. APJ was able to use the recommendations from that audit to help push for the eventual dismissal of an ineffective attorney general.

*there is a dangerous gap between policy-making and practice. Policy without practical implementation might as well be a newspaper editorial. Practice that does not tie back to policy, could well produce nifty projects, but little impact. As long as this gap persists, broader success in conflict areas is unlikely.*

To capture the public's imagination, strategic communications support for the government was provided, along with advisers for high-profile prosecutions, and assistance for a neighborhood-level security program that helped law enforcement earn convictions in 80 percent of its cases – 40 times the national average. Again, the common thread was a campaign to change the narrative that "crime pays," with the U.S. looking for local partners whose work we could catalyze. As in Kenya, the U.S. brought together foreign assistance funding with deployment of experts to seize on quick-impact ideas that complement existing diplomacy and foreign assistance. These efforts happen in collaboration with long-standing programs focused on development, law enforcement, and trafficking, all under the strategic eye of a forward leaning ambassador who brings it all together with a clear purpose.[11]

### New Tools, New Challenges

Even as we seek to carry forward the three golden rules, challenges remain. Broadly described, there is a dangerous gap between policy-making and practice. Policy without practical implementation might as well be a newspaper editorial. Practice that does not tie back to policy, could well produce nifty projects, but little impact.[12] As long as this gap persists, broader success in conflict areas is unlikely. Policy usually exists – how to make it meaningful is the missing link. A series of steps can produce a coherent approach that is not self-defeating. They are:

### Focus on places that matter, at opportune times, where the U.S. can make a difference.

Today Nigeria is more important to the future of Africa and to U.S. interests than South Sudan, Burundi, CAR, Mali, Liberia, or a dozen other countries. Similar choices present themselves in other parts of the world. We need to make these tough calls, harbor our resources, and find other ways (often thru multilateral channels) to contribute to second tier places. Eighty percent of our effort should go to situations where there is real value and a "ripeness" and then the U.S. must insist on a targeted approach.

### Make sure that every crisis/conflict situation has a 24/7 State Department or USAID leader with clear authorities and an established support system at the earliest possible date.

Significant international crises repeatedly stress the State Department and USAID's ability to lead the U.S. government response in a fluid, complex crisis. For civilians to be an organizational locus in Washington, a consistent structural response is needed to replace the current practice of starting anew in almost every instance. The QDDR set out a division of labor where State would lead operations in response to political and security crises and conflicts

and USAID would lead in humanitarian crises.[13]

A proposed model could work in the following way: within 48 hours of the eruption of a crisis, the Secretary of State should receive the name of a full-time Washington-based lead (the recommendation(s) of the Deputies, Undersecretaries, and USAID Administrator). That person should have a board of directors (regional, functional, Operations Center, and specialized, from State and USAID, depending on the nature of the crisis) to provide the immediate guidance, staff and resources. The leader's authority should allow for the design of a strategy and the shifting of enough assets to move ahead, and the daily management of the portfolio. Such an approach would force Washington to come together analytically and programmatically and enable greater clarity with the Embassy and country team.[14]

It should be somebody who can clarify direction, resolve differences, and make decisions, not merely coordinate or convene. We don't have to bring in special envoys for each case; just find good leaders and truly empower them with instant people, money, and the ability to move them around as needed.

### Conflict specialists should be part of every discussion about violence in a country or region.

State and USAID are building a cadre of "conflict specialists" with experience in dozens of crises and they should be expected to provide insights and ideas that regional experts may not. Among the problem sets they should be ready to address are the following: political violence; the absence of national, regional or local dialogues; popular narratives that produce violence; loss of government control and capacity; and, disengaged and/or fear struck publics.

### Develop an annual class of five to ten conflict leaders.

State and USAID need more in-country leaders who are familiar with crises. A competitively selected group of up and comers who could spend two years working at CSO and USAID's Offices of Transition Initiatives (OTI) and Conflict Management and Mitigation (CMM), collaborating with embassies, other bureaus, the Department of Defense, the intelligence community, and other interagency players, would produce a strong nucleus of leaders for years to come. The key to a skilled and agile response is having talent that is prepared to take charge – and deep enough to adjust for unknowns.

*We don't have to bring in special envoys for each case; just find good leaders and truly empower them with instant people, money, and the ability to move them around as needed.*

A natural complement to the development of such a leadership pool would be the advancement of a resident international exchange. The CSO experience with Nigerian and Bangladeshi next generation civil society figures suggests that a rich opportunity awaits.

### Create a network of networks to identify key people and talent in a timely way.

We know that success depends on finding the right people and getting them to the right places quickly, so we need to try new ways to do that. Skill sets that are needed include: experts in investigating the underlying

dynamics; strategists who can design and implement practical strategies; and constant entrepreneurs, taking calculated risks to enhance the chances of success. They must combine traditional diplomacy (monitoring, reporting, advice, and coordination) with conflict expertise (focused analysis, planning, and operational experience), catalytic action (facilitating, amplifying, launching, and managing initiatives), and sub-national expeditionary operations (safety outside the wire). These skill sets do not often show up in one person, so it is essential to put together small, agile teams with proven leaders.

CSO's Civilian Response Network (CRN) needs talent both in and beyond government, in bilateral, multilateral, private sector, and host-country organizations. It increasingly includes informal partnerships with organizations that have access to experts via existing staff, extended rosters, affinity groups, and listservs. Examples include academic listservs; roster-based organizations such as Canada's Civilian Reserve (CANADEM); international organizations like the United Nations; and U.S. interagency partners. LinkedIn and other existing systems are being tested to limit the overhead of a government run system.[15]

### Prepare to practice "asymmetric diplomacy."

Many of the countries in conflict will require "offshore" and cross border operations. Funding will be difficult to secure in a timely way. New leaders will emerge from the broad population of "silenced majorities," including women, youth, and others. All parties will use social media. Given these and many other



Julien Harneis

The Kibati refugee camp is located between the positions of government forces and CNDP rebels, separated from each other by about one kilometer. Here refugees wait to receive plastic sheets, blankets, cooking sets, soap, and other materials provided to the thousands of families in Kibati.

rapid fire changes, it is incumbent that our civilians be well versed in fast start coalition building, mass communications, identifying of unorthodox talent, political campaign organizing, working with multilateral organizations, and iterative interviewing techniques – among other skills. Asymmetric diplomacy must be "propositional vs. oppositional."

### Find ways to expand creativity and innovation.

Right now the U.S. government faces an imbalance between native caution and American ingenuity. Risk-taking is not career enhancing and idea generation suffers. In the most dynamic parts of our society, such as Silicon Valley, words such as "disruptive" and "early adapters" are signs of a breakthrough producing exciting change. In Washington the same words are stigmatized, thought of as disturbing, out of order, and critical of existing practices.

Conflict work is high risk by definition. It is not a "stay in your lane" kind of pursuit. Less like a swim meet and more like water polo, there is an inherent chaos and need for goal scoring to build surges of progress.

Since most will fail and only some succeed, conflict investment is life's most important and volatile venture capital business. Understanding risk, reward, and the inherent constraints of a violence prone place could liberate our creativity and produce more innovation.

### Invest in real time monitoring and evaluation.

We need faster, real-time evaluation so that programs can adjust in time to make a difference. An inspector general audit is often too late, whereas a McKinsey-like management review allows for instant adjustments. We must never forget to ask ourselves whether our work is changing the situation on the ground, rather than how much money we have spent.

It is hard to claim success where conflicts do not occur, or where the conflict does not escalate. Yet when conflict does not break out or escalate, this surely supports the U.S. national interest. Establishing baseline measurements, taking the pulse of the population through a variety of methods, and constantly adjusting programs are all ways of maximizing returns in the toughest places on earth.

### Conclusion

How might better analysis, strategic choices, and catalytic operations look assembled in one place? Imagine an embassy in a high risk or conflict-ridden country with an operations center in which intelligence reporting, diplomatic traffic, and the vast amount of open-source information is available in real time. Imagine it includes predictive and trend analysis capabilities to provide data for decision-making, and a cell to pull it all together into a single campaign plan. Finally, imagine it can link to its range of field teams and implementers, and those field teams have full authority to take immediate action based on their understanding of U.S. objectives. Teams could make daily or even hourly adaptations to their messaging and programs based on local dynamics. Through it all, let's make sure that we're focused on the top problems and building off of local initiatives, rather than doing what seems most comfortable or easiest.

These are the toughest cases on Earth, where success will defy the odds and the conventional wisdom. We have to be willing to accept risk and acknowledge modest chances for success. Creativity is more important than

ever. We cannot be self-indulgent or believe that any one of us has the best answers.

As Secretary Kerry said recently, "If we are going to bring light to the world, we have to go where it is dark. … We have an interest in helping people to build a stronger democratic institution, to take advantage of opportunity and create the futures that they choose for themselves. Indeed, those are the very places where we have the most to gain."

Working with a world of partners, the United States still has a great opportunity to make a difference in a conflict-churned world. We are contributing in key ways. With ongoing help and humility, we will always do it better. PRISM

## Notes

[1] http://www.economist.com/news/21589143-where-protest-likeliest-break-out-ripe-rebellion.

[2] U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, Remarks at Yale College Class Day, May 18, 2014.

[3] http://www.people-press.org/2013/12/03/public-sees-u-s-power-declining-as-support-for-global-engagement-slips/.

[4] According to the Center for Global Development: "At the aggregate level, only 16 percent of U.S. assistance has been focused on what Africans definitively cite as their most pressing problems. On average, less than one third of U.S. assistance has been aligned with people's top three concerns in 11 African nations over time." http://www.cgdev.org/publication/anyone-listening-does-us-foreign-assistance-target-peoples-top-priorities-working-paper.

[5] See, for example: http://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/print/13378; http://cco.dodlive.mil/files/2014/02/prism3-18_bowen.pdf; http://www.usglc.org/report-on-reports/; http://www.stimson.org/spotlight/new-report-diplomacy-in-a-time-of-scarcity/.

[6] http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/153142.pdf, p. 122.

[7] http://www.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2013/12/218631.htm.

[8] Thanks to Ambassador Robert Godec for his steady leadership.

[9] See the feature story on a Syrian partner http://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/07/magazine/radio-free-syria.html?smid=tw-share&_r=2.

[10] Special thanks to Ambassador Robert Ford and our colleagues in Turkey and Washington.

[11] Thanks to former U.S. Ambassador to Honduras Lisa Kubiske for her affirming leadership.

[12] Former Ambassador Jim Michel has warned development professionals about "patch of green" programs that feel or sound good but do not address broader forces propelling chaos and violence. Connection to policy and broad on the ground realities is essential.

[13] QDDR page 133 called for an Interagency Operational Response Framework (IORF) and while "The One Crisis Leader, One Committee, One Staff,

One Plan, One Mission" model has been proposed by CSO, it remains unfinished business.

14 "The One Crisis Leader, One Committee, One Staff, One Plan, One Mission" model has been proposed by CSO and it remains unfinished business.

15 In FY 2013, CSO deployed nearly 130 individuals – from the Bureau and the CRN – to 17 countries, with most of the effort concentrated in four major engagements. Individuals' deployments average just over three months in length, reflecting our efforts to provide targeted, tailored expertise that catalyzes local initiatives, rather than open-ended engagements best undertaken by existing diplomatic functions.

16 See a report by Craig Cohen at http://www.usip. org/sites/default/files/srs1.pdf; also, a more detailed look at how to apply some of the theories in live cases can be found at http://archive.aspeninstitute.de/Aspen_Germany_ Archive/The_Aspen_Institute_Germany_2008_ files/2008_09_17_2008_AESF_International_ Statebuilding_%26_Reconstruction_Efforts.pdf

17 http://www.state.gov/secretary/ remarks/2013/05/209671.htm.

## Photos

Israel's Iron Dome during Operation Pillar of Cloud

# An Israeli Approach to Deterring Terrorism

## Managing Persistent Conflict through a Violent Dialogue of Military Operations

BY MARK VINSON

O n July 8, 2014, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) launched Operation Protective Edge against Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), and other violent extremist organizations (VEOs) attacking Israel from the Gaza Strip. This was Israel's fourth major operation in Gaza since 2006, each immediately following a period of escalating, violent exchanges. The persistent, long-term interactions of this conflict, the increasingly dangerous nature of the VEO threat, and Israel's adaptive approach to manage conflicts with such VEOs, provide a conceptual basis for "deterrence operations" as a component of a military support concept to a whole-of-government strategy for preventing and managing conflict with VEOs.

The United States and Israel have well-developed, but distinct, concepts of deterrence. Although both concepts emerged in the 1950s as centerpieces of each nation's national strategy, they were designed to address dissimilar existential threats, and they have evolved along largely separate paths in response to unique national security challenges. Although each concept shares a fundamental cost-benefit, rational-actor basis, their current approaches remain different.

While the U.S. security environment has the inherent physical advantage of strategic depth, enabled by friendly neighbors and two oceans, the terror attacks of 9/11 shattered any notions that the U.S. homeland is secure from attack. Moreover, U.S. security interests, responsibilities, and threats are global and wide-ranging, and physical distance no longer ensures security from terrorism and modern threats, such as cyber, space, and missile attacks.

Israel, on the other hand, is a small country with no strategic depth, surrounded by a hostile, regional mix of state and non-state adversaries, and has remained in an almost perpetual state of conflict since gaining statehood in 1948. To survive, Israel developed a powerful, high-technology military that repeatedly defeated its larger Arab neighbors in a series of major wars from 1948 to 1973. The cumulative deterrent effect of these decisive victories eventually led to peace treaties with Egypt and Jordan; while Syria remains hostile it is deterred from directly challenging Israel militarily. Concurrently, Israel has remained in a state of persistent conflict with a host of

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increasingly powerful Arab VEOs that have maintained a violent resistance to Israel's existence. In response, Israel's concept of "deterrence operations" has evolved to try to prevent and manage these conflicts.

Despite their different contextual origins and paths, since the end of the Cold War, and, in particular, since 9/11, the most likely security threats to the U.S. and Israel have substantially overlapped and converged on VEOs and their state sponsors, who employ terrorism and other asymmetric means and methods to counter U.S. and Israeli conventional military strength. Both countries are now threatened by the proliferation and lethal potential of VEOs with the intent, capability, and willingness to attack the vital interests of both nations on a potentially catastrophic scale. While persistent conflict with VEOs threatens Israel's

homeland, the primary threat to the U.S. is currently to its national interests abroad.

After fighting two prolonged wars in the midst of a global counter-terrorism campaign, the U.S. is now transitioning its counter-terrorism approach to a conflict prevention strategy that seeks to anticipate threats and to partner with other countries to stop terrorism from taking root, spreading, and threatening U.S. national security interests at home and abroad. With the evolution of its threats and security strategy, the U.S. needs to critically examine the appropriate role for and concept of deterrence operations.

Based on the author's research of open-source literature and a cooperative, two-year examination of ideas for deterring VEOs with the IDF and the U.S. military, this article will describe the growing and persistent threat of conflict with VEOs, review the U.S. President's



Eight Qassam small artillery rocket launchers, seven equipped with operating systems and one armed and ready to launch, uncovered during a counter-terrorism operation in northern Gaza.

new vision for preventing terrorism, and examine key aspects of the Israeli approach to deterring and managing conflict with such VEOs. It concludes with some ideas that the United States might consider in a concept for deterring VEOs in support of a broader, whole-of-government approach to preventing and managing conflict.

### The Growing and Persistent Threat of VEOs

On 7 August 2014, the U.S. began limited airstrikes against Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) militants who were threatening the Kurdish capital of Erbil.[1]  The airstrikes were intended to support Kurdish military forces and to protect U.S. diplomats, military advisors, and civilians. In a brutal response, ISIL beheaded captured American photojournalist James Foley, posting a gruesome propaganda video on the internet with a warning of further revenge if U.S. airstrikes continued. U.S. Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel characterized ISIL as a "long-term threat" that would require a "long-term strategy" to combat it.[2] The emergence of extremist actors with violent political agendas, advanced weapons and communications capabilities, religious or ideologically-based interests, long-term strategies, and the willingness to confront powerful states through terrorism and other asymmetric means and methods continues to threaten U.S. national interests.

After 13 years of war since the terror attacks of 9/11/2001, U.S. conflict with terror organizations and the threat of terrorism and other harm by VEOs around the world persists. Indeed, on May 28, 2014, President Barack Obama stated that "for the foreseeable future, the most direct threat to America at home and abroad remains terrorism."[3]  A partial list of VEOs in the news during the summer of 2014

included Hamas firing rockets and missiles and conducting cross-border raids from the Gaza Strip into Israel; Hezbollah fighting Sunni rebel and Islamic jihadist forces in Syria while amassing a state-like arsenal of rockets and missiles in Lebanon aimed at Israel; pro-Russia separatist rebels in eastern Ukraine fighting Ukrainian military forces with Grad rockets and advanced surface-to-air missiles; the ISIL militants attacking regime and other non-aligned forces in Iraq and Syria, rapidly seizing territory and advanced weapons as they go; al-Qaeda affiliates fighting in Yemen, Syria, Libya, and Mali; and al-Shabaab and Boko Haram terrorizing the populations of east and west Africa, respectively. Each of these conflicts involving VEOs has been, or is likely to be, a long-term conflict that threatens the stability of a region.

The U.S. military's Capstone Concept for Joint Operations (CCJO) describes a future security environment characterized by the "diffusion of advanced technology…, [t]he proliferation of cyber and space weapons, precision munitions, ballistic missiles, and anti-access and area denial capabilities."[4]  Such capabilities give VEOs the means to not only threaten local and regional stability, but also to threaten U.S. "access to the global commons" and inflict potentially "devastating losses."[5]  Even as potential adversaries obtain advanced capabilities that narrow the advantages enjoyed by the U.S., the CCJO warns that they "continue to explore asymmetric ways to employ both crude and advanced technology to exploit U.S. vulnerabilities."[6]  While some VEOs may possess state-like capabilities to threaten vital U.S. national security interests, they generally lack the symmetric, state-to-state framework of interests, values, government, and economic infrastructure that enable the U.S. to deter

them as it would a state. Further, the U.S. will usually have greater difficulty directly communicating threats to VEO leaders.

## A U.S. Vision of Prevention

To address the growing and persistent terrorism threat by VEOs, President Obama presented a foreign policy speech on May 28, 2014, to announce a shift in the U.S. counter-terrorism strategy. He described a move from the direct, force-intensive, costly approach featured in Iraq and Afghanistan, to a more indirect approach that seeks to prevent costly wars by working "to more effectively partner with countries where terrorist networks seek a foothold."[7] The president's prevention strategy envisions a primary military role of training and advising host country security forces, and the collective application, by allies and partners, of a broader set of tools "to include diplomacy and development; sanctions and isolation; appeals to international law and – if just, necessary, and effective – multilateral military action."[8]

The president's vision refocuses U.S. counter-terrorism efforts on anticipating and preventing conflict with VEOs; however, it may lack a timely or sufficient path to address VEOs when prevention fails. The prevention strategy relies on detecting the early indicators of conflict, as well as on the cooperation of host-nation governments and other partners to establish security and provide the non-military remedies to preclude a conflict. Besides training and advising, the military must approach conflict prevention with a complementary range of ways to provide a safe and secure environment, including deterrence, dissuasion, compellence, preemption, and even preventive attacks. Additionally, if prevention fails and a conflict emerges with a dangerous VEO, like

ISIL, then the strategy must quickly counter the threat. For long-term conflicts with persistent VEOs, the U.S. requires a long-term approach to manage the conflict until non-military initiatives can succeed.

In the U.S., the application and relevance of deterrence theory to various current and emerging extremist threats since 9/11/2001 has been the subject of some debate. In a June 2002 speech at West Point, President George W. Bush asserted, "Deterrence – the promise of massive retaliation against nations – means nothing against shadowy terrorist networks with no nation or citizens to defend."[9] However, the U.S. strategic defense guidance published in January 2012, *Sustaining US Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense*, directs that "U.S. forces will be capable of deterring and defeating aggression by any potential adversary."[10]

The current U.S. military concept for deterrence operations, published in December 2006, applies the same general approach to deterring a terror attack by a non-state actor as it does to deterring a nuclear missile attack by a nation-state.[11] The U.S. understanding of deterrence was largely developed from its symmetric Cold War meaning and application and has not been substantially adapted to address emerging asymmetric, VEO threats. However, the proliferation and lethal potential of VEOs with the intent, capability, and willingness to threaten the vital interests of the U.S. on a potentially catastrophic scale requires the U.S. government to examine critically how to effectively deter such actors. Although the U.S. deterrence concept now includes deterrence of non-state actors, much work remains to fully develop and effectively operationalize deterrence approaches to address the unique challenges of VEO threats. Further, to address

root-cause issues that generate and sustain VEOs will require more than a military solution. An updated concept must address the role of deterrence in the broader, whole-of-government context of preventing and managing conflicts with VEOs, which will require some conceptual changes to how the U.S. military conducts deterrence operations.

Toward that end, the U.S. should consider the Israeli approach to, and experience with, deterrence operations as a crucible for examining ideas for deterring highly-enabled VEOs that engage in persistent conflict. As Thomas Rid observed in his *Contemporary Security Policy* article on Israel's evolving approach to deterrence, "Historically, Israel offers perhaps the only case study where different approaches towards the deterrence of non-state actors and terrorists have been tried and tested over many decades – decades during which Israel's political and military leaders assumed that political violence could not be entirely stopped, only limited, thereby transcending a singular and binary view of the use of force. Operationally, Israel's experience illuminates the relationship between the deterring use of force and the construction of norms, an aspect of deterrence research that has received little attention in the vast literature on the subject."[12] This article will now examine Israel's evolving concept of deterrence operations as a way to manage conflict, focusing on its more recent application to deter VEO attacks from the Gaza Strip.



**Two laser guided bombs dropped by the Israeli air force on an apartment belonging to a senior Hezbollah official in the center of Tyre, south Lebanon, 2006. Four children and several others were injured, though none was killed.**

### The Israeli Concept of Deterrence Operations: "Managing" Violence through Measured Retaliation

#### A Law-Enforcement-Style Conflict Management Approach

Israel's unique conceptualization of conventional deterrence has evolved during many decades of practice against a regional mix of state and non-state adversaries. Rid traced Israel's experience with applying deterrence against irregular, non-state actor threats to its pre-independence, Zionist movement days in the 1920s.[13] Driven by its many adversaries and perpetually hostile environment, Israel has developed a policy, strategy, and culture of deterrence as a strategic necessity. Since achieving statehood in 1948, deterrence has stood as a pillar of Israel's national defense strategy, inferring an operational and strategic



A kindergarten in central Israel during a rocket alarm, July 2014.

deterrence meaning to IDF capabilities, such as the Iron Dome missile-defense system to deny successful rocket attacks, and unmanned combat air vehicles, or drones, to provide prompt retaliation for VEO attacks. In particular, deterrence has served as a strategic foundation to the IDF's developing design and execution of "deterrence operations" as its broad approach for achieving and maintaining a relative state of deterrence against adaptive threat actors in a dynamic environment.

Born out of its initial employment to deter violent Arab terrorist attacks and crimes against early Zionist settlers, the Israeli approach resembles aspects of a law enforcement concept for deterring crime.[14] Like a law-enforcement practitioner's basic assumption of the inevitability of some amount of crime, Israel presumes political violence with its neighbors will be a persistent problem that cannot be eliminated, and must, therefore, be *managed* to keep it at an acceptable level. As with law-enforcement capabilities for deterring crime, Israel maintains a credible, ready security force to enable the threat and use of force, both to punish and to reduce the future risk of VEO attacks.

#### A Dual Logic of Deterrence Operations

To address VEO attacks, Israel systematically uses measured retaliation – and periodically, massive retaliation – as integral to how it manages violent conflict and establishes an informal norm of belligerent behavior between itself and an adversary. Although Israel's use of retaliatory force as a method to change an adversary's behavior is compellence, not deterrence, Israel calls them "deterrence operations" due to their primary coercive objective of restoring deterrence. In general, the intent of Israeli retaliation is not a backward-looking act

of retributive punishment, but a forward-looking, utilitarian action designed to both punish the breach of norms and to influence the adversary's decision calculus by imposing a high enough cost to deter future attacks.[15] Like the U.S. idea of tailored deterrence operations, the target of the IDF's retaliation is specific to the threatened act, actor, and circumstances; however, the IDF also intends that other regional actors looking for signs of Israeli weakness receive a general deterrent effect.

Israel's "deterrence operations" employ a two-tiered, or dual-logic concept, of "flexible" or "massive response" operations, depending on whether Israel is trying to maintain a status quo of deterrence or trying to restore deterrence lost through an excessive escalation of the conflict, respectively. Since disengaging from the Gaza Strip in 2005, Israel has conducted four "massive response" deterrence operations to restore deterrence of VEOs in Gaza – Operations Summer Rains and Autumn Clouds (June–November 2006); Operation Cast Lead (December 2008–January 2009); Operation Pillar of Defense (November 2012); and Operation Protective Edge (July–August 2014). During the longer, steady-state periods of small-scale conflict between these major operations, Israel has conducted "flexible response" operations: limited, tailored retaliatory attacks to punish intermittent attacks on Israel.

The deterrence model in the figure below illustrates this dual logic of "deterrence



**Scale of Response (Intensity / Duration)**

| Decisive Operation |
| Counterproductive Response (Effects exceed constraints: international legitimacy, law of war duration) |
| Massive Response (Major operation to reset deterrence to new level) |
| Counterproductive Response (Creates excessive escalation) |
| Flexible Response (Limited, tailored response to maintain deterrence at current level) |
| Adversary's Expected Response |
| Mild to No Response (Perceived sign of weakness) |

VEO Actor (Direct)　　　Target of Response　　　Proxy Actor (Indirect)

**IDF Deterrence Operations Model**

operations," depicting them as measured, optimal responses on a graduated scale of intensity and duration of potential responses (Y axis), and the careful selection of the target (X axis).

The scale of response will be discussed in the following sections. Regarding targets, in general, Israel might target either the VEO or a proxy actor to achieve its deterrence aims. In a direct approach, Israel would target the VEO actor that conducted the attack. For example, the IDF might destroy a PIJ rocket launch site if it determines that they have fired a rocket into Israel. Alternatively, Israel might take an indirect approach by targeting an actor that would serve as Israel's proxy for influencing the VEO actor. In this case, Israel would seek to motivate the proxy actor, which might not share Israel's deterrence objective, to use its more effective influence to deter or otherwise prevent further attacks by the VEO actor. Motivating the proxy actor may require either rewards or punishments to induce it to act. For example, Israel might have targeted Hamas by opening or closing a border-crossing site to reward or punish it, as the former governing party of the Gaza Strip, depending on whether Hamas was providing adequate security control over PIJ.

## Flexible Response Operations: A Violent Dialogue

Israel conducts "flexible response" operations to punish an attack and deter an escalation of conflict by creating and maintaining an unwritten norm for the use-of-force or "rules-of-the-game" understanding between the two sides of the conflict. These rules are not formally developed and documented. Each enemy action and corresponding Israeli retaliatory response contributes to a continuous series of actions and counteractions that establishes a "dialogue" or system of bargaining through violent actions. This violent dialogue of actions and words is communicated by both sides, typically in the absence of a direct means of communication between Israel and the VEO, to maintain conflict within a bounded range of actions.

For this article, a *threat* is defined as a function of an actor's implied or expressed intentions, capabilities, and willingness to commit a specific act of violence under certain conditions upon another actor. Flexible response operations primarily target the VEO's willingness to escalate its attacks.

Clearly, the Israeli approach does not consider an enemy attack, and its subsequent need to retaliate, to be a complete loss of deterrence. While an attack using weapons of mass destruction still requires an *absolute* deterrence standard of no attacks, most attacks on Israel, particularly those from VEOs, have fallen within a low-level range of persistent conflict to which Israel applies a *relative* deterrence standard. As Jeffrey Knopf observed about deterrence of asymmetric threats in *The Fourth Wave in Deterrence Research*, "However undesirable, one or even a handful of deterrence failures would not vitiate the value of deterrence. Because a single deterrence failure does not risk complete destruction of the country, the standard for evaluating deterrence has changed from the Cold War."[18] Assessing the state of deterrence under these conditions is not an objective black or white, but a subjective shade of gray.

In most cases, after an enemy attack during steady-state periods of relative calm, Israel conducts "flexible response" operations to promptly retaliate, generally in the form of military attacks, to impose a limited, immediate cost that either pre¬serves a status quo of

relative deterrence or deters an escalating situation. The IDF's intent is to identify and execute a "flexible response" within an optimal range of potential responses, using limited military actions to communicate a deterrent message to the adversary that is neither too weak nor too strong. The IDF's basic assumption is that no response, or a mild response, would generally be ineffective, because the adversary might interpret it as a sign of weakness, which could encourage it to continue or escalate its acts. Likewise, the IDF estimates that a response that only meets the adversary's cost-benefit expectations would not adequately punish the attack and deter future escalation. On the other hand, a response that is too severe might demand an enemy response, leading to a counterproductive escalation. Thus, an effective response must fall within a theoretical range between what is expected and what would escalate the situation. Identifying

such a response requires careful judgment and a thorough and nuanced understanding of the adversary's core decision factors and decision calculus. Each enemy action – even a small attack on Israel, such as a mortar or small rocket fired into uninhabited Israeli territory – requires a carefully considered, consequential response to maintain Israel's relative deterrence goal within a fairly stable state of "dynamic equilibrium." Dynamic equilibrium exists when, despite the exchange of attacks and retaliation between Israel and the VEO, there is no observable net change in the system.

Effective retaliation requires a prompt, certain, and severe response.[19] A prompt response shows strength and more clearly communicates the cause and effect relationship between the VEO's attack and Israel's retaliatory response. Certainty or predictability is achieved when every VEO attack is met with



Israeli Defense Forces

**IDF soldiers uncover a tunnel near the Philadelphi Route between the Gaza Strip and Egypt**

a retaliatory response. Finally, the severity of the response must achieve a deterrent effect, but not so intense as to cause counterproductive escalation.

As long as the adversary's actions and Israel's retaliations maintain a "dynamic equilibrium," then a sufficient level of deterrence exists and stronger actions by Israel are not required. However, if Israel perceives that its adversary is breaking the rules of the game by escalating its actions, and "flexible response" actions no longer maintain the deterrence status quo, then its political leaders must decide whether a "massive response operation" is required to restore deterrence.

## Massive Response Operations: Escalation Dominance to Reset Deterrence

Israel conducts massive response deterrence operations to reset the "rules of the game," to restore specific deterrence of the adversary and to reinforce general deterrence across the region. Such major operations are essentially short-duration punitive expeditions, with limited objectives that fall short of decisively defeating its adversary, but are principally designed to compel the VEO to stop its belligerent behavior for as long as possible. Like flexible response operations, they are focused on influencing an adversary's *willingness* to continue escalating the conflict; however, massive response operations are distinguished by Israel's additional objective of significantly damaging the adversary's primary threat capabilities, such as command and control facilities and weapon storage sites. By destroying these *capabilities*, Israel both punishes the VEO's actions and removes its near-term capacity to resume attacks, buying Israel time before another major conflict.

Besides destroying VEO threat capabilities, the IDF seeks to compel the VEO to stop its attacks by using its superior military capabilities to achieve "escalation dominance." During the 2014 operation in Gaza, Israel initially targeted missile capabilities and command and control sites to achieve escalation dominance. However, Hamas responded with its own escalation dominance efforts by firing longer-range rockets and using cross-border tunnels to infiltrate Israel and conduct surprise attacks on Israeli forces protecting communities near the border. While Israel's Iron Dome air defense batteries destroyed most of the threatening rockets, Israel determined that the tunnels were a strategic threat capability that needed to be destroyed. To re-establish escalation dominance, Israel conducted a ground attack into Gaza to locate and destroy these tunnels.

While Israel's massive response operations leverage its superior military capacity, these operations can be constrained by practical, strategic considerations of domestic and international legitimacy, law of war, and a desire to end the conflict as quickly as possible. Exceeding these constraints can be counterproductive to strategic objectives. When fighting VEOs embedded in civilian populations, there is a strong tension between conducting operations to achieve escalation dominance and the collateral risk of non-combatant casualties and damage to civilian communities. Excessive harm to civilians could lose international support and legitimacy for its operations, thus, proving politically counterproductive. The laws of war constrain the use of military force, with principles such as distinction and proportionality requiring careful consideration, especially in conflicts involving VEOs that deliberately fight from amongst the population. On the other hand, a massive response operation

must inflict significant punishment to achieve deterrence. So, while Israel seeks escalation dominance over its opponent, its freedom of action may be constrained within operational and strategic limits. Exceeding these limits must be weighed against the potential benefits.

During Operation Pillar of Defense in 2012, the IDF demonstrated escalation dominance over its Gaza rivals through sustained and unchallenged air attacks and a successful missile defense that minimized effective attacks from Gaza. The IDF threatened further escalation by deploying forces for a ground attack into Gaza, but, ultimately, Israel's leaders decided that a ground attack was not necessary to achieve their objectives. Israel's ground operation was essentially constrained by pragmatic cost-benefit calculations that included loss of international legitimacy. While many nations supported Israel's right to self-defense, they did not support a ground attack into Gaza that might have resulted in higher numbers of civilian casualties.[20] During Operation Protective Edge in 2014, Israel's leaders decided that a limited ground attack was legitimate and necessary to destroy infiltration tunnels after Hamas refused an Egyptian cease-fire proposal and used a tunnel to attack Israel.[21]

## Conclusions: Implications for the United States

Although the U.S. and Israel differ substantially in the scope and scale of their national security strategies, they share many interests and values. In recent years, their national interests have been increasingly threatened by dangerous and persistent VEOs that apply asymmetric approaches, such as terror attacks, to engage in long-term conflicts. Two ways the U.S. might benefit from Israel's experiences with deterring VEOs are; 1) by examining Israel's deterrence operations concept for ways to address the unique challenges of VEOs; and 2) by considering Israel's balanced joint force development of both offensive and defensive capabilities to enable escalation dominance over its VEO adversaries. However, military deterrence operations alone are not enough to effectively prevent or manage long-term conflicts with VEOs, much less to eventually resolve them. Toward these ends, the U.S. must determine the role of deterrence operations in the broader context of its evolving whole-of-government strategy for counter-terrorism. Israel's escalating series of conflicts with VEOs in Gaza illustrates the military's capability to use flexible response operations to manage the escalation of violence between major conflicts, as well as its capability to conduct massive response operations to temporarily prevent conflict by reducing the adversary's will and capability for violence. However, to holistically and decisively address VEOs during a long-term conflict requires a whole-of-government approach that addresses its root causes. To enable the development of the requisite joint force capabilities, the military should develop a concept of support for such a strategy.

### Adapt the Concept of Deterrence Operations to Address VEOs

As the U.S. continues to evolve its joint concept for deterrence operations, it should consider adapting a conflict prevention/management approach, based on Israel's experience, to deal with persistent conflict with VEOs. Such a concept must recognize the inevitability of VEO attacks and seek to manage long-term conflicts, employing "flexible response" operations to maintain relative deterrence, or "massive response" operations to restore it. As direct communication with VEOs is unlikely, the U.S. concept should

describe how to use a violent dialogue of prompt, predictable, severe retaliation to normatively establish clear "rules of the game." The concept should also describe how to judiciously employ retaliatory actions that are severe enough to show strength and deter an enemy response, but not so strong as to encourage excessive, counterproductive escalation. The concept should discuss considerations for either directly targeting VEOs or indirectly influencing them through a proxy actor. For conflicts that escalate to an unacceptable level, the concept should describe major deterrence operations that would apply military ways and means to establish escalation dominance. Finally, the concept should provide key ideas and required capabilities for a short-term, punitive expedition, designed to destroy key threat capabilities and reduce an adversary's willingness to attack.

**Develop A Balanced Mix of Offensive and Defensive Deterrence Capabilities**

The U.S. should examine a variety of VEO threat scenarios to determine the right balance of offensive and defensive capabilities required to support a concept of deterrence operations. Offensive capabilities provide the means to credibly threaten retaliation. However, to prevent conflict and deter VEOs that have little or no physical targets of value, defensive capabilities may better strengthen a deterrence posture.

VEOs generally lack targetable territory and infrastructure, which limits the deterrence value of offensive, cost-imposition capabilities. However, deterrence can also be achieved by employing effective active and passive defense capabilities. Investing in defensive capabilities to help prevent successful attacks enhances deterrence, and they can complement offensive



Israeli Defense Forces

**Iron Dome system intercepts Gaza rockets aimed at central Israel.**

capabilities capable of imposing a price for VEO attacks. For example, the IDF's Iron Dome is an effective missile-defense capability that denies adversaries the benefits of a successful rocket or missile attack. According to senior Israeli sources, during Operation Protective Edge, Iron Dome intercepted almost 90 percent of the rockets headed for Israeli population centers, avoiding damage and casualties, and denying Hamas the benefits of its rockets causing destruction.[22] Of more than 4,500 rockets fired from Gaza, approximately 25 percent threatened to hit populated areas, but only 70 hit urban areas inside Israel (killing one Israeli civilian; four other Israeli civilians and nine Israeli soldiers were killed by mortars).[23] In areas protected by Iron Dome, there were no civilian fatalities.[24] Israel also developed a national civil-defense warning and shelter system to warn its citizens of rocket attacks. Such a passive-defense system also contributed to deterrence by reducing casualties and increasing the population's resilience, and it complemented Israel's offensive air and ground capabilities.

The U.S. should also examine the required authorities and capabilities to enable joint forces with prompt use of non-lethal offensive capabilities, such as cyber-attack and elec¬tronic warfare capabilities. As described earlier, the capability to retaliate promptly, with measured intensity and predictability, and in a way that does not lead to excessive escalation, demands that the U.S. have such offensive means with global reach. Offensive capabilities enable the U.S. to credibly threaten a VEO with retaliatory costs. Cyber and electronic warfare tools can provide a non-attributable response to threats that sends adversaries a strong, clear message, while reducing the risk of inciting an escalatory response.

## Develop a Military Concept of Support to a Whole-of-Government Strategy for Conflict Prevention and Management

On 16 September 2014, Secretary of Defense Hagel told Congress, "…American military power alone cannot, will not eradicate the threats posed by ISIL to the United States, our allies, and our friends and partners in the region….We intend to use all of those instruments of power, military, law enforcement, economic, diplomatic, and intelligence in coordination with all the countries in the region."[25] In short, addressing long-term conflicts with VEOs, like ISIL, requires a whole-of-government approach with the unified efforts of allies and other partners.

Israel's approach to deterrence operations includes a variety of military methods: deterrence, dissuasion, compellence, and pre-emption. However, Israel's military operations have not decisively resolved its conflicts with VEOs. These methods may buy Israel a time of relative calm, but its adversaries use this time to rearm and rebuild. Perhaps its adversaries might become exhausted with the conflict and seek a less violent path, but perhaps not. Ultimately, Israel must either defeat its VEO adversaries militarily or use all of its instruments of power to address its adversary's strategic intent/motivations for conflict. Former Israeli Foreign Minister, Shlomo Ben Ami, in addressing the 2014 conflict between Israel and Gaza, assessed Israel's dilemma, saying, "These wars are creating a new kind of threat to Israel, for they add to the conflicts' strictly military dimension the domains of diplomacy, regional politics, legitimacy, and international law, in which Israel does not have the upper hand. As a result, in asymmetrical conflicts, Israel finds its military superiority vitiated. These are political battles that cannot be won

by military means. The asymmetry between the nature of the threats and Israel's response ends up putting the superior military power in a position of strategic inferiority."[26] To be clear, VEO attacks demand an effective military response. Israeli deterrence operations have effectively purchased short periods of calm. But it takes more than military ways and means to manage, and perhaps resolve, such conflicts. If military means are insufficient, then how might the government best use the time and security purchased through military deterrence operations to move toward peace?

To gain lasting, or at least incremental, value from deterrence operations against VEOs, the operations must be conceptualized as a supporting part of a broader, whole-of-government strategy, a more comprehensive, long-term approach, to address conflict with VEOs. The U.S. National Security Strategy states, "Successful engagement will depend upon the effective use and integration of different elements of American power. Our diplomacy and development capabilities must help prevent conflict…" Toward this end, the U.S. military should develop a joint concept for military support to a whole-of-government strategy to prevent and manage conflict. The primary role of military deterrence operations, in this context, would be to buy time and create the security conditions for a whole-of-government strategy. Such a strategy is led by diplomatic and development efforts that are intended to address the root causes that create and sustain the VEOs. These non-military efforts will leverage the time bought by deterrence operations to enable the U.S. to seize the initiative and decisively resolve its conflicts with VEOs. **PRISM**

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## Photos

Cyclone Nargis makes landfall in Myanmar, May 3, 2008

# Reforming Myanmar's Military

BY ERIN MURPHY, MATTHEW TURPIN, AND PETER KUCIK

The developing relationship between the U.S. and Myanmar represents one of the most positive foreign policy shifts in recent memory. Myanmar is one of few former despotic nations to have "unclenched its fist" and now enjoys generally positive international support. With the U.S. actively engaged in civil capacity building efforts, the people of Myanmar are testing their new freedom of speech to debate nearly all facets of their public and private sectors. The path to democratic and economic reform, begun in 2011, will likely be rocky, but the positive momentum is clear.

There is however one glaring omission in U.S. efforts to help Myanmar: assistance in reforming its military institutions. Critics of comprehensive military assistance suggest that conducting military-to-military engagement offers something for nothing, as the Myanmar military has shown few signs of reform. With ongoing human rights abuses, the U.S. should not provide any benefits to Myanmar's military through enhanced ties. Additionally, some critics believe that U.S. military assistance will simply result in making Myanmar's military better at abusing the civilian population and will give them the tools to undermine democratic and economic reforms.

While these are legitimate concerns, direct military-to-military engagement with Myanmar is a critical part of the overall reform effort. Ignoring this crucial segment of Myanmar's society risks undermining the long-term stability and development of the country. As the military is Myanmar's most powerful institution, the U.S. government must engage with the military in a deliberate, long-term program to reinforce efforts to strengthen civil society, create civilian institutions, and ensure the military is under civilian control. As demonstrated in previous transitions from authoritarian to democratic rule, direct military-to-military assistance can play a critical part of making that a reality. Such assistance must be coordinated with broader civilian efforts, but experience has shown that the Country Teams within U.S. Embassies can manage this cooperation. While the stereotypical image of military assistance involves weapons training and battlefield tactics, the U.S. likely would focus on wider institutional issues like recruitment, pay, military justice,

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promotion, and retirement. Properly designed, these systems can reinforce principles of civilian control, and carve out a space for a professional military to flourish while remaining subordinate to civilian political leadership. Depending on the roles that Myanmar wants its military to play, the U.S. can offer assistance on training for military medicine, disaster relief, and securing the nation's borders and maritime resources.

For those who wish to punish individuals within the Myanmar military, withholding this kind of military assistance is not productive. In fact, it makes it easier for them to resist efforts to reform. If we accept the premise that civilian institutions need assistance to build their capacity to perform new roles and change the way they serve Myanmar's society, then we must understand that the same holds true for the military. Expecting Myanmar's military to reform in isolation is a risky gamble.

## Brief Background on U.S.-Myanmar Military ties

Between 1942 and 2011, the U.S.-Myanmar relationship shifted from cooperation to hostility and, in just the last three years, it has shifted back toward cooperation. During World War II, groups of ethnic Kachins fought alongside the U.S. in Northern Myanmar to open supply routes for Chinese forces fighting the Japanese. During and after the Chinese Civil War, the U.S. provided support to Chinese Nationalist (Kuomintang) troops settling in Northern Myanmar, and sought to make Myanmar a bulwark against communist



Global Journalist

**Activists protest the death of freelance journalist Aung Kyaw Naing, also known as Pary Gyi, outside Yangon's city hall. Detained 30 Sept 2014, Naing was shot and killed in military custody 4 Oct, and his death was announced 20 days later.**

expansion during the Cold War. As the U.S. grew concerned with the drug trade in the "Golden Triangle" in the 1970s, it worked with the government to disrupt production and out-flows. Bilateral ties sharply declined following the 1988 uprising and subsequent crackdown by the military junta as it consolidated its hold on power in Myanmar. The junta's brutal tac-tics prompted the U.S. to levy a series of sanc-tions and restrictions that prohibited new U.S. investment, exports to the U.S., and the provi-sion of U.S. financial services, as well as drasti-cally limiting U.S. aid and diplomatic ties. These measures were undertaken by both exec-utive order and legislation.

After nearly a quarter century of difficul-ties, the relationship began to warm in 2011. The Myanmar government took significant steps to open the political and economic sys-tems, resulting in the rollback of some of the most restrictive U.S. measures, including broad financial sanctions and diplomatic exchange protocols. However, security ties remain largely frozen as debate rages in the U.S. on how best to deal with Myanmar's military. Some in Congress and certain human rights groups called for more stringent restrictions on U.S. engagement with Myanmar's military as both a punitive measure and as leverage for measur-able progress on human rights and military professionalization.

## Myanmar's Military History

The Myanmar military was born out of a desire for independence from the British in the after-math of World War II. Aung San, father of pro-democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi, along with his "Thirty Comrades," created the Burma Independence Army (BIA). Following Myanmar's independence in 1948, the military played a critical part in guaranteeing the

country's sovereignty and protecting the new government from dozens of ethnic and anti-government militias threatening secession or coup. General Ne Win, a member of the Thirty Comrades, took power in 1958 to settle a political stalemate and gain the ability to quash uprisings, and again in 1962, this time to stay in power.

Myanmar has been in the throes of war since its independence, fighting ethnic militias – some numbering between 20,000-40,000 troops[1] – and anti-government armies. Waging counter-insurgency operations became the foundation of Myanmar's military, shaping its doctrine and institutions ever since. In the 1970s, Ne Win developed the "*four cuts*" strat-egy that cut off access to food and shelter, funds, intelligence, and recruitment, often resulting in a scorched earth policy in its implementation. To this day, the *four cuts* strat-egy remains the guiding principle behind the military's institutions and operations, which contributes to ongoing human rights viola-tions that include forced labor, child soldiers, land seizures, displacement, sexual violence, and human trafficking.

Despite a sometimes rocky relationship during the Cold War, the U.S. concentrated its support to Myanmar's military on preventing the spread of communism and drugs. Through International Military Education and Training (IMET) and similar programs, select groups of Myanmar's junior and middle ranking officers participated in professional military education in the United States.[2] IMET's purpose was to build interoperability with allied and partner militaries and to promote military profession-alism. Within the context of the Cold War, and particularly during the Vietnam conflict, this centered on making Myanmar a reliable con-tainment partner. As a frontline state in the

containment of communism, the U.S. sought a strong security partner in Myanmar to counter both Soviet and Chinese assistance to the multiple communist insurgencies in Southeast Asia. Sharing a lengthy and mountainous border with the People's Republic of China, Myanmar held a pivotal position in preventing access to the Indian Ocean and protecting Thailand, a U.S. treaty ally. This interest expanded after 1974, when the U.S. sponsored an anti-narcotics program that provided helicopters and pilot training. Narcotics production and smuggling provided funding to many of Myanmar's internal insurgencies, so this assistance aligned with Myanmar's own *four cuts* strategy.

U.S. interest in maintaining Myanmar as a bulwark against communism declined during the 1980s as the U.S. policy toward China changed, and China shifted its focus to economic development. Even after the downgrade of diplomatic relations following the military coup in 1988, the U.S. maintained a defense attaché office to monitor security developments. In the 1990s, the U.S. military conducted limited operations in Myanmar with its Joint Task Force – Full Accounting (JTF-FA) and the Central Identification Laboratory – Hawaii (CILHI) to identify and recover the remains of soldiers lost during World War II. In 2004, this recovery effort ended when the Myanmar government suspended the work on the ground.[3]

## Current State of U.S.-Myanmar Military Ties

Following Myanmar's reforms beginning in 2011, the Obama administration began to consider re-starting military cooperation. Discussions began during Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's 2011 trip to the country,

with both governments agreeing to resume the recovery of World War II remains, as well as to cooperate on counter-narcotics. Since then, Pentagon officials have traveled to Myanmar in various capacities. When former Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor Michael Posner visited Myanmar for a two-day bilateral human rights dialogue in October 2012, Lieutenant General Frank Wiercinski, commander of the U.S. Army Pacific, and Vikram Singh, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (DASD) for South and Southeast Asia, joined the U.S. delegation. The dialogue's agenda covered a range of topics, such as rule of law, the protection of human rights, and the military code of conduct. Following the human rights dialogue, the U.S. invited Myanmar to send observers to Exercise COBRA GOLD in Thailand, the largest multilateral joint military training exercise in the Asia-Pacific.[4]  In June 2014, Lieutenant General Anthony Crutchfield, Deputy Commander of the U.S. Pacific Command, addressed Myanmar's National Defense College, the first U.S. military officer to do so. In January 2014, the second two-day human rights dialogue took place, again with representatives of the U.S. military joining State Department colleagues to discuss a range of topics, including military reform.

Despite these initial steps to restart the relationship, there are still Myanmar-specific and non-country specific legislative and executive restrictions that prevent real assistance to address the challenges faced by Myanmar's security establishment. The 2012 Defense Act prohibited funding for IMET, foreign military financing, or excess defense articles.[5]  The provision of counter-terrorism and stability

operations assistance, commonly known as 1206 funding, is also prohibited.[6] Additionally, the U.S. restricts direct commercial sales of military equipment or peacekeeping operations in Myanmar (as well as other selected countries) if funds "may be used to support any military training or operations that include child soldiers."[7] Since October 1, 2010, Myanmar is also prohibited from receiving aid under IMET due to the provisions of the Child Soldiers Prevention Act of 2008.

The Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) has the authority to sanction individuals and entities pursuant to the criteria outlined in relevant presidential Executive Orders (E.O.s) and the Burmese Sanctions Regulations, 31 C.F.R. Part 537. The Myanmar military's holding companies, Myanmar Economic Corporation and Union of Myanmar Economic Holdings Limited, have been included since 2008 on OFAC's list of sanctioned individuals and entities, the Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons list (SDN list). All U.S. individuals and companies worldwide are prohibited from dealing with the individuals and entities specified on the SDN list. In 2012, President Obama issued an Executive Order adding designation criteria to target individuals or entities determined "(i) to have engaged in acts that directly or indirectly threaten the peace, security, or stability of Burma [Myanmar], such as actions that have the purpose or effect of undermining or obstructing the political reform process or the peace process with ethnic minorities in Burma [Myanmar]; (ii) to be responsible for or complicit in, or responsible for ordering, controlling, or otherwise directing, or to have participated in, the commission of human rights abuses in Burma [Myanmar]; (iii) to have,

directly or indirectly, imported, exported, re-exported, sold or supplied arms or related materiel from North Korea or the Government of North Korea to Burma [Myanmar] or the Government of Burma [Myanmar]."[8] The U.S. has since added the Directorate of Defense Industries, Lieutenant Colonel Kyaw Nyunt Oo, and Lieutenant General Thein Htay, to the SDN list for engaging in such trade with North Korea.[9]

The President, under the Arms Export Control Act of 1976 (P.L. 94- 329), can prohibit all arms exports to a country "in furtherance of world peace and the security and foreign policy of the United States." In 1988, President Ronald Reagan invoked his powers under this law to impose an arms embargo on Myanmar. In 1993 the Department of State (DoS) issued a public notice implementing an immediate ban on exports of defense articles and services to Myanmar. The U.S. continues to maintain an arms embargo on Myanmar.[10]

Myanmar security forces also fall under the vetting requirements specified in section 620M of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (FAA), as amended, the "Leahy Amendment." The DoS vets beneficiaries of its assistance to foreign security forces, as well as certain Department of Defense (DoD) training programs, to ensure that recipients have not committed gross human rights abuses. When the vetting process uncovers credible evidence that an individual or unit has committed a gross violation of human rights, U.S. assistance is withheld. The obligation to vet DoS assistance and DoD-funded training programs for foreign security forces is in both the Leahy Amendment and a comparable provision in the annual DoD Appropriations Act. While the DoS legislation applies to all "assistance" under the FAA and the Arms Export Control

Act, the DoD requirements are specific to "training programs" funded under Defense Department Appropriations Acts. Security forces subject to Leahy vetting generally include foreign militaries, reserves, police, and internal security forces such as border guards, customs police, prison guards, and other units or individual members of units authorized to use force.[11]

## The Need to Pursue a Relationship with Myanmar's Military

Action on developing military ties with Myanmar is critical at this pivotal moment in the country's democratic transition. It is unreasonable to expect Myanmar's military to professionalize and subordinate itself to a new civilian government without assistance. Isolating the military leadership during this transition process can only encourage the status quo or, in the worst case, prompt backsliding. The military is the most powerful institution in Myanmar; active military officers head three ministries (Defense, Home Affairs, and Border Affairs), hold 25 percent of parliamentary seats, and manage significant business interests throughout Myanmar's economy. Additionally, little is known about the intentions or attitudes toward reform of the Commander-in-Chief, Vice Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, and other top military officials. Given this environment, the U.S. stands to gain in several ways from developing bilateral military ties with Myanmar. Comprehensive and long-term



Robert Coles

**2007 anti-government protesters in Yangon; the banner reads "non-violence: national movement."**

U.S. military engagement, paired with ongoing efforts by the U.S. government and non-governmental organizations to build civilian governance capacity, can help foster a peaceful and lasting democratic transition.

Decades of ethnic strife, internal conflict, and dysfunctional governance have left Myanmar unable to make the necessary reforms alone. There is broad understanding that Myanmar needs help reforming its economy, infrastructure, and civil society. The U.S. is actively engaging in outreach to Myanmar's "cronies," the businessmen on OFAC's SDN list that have been pilloried for benefiting financially from their ties to the former junta. The U.S. government has identified ways for these business tycoons to reform their practices in order to have the sanctions against them lifted. Assistant Secretary for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor Tom Malinowski, traveled to Myanmar in June 2014 and met with several sanctioned individuals to start a dialogue on ways to change. The delegation explained that removal from the SDN list is a legal, not a political, process managed by OFAC, for which petitioners must demonstrate fundamental behavior change. "Those still on our sanctions list have a chance to build a new legacy for themselves and their country by showing that they have cut business ties with the military and started respecting human rights in the communities where they operate," said Assistant Secretary Malinowski.[12]

The U.S. is also moving away from a transactional foreign policy where the U.S. will only take action, whether to reward or punish, in response to moves the Myanmar government makes. Following the August 2014 Regional Forum meetings of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), a senior U.S. government official said that in the context of removing or imposing new sanctions, "(i)t [discussions] wasn't, 'If you don't do this, we won't do that.'"[13]

The same applies to their military. If the international community, including the U.S. and the human rights non-governmental organizations, wants Myanmar's military to change in a positive way, they must have "skin in the game." Withholding assistance as a form of punishment only undermines the objectives sought: a military in Myanmar that respects human rights, follows the rule of law, and operates under civilian control. There is domestic support for such assistance, including from the political opposition and civil society groups that recognize the need for reform and professionalization of the military. Within the international community and in certain human rights groups however, there is a lack of trust in the Myanmar military and concern that expansion of military cooperation could lead to a greater ability or willingness to commit abuse. While this is a legitimate concern, the only real way to stop Myanmar military abuses is for the military to undergo internal reforms to change its culture and actively prevent these activities. During her initial months in parliament, pro-democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi supported military professionalization, noting her fondness for the armed services due to her father's role in the creation of the BIA. She expressed concern with the military's presence in parliament and the constitutional powers it granted itself, and has repeatedly called for assistance in reforming the military, particularly its role in business and politics.[14] Assistant Secretary Malinowski has also stated that "(t)he only path to a professional and modern [Burmese] military is through discipline, accountability, transparency, and civilian oversight by a democratically

elected government. This may not happen overnight, but in the meantime we encouraged the military to take concrete, visible steps to demonstrate its commitment to human rights, for example by issuing and making public orders to cease land confiscations, and the use of forced labor and child soldiers."[15]

As in all other states, the Myanmar military is not a monolithic institution. There have been calls by soldiers in the lower ranks to reform, and there are those in the military who remember when there was cooperation with the U.S. and would like a return to that status. Finally, the military wants the domestic and international respect that professionalization brings, and has the willingness to do what it takes to earn that respect. On almost every official trip, senior government and military officers acknowledge their participation in IMET and fondly recall their experiences. As an educational development program, IMET is designed to promote professionalization and U.S. military values as part of a long-term strategy that properly nests and complements other engagement policies, especially those targeting human rights violations.

It also is critical to provide the military a stake and a role in the government's reform efforts. Thus far, this key part of Myanmar's political system has been further isolated, with increased public calls for more punitive measures. Failing to assist the military with carving out a legitimate role in Myanmar society only strengthens the notion that the democratic experiment offers the military nothing and increases the risk that it will seek to undermine the reform efforts.

## Obstacles to Greater Ties

Human rights organizations oppose expanding military ties to Myanmar, highlighting what they term as "backsliding" on reforms there. Certainly dealing with an institution associated with a litany of atrocities comes with reputational costs. There is a real question on whether the Myanmar military can in fact reform. There have been reports of continued abuses, particularly in conflict areas in Kachin and Shan States, which put in doubt trust of the military. However, while such critics serve an important role in exposing human rights abuses perpetrated by the military, particularly in ethnic minority areas, they have offered few alternatives to punitive measures, or viable recommendations for reforming the institution.

Congress has also expressed deep concern in re-engaging with Myanmar's military. Representatives Steve Chabot, former Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific, and Joe Crowley, in December 2013 introduced the Burma Human Rights and Democracy Act of 2013, H.R. 3889. This bipartisan measure places conditions on U.S. military assistance to Myanmar, including prohibiting the use of FY2014 Department of Defense funds to assist Myanmar until the U.S. Secretary of State certifies the country has taken steps toward establishing civilian oversight of the armed forces, addressing human rights abuses by the military, and terminating military relations with North Korea.[16] In January 2014 Senators Marco Rubio and Robert Menendez introduced The Burma Human Rights and Democracy Act of 2013, a parallel bipartisan Senate measure that would prohibit U.S. military aid to Myanmar, except in cases of basic training on human rights and civilian control of the military. The bill offers no waivers and would lift the prohibition only if Myanmar takes concrete actions to measurably improve human rights conditions, including:

establishing civilian oversight of the armed forces, addressing human rights violations by their military, and terminating military relations with North Korea. The amendment would also request an annual report on the Obama Administration's strategy to engage the Myanmar military.[17]

Additionally, it is unclear the degree to which strengthened military ties with the U.S. can influence a reforming a military. A 2011 Government Accountability Office report concluded that the effectiveness of IMET is largely unsubstantiated and that confidence is based on anecdotal data at best due to significant data gaps and a lack of rigorous analysis.[18] Critics of reinstituting IMET in Myanmar note that alumni of the IMET program have committed human rights abuses and that the program did little to change the course of military reform. Human rights groups argue that the U.S. should withhold IMET until all culpable parties are held accountable and the relevant institutions undergo drastic reform.

## Getting it Done Right, Not Getting it Done Tomorrow

Resuming military-to-military ties does not mean training and arming the Myanmar military to become better at committing abuses. Given its history since independence, it is unrealistic to assume that Myanmar can organically develop civilian control of its military or turn away from entrenched doctrines, like the *four cuts* strategy, without assistance. The nations of Eastern Europe faced similar challenges in the 1990s



Mikhail Esteves

**Burma is home to at least 2 million IDPs of various ethnicities, and at least 2 million others have found refuge in neighboring countries. Shown here is the Mae La refugee camp in Tak, Thailand, which houses a number of Karen refugees; the Karen Conflict has been termed the "longest civil war in the world" (1949-present).**

following the collapse of communism. The U.S., along with NATO partners, played an active and positive role in helping those countries reform their militaries. At the time, there was similar concern over the human rights violations perpetrated by members of those militaries and their involvement in the political process (military leaders were often communist party members). However, instead of being aloof and insisting on full internal reform before assistance could begin, the U.S. and NATO took steps, although potentially risky, to positively shape that reform process through a proactive, long-term and comprehensive security cooperation program called Partnership for Peace (PfP).

For 20 years, the annual Congressional appropriation for the Warsaw Initiative Fund (WIF) has enabled the DoD to support NATO's

PfP Program. The objective of both WIF and PfP has been to advance democratic reforms of defense establishments and military forces in the former communist-bloc countries of Eastern Europe, as well as the former Soviet Republics. The program has involved 35 countries, 12 of which have become NATO members. It supports a wide range of activities, from military-to-military engagements and training exercises, to education programs for uniformed military leaders and civilian leaders occupying positions within newly established ministries of defense. The program has been a resounding success for a number of the PfP participants, and countries like Poland, Bulgaria, Romania, and the Baltic States have reformed their militaries and established robust civilian control after decades under authoritarian regimes. Obviously, much of the credit goes to the people of these nations, but



TV footage following Myanmar military attack on Kachin rebels

the far-sighted legislative decision to provide assistance early in the reform process enabled this success.[19]

There is a range of options to bring about the changes in the Myanmar military that the U.S. wants to see. The concept in resuming ties is to slowly and methodically do so, building the institutions with civilian control first, and then working through to other issues. We recommend the following:

Human Rights Dialogue: The Human Rights Dialogue offers a chance for a higher-level dialogue with U.S. and military officials, and should be continued on an annual basis. After more than a two-year hiatus, the second Human Rights Dialogue was held in January 2015. Human rights are the central theme of this program, and institutionalizing the dialogue would present a regular opportunity for policymakers from various departments, including DoD and DoS, to explain the need for and ways to implement a human rights policy for Myanmar's military.

Track 1.5 and Track 2 Exchanges: In addition to the Human Rights Dialogue, a combination of Track 1.5 and Track 2 dialogues can bring in the appropriate human rights and military scholars, foreign policy practitioners, and retired military officials to discuss ways to professionalize the military, as well as offer first-hand experiences of how senior military officers serve under civilian leadership. Retired U.S. military officers and civilian defense officials can speak in military parlance while offering constructive advice on professionalization and appropriate roles for military officers in both governance and national security institutions.

Disaster Relief and Humanitarian Assistance Capacity Building: Myanmar is prone to natural disasters and its fragile infrastructure places its citizens at even greater risk from flooding, cyclones, and earthquakes. Cyclone Nargis in 2008 devastated the Ayeyarwady Delta and the city of Yangon, killing close to 130,000 people. Myanmar's military could be trained to quickly mobilize to aid victims of natural disasters, evacuate them to safer areas, and support reconstruction efforts. More importantly, Myanmar could use its military to focus on disaster risk reduction and other preparedness efforts, something Bangladesh has done to great effect. The U.S. government could offer military-to-military training programs and technical assistance in an effort to begin to transform the military's role in Myanmar. Given the effort expended since Hurricane Katrina to develop the doctrine and conceptual foundation of Defense Support to Civil Authorities, the U.S. military could use these lessons to help Myanmar's military turn away from the *four cuts* strategy and adopt a strategy focused on protecting citizens from significant environmental risks. Additionally, the U.S. could include Myanmar in its annual Pacific Partnership and Pacific Angel operations, which focus on bringing civil engineering and military medicine programs to countries in the region. These programs assist host nation militaries develop capacity in these areas, and provide humanitarian assistance to civilian populations through the construction of schools and other public buildings and the provision of basic health and dental care.

Security Cooperation Programs: The U.S. has a number of security cooperation programs that could be used in combination to bring about positive changes and accountability. The first and probably most important for Myanmar today is the Defense Institutional Reform Initiative (DIRI). The goal of this

program is to develop effective, accountable, professional and transparent security establishments, something that all assess is lacking in Myanmar. DIRI would place U.S. subject matter experts within Myanmar's military institutions to develop a common assessment of organizational weaknesses and a plan for making reforms. Another is the Ministry of Defense Advisor (MoDA) program that seeks to build civilian ministerial capacity. It partners U.S. DoD civilians with foreign counterparts to help them develop specific programs for budgeting and programming, acquisition processes, and running personnel systems for recruitment, pay, promotion and retirement. While the DoD currently operates MoDA only in Afghanistan, it represents the kind of program that could be employed to assist Myanmar. As policy makers discuss increased military engagement with Myanmar, DIRI and MoDA should be among the first considerations.

Over time and in line with legislative and executive restrictions, the IMET program can educate and influence future military leaders and establish a rapport between U.S. and Myanmar military officers. As progress is made and reforms are undertaken, the U.S. has a number of programs designed to assist in providing military resources, whether through financing (Foreign Military Financing - FMF) or direct sales (Foreign Military Sales -FMS), to purchase new equipment or pay for specialized training for new roles and missions.

Peacekeeping Operations: As Myanmar reforms its military institutions, the U.S. could begin providing assistance to build peacekeeping capacity, so that Myanmar can be a net contributor to stability. This effort is likely years off in the future, but a number of countries like Mongolia and Bangladesh have

focused their military doctrines and training to provide the United Nations with forces capable of fulfilling peacekeeping operations in other parts of the world. The U.S. could use its extensive experience in training other peacekeeping forces to help shape the Myanmar military for this role, if the government desires. Conducting such training would have the added benefit of establishing interoperability between the U.S. and Myanmar militaries, making it easier to integrate Myanmar into multilateral exercises and regional security efforts, like the ASEAN initiatives on maritime security, counter-piracy, counter-terrorism, and disaster relief. These are decisions that do not need to be made today, but their consideration could suggest a path for the U.S. and Myanmar to follow if both choose to establish a long-term, comprehensive military relationship.

## Conclusion

It is tempting to think that Myanmar's military leadership could just snap their fingers and immediately institute civilian control or abandon the *four cuts* strategy. Unfortunately, such efforts require comprehensive institutional changes and would be difficult even under the best conditions. If the U.S. wants and expects change, then it must actively work to realize that change, including by providing training, resources, and support to the individuals trying to reform that space in Myanmar's society. The same holds true for Myanmar's military and security sectors. The U.S., in cooperation with the wider international community, must be willing to engage Myanmar's military to develop a comprehensive program that does not simply focus on how *not* to act, but provides resources and assistance in adopting new roles and missions, as well as the new doctrines, processes, and systems that will

ultimately create a new military foundation in Myanmar. That is a daunting and scary prospect for any institution. In the end, the people of Myanmar, both civilian and military, will have to do the hard work of reforming; we should help them in that effort.

As Assistant Secretary Malinowski said, "(t)his country's transition has just begun, and the hardest work is still ahead – but there is unlimited potential. And the United States is committed as a partner and as a friend to seeing that potential fully realized." PRISM

## Notes

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## Photos

Page 76 photo by Mohd Nor Azmil Abdul Rahman. 2008. *Cyclone Nargis in Myanmar. Views to show the effects of the wind and rain on 3 May 2008*. From http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cyclone_Nargis_-Myanmar-3May2008.jpg licensed under the Creative Commons **Attribution 2.0 Generic** license. http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/deed.en. Photo reproduced unaltered.

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Cristina Fernández de Kirchner and Medvedev in the Casa Rosada, Buenos Aires, Argentine, 2010

# The Advance of Radical Populist Doctrine in Latin America

## How the Bolivarian Alliance is Remaking Militaries, Dismantling Democracy and Combatting the Empire

BY DOUGLAS FARAH

In July 2014 Russian President Vladimir Putin visited Cuba, Nicaragua, Argentina and Brazil. He forgave more than $30 billion in Cuban debt from the Cold War; signed a nuclear energy and gas deals with Argentina and declared the beleaguered administration of Cristina Fernández de Kirchner a "top strategic ally;" promised his old friend Daniel Ortega in Nicaragua agricultural assistance and other aid; and signed on as a founding member of the BRICS' new development bank to challenge the World Bank and International Monetary Fund.[1]

Ten days after Putin's visit, Chinese President Xi Jinping swept through the region, visiting Brazil, Argentina, Venezuela and Cuba and dispensing some $70 billion in loans, lines of credit and direct aid.[2]  It was his second visit to the region in less than two years and the third by a Chinese president in the past three years.

In contrast, in eight years President Obama has visited only six Latin American countries – and only one more than once.[3]  U.S. aid to the region has been shrinking and most of what is available is used to fund increasingly unpopular counter-narcotics efforts. Even the crisis of unaccompanied minors from Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador resulted in an acrimonious domestic debate over immigration policy that yielded little additional aid to the region.

Many U.S. policy leaders express dismay at the inability of U.S. leaders to produce desired results around the world, from brokering a ceasefire in the Middle East to stemming the advance of radical Islamists in Iraq and Syria, and warn of a decline of U.S influence.

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But the visits of the gift-laden presidents of Russia and China to Latin America, traditionally a region of unchallenged U.S. influence, underscores the significant loss of Washington's ability to shape events in a region much closer to home and of significant strategic interest. The decline, due to waning policy attention amidst multiple global crises and severe budget constraints, is leaving a diminishing group of friends in the hemisphere. While the U.S. position remains preeminent – due to geographic proximity, cultural ties, and trade ties – it is rapidly eroding.

In a multi-polar world of competing powers some shifts are inevitable, and not all present a strategic challenge. But in the case of Latin America, the long-standing U.S. goal of establishing functioning democracies under the rule of law, with stable economic growth, is being dismantled after decades of progress.

U.S. engagement efforts, both military and diplomatic, are being scaled back dramatically, leaving a vacuum being filled by extra-regional actors and a growing group of political leaders who hope for the collapse of the United States. Beginning in 2010 overall U.S. aid, both civilian and security assistance, began to drop dramatically and the regional initiatives are among the hardest hit by the ongoing budget austerity and sequestration.[4]

As the U.S. pulls back it is simultaneously facing concerted effort by radical self-proclaimed socialist and populist governments to erase any trace of U.S. military and security doctrine, weaken economic and cultural ties, and portray any and all U.S. policy decisions as seeking to recolonize Latin America.

The visits of Putin and Xi Jinping to the main Bolivarian nations were designed to strengthen those governments and give them fresh resources. Iran also weighed in, announcing that its official Book News Agency would be releasing a special edition book of the writing and thinking of Fidel Castro and, in addition, a book compiling the revolutionary successes of Ukraine, Syria, Iraq and Venezuela.[5]

U.S. influence is being replaced by a lethal doctrine of asymmetrical warfare, inspired by authoritarian governments seeking perpetual power and nurtured by Iran. Through an interlocking and rapidly expanding network of official websites, publishing houses, think tanks and military academies, the governments of Argentina, Cuba and Venezuela have created a dominant narrative that identifies the United States as the primary threat to Latin America.

The 8-member Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA), espousing "Socialism for the 21st Century", is replacing U.S. influence with a toxic mix of anti-democratic values, massive corruption, and a doctrine that draws on terrorism and totalitarian models, including the justification of the use of weapons of mass destruction against the United States. In an indication of the organization's inclination, Iran and Syria are the only two countries that have been granted observer status in ALBA.[6] In addition to the eight nations formally in ALBA, Argentina has become a de facto member of the alliance under Fernández de Kirchner and her government has become one of the leading state sponsors of the new ideology.

Under the banner of the "Bolivarian Revolution," named for South American liberator Simón Bolivar, the group has tried to forge a new economic, political, and military model that is completely untethered from Western democratic values and models. Rather, the bloc looks to Cuba, Iran, Hezbollah, China and Russia as anti-imperialist bulwarks to be

emulated. Alliances with Zimbabwe, Angola, Syria and other repressive regimes are viewed as beneficial to the revolution.

The Bolivarian nations, occasionally joined by Brazil, consistently side with any nation against U.S. interests. This includes supporting the government of Syria, the Russian annexation of Crimea and intervention in Ukraine, and helping Iran evade international sanctions. Fernández de Kirchner of Argentina, once considered an ally of the United States, has been particularly vocal in her support of every statement of Putin and move by Russia, closely followed by Maduro of Venezuela.

The Bolivarian revolution is not a significant military threat to the United States. Rather, the primary threat lies in the willingness of the alliance to offer sanctuary, support,

and infrastructure to those with an overtly hostile, multifaceted agenda toward the United States (Iran, Russia), or countries like China who have both strategic, intelligence and economic designs in the region. The ALBA axis acts as a gateway and secure entry point for these nations, and for hostile non-state actors and proxies such as Hezbollah, the Basque ETA, transnational organized crime groups linked to Russian and Chinese state presence, and other actors.

There are some Orwellian twists to the new radical populism that underscore the efforts to create an entire new worldview in the region. Fernández de Kirchner recently announced the establishment of a new "Secretariat of National Thought." She said the office, to be led by Ricardo Forster, one of her



Fabio Rodrigues Pozzebom / Agência Brasil

**The presidents of Paraguay, Fernando Lugo, of Bolivia, Evo Morales, of Brazil, Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, of Ecuador, Rafael Correa, and Venezuela, Hugo Chavez, participating with members of the World Social Forum**

most loyal intellectual allies, would "design, coordinate and create a factory of national thought, in line with what the secretary decides."[7] The announcement was met with widespread ridicule and comparison to Joseph Goebbels and the Nazi Ministry of Propaganda, yet is now operational.

Despite such twists that could provide openings, there is no countervailing U.S.-led counter-narrative in support of democratic values or U.S interests. Given the multiple failures of the Bolivarian system, creating such a narrative is not an insurmountable obstacle. There are significant and exploitable vulnerabilities, both political – such as the Secretariat of National Thought – and economic. However, as resources diminish and Latin America remains a low priority region for policy makers, these opportunities are seldom recognized and even less often acted on.

The failures are very public. Venezuela under Hugo Chávez initially, and currently under Nicolás Maduro, has become the second most violent country in the world, after Honduras.[8] The Venezuelan economy is in a free fall, with shortages of everything from basic foodstuffs to toilet paper. Cuba's economy remains almost entirely dependent on virtually free Venezuelan oil.

Argentina is facing a deep recession, steep inflation, and just on July 31 defaulted on its international debt payments. Nicaragua and Bolivia remain among the poorest nations in the world. All the main Bolivarian countries have greatly restricted freedom of expression, shut down independent media, ravaged the fragile and weak judicial systems, and tampered with the electoral process. In every Bolivarian nation senior officials have been credibly linked to transnational organized criminal activity, particularly cocaine trafficking and weapons sales. The levels of corruption, by every measure, are greater under the Bolivarian governments in South America than in previous times.[9]

While the revolutionary model, financed by Venezuela's extensive oil revenues, began as "bread and circus," with promises to do everything for everyone, noted one economist, as the model collapsed, it "became only circus, and in its last phase, the clowns abandon the circus and all that is left is a razed field."

Gen. John Kelly, commander of the U.S. Southern Command responsible for Latin America, is acutely aware of his waning ability to shape and influence events. As an 'economy of force' combatant command designed to have a light footprint, ongoing budget cuts have had an enormous impact on SOUTHCOM's ability to operate in the region and defend the southern approaches to the United States.

In an unusually blunt posture statement to Congress in February 2014, Kelly said his shrinking budget had forced a significant retreat from Latin America and the Caribbean:

> *Ultimately, the cumulative impact of our reduced engagement will be measured in terms of U.S. influence, leadership, and relationships in the Western Hemisphere. Severe budget constraints have serious implications for all three, at a time in which regional security issues warrant greater attention.*
>
> *Budget cuts are having a direct and detrimental effect on our security cooperation activities, the principal way we engage and promote defense cooperation in the region. The cumulative effect of our reduced*

*engagement is a relative but accelerated decline of trust in our reliability and commitment to the region. Our relationships, our leadership, and our influence in the Western Hemisphere are paying the price.*

*Severe budget constraints are significantly degrading our ability to defend the southern approaches to the United States.*[10]

One constant in the new narrative, and a particular favorite of the late Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez, is that a U.S. invasion is imminent and inevitable. This is because the alleged United States policy is based on pillaging the region's natural resources, toppling the revolutionary regimes leading the march to Latin American independence, and subjugating its citizens. Flush with oil revenues at a time when U.S. attention was focused on two hot wars, Venezuela and its allies have rapidly reshaped the battle of ideas against the United States in Latin America.

As one prominent Bolivarian website stated, "Every U.S. military base in Our America is not only a terrible threat, but an attack on the dignity of the people and an intolerable humiliation."[11]

A constant but small anti-U.S. narrative has long been a part of the Latin American landscape, shaped by mass movements, armed insurgencies and Marxist ideologies, and based on the turbulent history of relations between the United States and the region. The difference now is the overt multi-government sponsorship of the effort and the official adoption of these positions as policy and doctrine. This gives the current campaign deeper roots and access to levers of state power.

The initial narrative was shaped before and during the Cold War when the United States, in its effort to counter Soviet sponsorship of leftist parties, guerilla movements and terrorist groups, often supported governments in the region whose leaders were human rights abusers, including brutal military dictatorships. During this period the standing of many Latin militaries was compromised and the Left was able to cast the United States as a supporter of dictators. Increasingly over the past four decades U.S. diplomatic and military doctrine and training have focused on human rights training, respect for civilian governments and the rule of law. This process helped transform Latin American countries and militaries away from their coup-prone and authoritarian past into national defense institutions under civilian control. Colombia and Chile, the two most visible U.S. allies in the region, are vibrant examples of the success the changes have brought.

Yet in most of the region, this trend toward institutionalism is being reversed. Bolivarian leaders are building militaries in the Cuban and Iranian molds – as instruments of increasingly authoritarian revolutions, to be used against any "counter-revolutionary" dissent. The military hierarchy has been repeatedly breached to purge senior officers trained in the United States or Europe. Elite units of the military and police have been disbanded and those loyal to the revolution have been placed in leadership positions, regardless of their qualifications.[12]

Like Cuba and Iran, most ALBA nations are creating well-armed militias that respond directly to the president, not the military hierarchy. These groups are used primarily as shock troops to suppress street protests.

As the paramilitary *Basij* in Iran showed in 2009, and the *Colectivos* in Venezuela show today, the model is highly successful in stifling

internal dissent and its members can carry out their brutality with impunity. The loyalty of these groups lies with the revolution and its leader – not the rule of law, democracy with alternating parties in power, or civilian leaders viewed as disloyal to the revolution.

Within the Bolivarian construct a strong president is the representative of the revolution, which in turn represents the will of the people. Therefore, anything against the president is counter-revolutionary, against the people, and deserving of censure and punishment. If the judiciary, the media or civil society organizations do not align with the revolution, they must be eradicated as a cancer spreading counter-revolutionary values at the bidding of the "Empire," as the United States is routinely



President of Argentina, Cristina Kirchner, holding a poster of Guevara. She has remarked that "Che is a man who fought unconditionally for his ideas and died for them."

called. Because the revolution holds itself up as a paragon of virtue in contrast to the corrupt traditional order, any reporting of the massive corruption and incompetence that inevitably ensues has to be silenced and its authors discredited as agents of the Empire's interests.

The emerging military doctrine is only one part of multi-pronged "war of ideas" waged by the ALBA nations and their allies. This multi-faceted campaign is coordinated, consistent in its messaging, and unrelenting in its narrative that the values, doctrine, economic model and political system of the United States and Western democracies have failed.

"The U.S. military expansion and strengthening of the Latin American militaries are the primary threats to the growth of democracy and stability in the region," said one policy statement. "However, the militaries see the consequences to this domination and exploitation – popular opposition – and see these U.S. actions as the main threat to Latin America."[13]

This ALBA doctrine is now being taught as military doctrine in the member nations. The government-sponsored interlocking wheels of teaching, narrative and blatant fabrications and misrepresentations have real implications for the future security of the United States and democracy in Latin America.

The new ALBA model posits that Soviet-style socialism and Marxism did not fail conceptually, but in their implementation. Hence the end of the Cold War was simply an historical pause, which is now ending. The new 21st Century Socialism is a mixture of radical populism, the cult of personality, and all-encompassing revolution that puts its members in constant conflict with all those who oppose their vision of the future – most often the "Empire."

The Cuban revolution, long on the margins of regional thinking, is ironically now viewed as a sustainable model for the Bolivarian revolution. The new mantra is now *progresismo* (progressivism), often shortened to *progres* or *nac y pop* (national and popular) in the revolutionary vernacular, based on the unity of the people with the revolution and, by extension, the revolutionary leader embodying the revolution.

Yet, as Gen. Kelly notes, there is little awareness of the deep reversals the United States has suffered in the battle of ideas in the region. While many volumes have recently been published on the new military, security and social doctrines being spread across the region, few outside are even aware of the sea change and fewer still have studied it and tried to understand it.

## The New Military Structure

Since at least 2004, the Bolivarian axis has been working to create a set of regional organizations that explicitly exclude the United States and often Canada. The fundamental premise is that anything in which the United States participates will be subservient to the "Empire." So, in addition to creating new entities – with an emphasis on military training – it is necessary to withdraw or weaken those institutions where the United States does participate, including the Organization of American States (OAS) and its affiliated groups such as the Inter-American Defense Board and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.

As with most Bolivarian structures, there are different levels to the effort, with the most radical being closest to the ALBA core, and showing a less militant face when seeking to expand its influence beyond that core.

The initial foray into Bolivarian military doctrine came from Chávez in 2005, when he officially adopted teachings which explicitly embrace a radical Islamist model of asymmetrical or "fourth-generation warfare," with its heavy reliance on suicide bombings and different types of terrorism, including the use of nuclear weapons and other WMD.

Chávez adopted as his military doctrine the concepts and strategies articulated in <u>Peripheral Warfare and Revolutionary Islam: Origins, Rules and Ethics of Asymmetrical Warfare</u> *(Guerra Periférica y el Islam Revolucionario: Orígenes, Reglas y Ética de la Guerra Asimétrica)*, by the Spanish politician and ideologue Jorge Verstrynge.[14] Verstrynge argues for the destruction of United States through series of asymmetrical attacks, like those of 9-11, in the belief that the United States will simply crumble when its vast military strength cannot be used to combat its enemies.

Although he is not a Muslim, and the book was not written directly in relation to the Venezuelan experience, Verstrynge moves beyond previous strategies articulated by Carlos Ilich Sánchez Ramirez to embrace all strands of radical Islam for helping to expand the parameters of what irregular warfare should encompass, including the use of biological and nuclear weapons, along with the correlated civilian casualties among the enemy.[15]

Central to Verstrynge's idealized view of terrorists is the belief in the sacredness of the willingness of the fighters to sacrifice their lives in pursuit of their goals. Before writing extensively on how to make chemical weapons and listing helpful places to find information on the manufacture of rudimentary nuclear

bombs that "someone with a high school education could make," Verstrynge writes:

> We already know it is incorrect to limit asymmetrical warfare to guerrilla warfare, although it is important. However, it is not a mistake to also use things that are classified as terrorism and use them in asymmetrical warfare. And we have super terrorism, divided into chemical terrorism, bioterrorism (which uses biological and bacteriological methods), and nuclear terrorism, which means "the type of terrorism uses the threat of nuclear attack to achieve its goals."

In a December 12, 2008 interview with Venezuelan state television, Verstrynge lauded Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda for creating a new type of warfare that is "de-territorialized, de-stateized and de-nationalized," a war where suicide bombers act as "atomic bombs for the poor."[17] In his interview with Univisión, Verstrynge said his model was specifically drawn from Hezbollah's experience.

Chávez liked the Verstrynge book so well that he had a special pocket-sized edition printed and distributed to the armed forces officer corps with express orders that it be read cover to cover. It has since been adopted as official Venezuelan military doctrine.

## The Proliferation of Bolivarian Military Academies

The military institution most explicitly designed to eradicate any vestiges of U.S. military doctrine in the region is the ALBA Defense and Sovereignty School, established in 2011 with the support of Iran, near the city of Santa Cruz, Bolivia.

Bolivian President Morales, speaking at the inauguration of the facility, said the School would prepare the peoples of the region to defend against "imperialist threats, which seek to divide us." He said that the "Peoples of ALBA are being besieged, sanctioned and punished by imperial arrogance just because we are exerting the right of being decent and sovereign." He added that, "We must not allow the history of colonization to be repeated or our resources to become the loot of the Empire."

Speaking before the assembled heads of state from the ALBA countries, Morales articulated the ALBA position by saying,

> The Empire seeks to divide us, make us fight with our brother nations, in order to benefit from those conflicts. But we have decided to live in peace. The most profitable business of the empire is armed conflict among brother nations. War has one winner: Capitalism. And war has one loser: less developed nations.[19]

Iran's interest in the project, which it supports financially, was made clear when Iranian defense minister Ahmad Vahidi arrived in Bolivia for the school's inauguration, despite having an Interpol Red Notice issued for his arrest as a result of his alleged participation in the 1994 AMIA bombing in Buenos Aires.

When his public appearance at a military ceremony the day before the school's inauguration set off an international scandal Vahidi quietly slipped out of Bolivia.[20]

Since the Vahidi embarrassment, the ALBA nations have softened their tone. As they seek a broader membership in their new wave of regional organizations and military centers they have been careful to make the ties to Iran less visible and publicly mute some of the harshest anti-imperialist rhetoric. Rather, in

the broader arenas, they have adopted a narrative that a new defense doctrine is imperative to build the mythical Latin American unity in order to defend the region's natural resources.

One of the most prominent of the new groups is the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), which was specifically founded in 2010 to exclude the United States. As Bolivian President Evo Morales said, "it is important to identify those responsible for the poverty, inequality and injustice, and to debate, analyze and create unity of the American countries, without the United States, in order to liberate our people."[21]

Prior to the formation of CELAC, and not couched in as explicitly anti-U.S. terms, was the Union of South American Countries (*Unión de Naciones Sudamericanas – UNASUR*), founded in 2008. One of the first group's first actions was to form the South American Defense Council (*Consejo de Defensa Sudamericáno*), as a counterpart to the IADB. It also set up what has become one of the premiere anti-U.S. think tanks in terms of military policy, the Center for Strategic Defense Studies (*Centro de Estudio Estratégicos de la Defensa – CEED*), based in Buenos Aires and led by Alfredo Forti, a former Argentine defense official. At the inauguration of the Center, Forti repeated the Bolivarian mantra that coming conflicts would be over Latin America's abundant natural resources, which outside forces, meaning the United States, would seek to expropriate.

In a February 2014 meeting in Suriname of the Defense Council, UNASUR agreed to establish the South American Defense School (*Escuela Suramericana de Defensa*), to be located in Quito, Ecuador. The purpose is to promote a regional defense strategy to "protect natural resources, reduce technological dependency and face possible current threats."[22]

All of these structures are closely tied to the Bolivarian Military University of the Republic of Venezuela (*Universidad Militar Bolivariana de Venezuela*) in Caracas, Venezuela. The university describes its mission as inculcating "ethical, moral spiritual and socialist values" in its students.[23]

In keeping with the veneration of the heroes of the Bolivarian revolution, the university recently created a Nestor Kirchner-Hugo Chávez chair to study the teaching of both deceased leaders. The announcement of the chair came during a recent visit of the Argentine minister of defense Agustín Rossi with his Venezuelan counterpart Carmen Melendez. The two also signed a series of agreements on joint training and the exchange of scientific and technological knowledge.[24]

It is worth noting that staunch U.S. allies in the regions, such as Colombia, joined these groups in large part to avoid deep regional isolation. These countries have quietly tried to blunt some of the more radical efforts of the ALBA nations and have used the UNASUR platform to demand more transparency in the region's defense budgets, a move aimed at Venezuela. Overall the countries have been muted in their disagreements.

## The Support Structures

These interlocking institutions of higher military learning are supported by an extensive network of intellectuals who have written dozens of books now being taught as the new military theory, as well as dozens of websites which provide content, updates, and forums for discussion. The vast majority of the content is sharply anti-U.S. and offers an interpretation of history that, at best, is riddled with

half-truths, lies and leaps of the imagination and intellect.

While few in the U.S. military or policy community have read these authors and websites, they are among the most influential in the Bolivarian bloc, particularly in the armed forces, and are the heralds of the next generation of radical doctrine.

Here is a small sampling of some of the most influential ideologues and the overlapping support structures.

**Atilio Boron,** an Argentine political scientist and sociologist with a Ph.D. from Harvard who currently teaches at the University of Buenos Aires and the Floreal Gorini Cultural Center in Buenos Aires.

His work often appears on websites like www.rebelion.org , with links in Argentina, Cuba, Bolivia, Venezuela, Spain and Colombia; www.en.cubadebate.cu , www.alainet.org, which stands for Latin America in Movement ("*America Latina en Movimiento*"), www.contrainjerencia.com; and the Floreal Gorini Cultural Center, (*Centro Cultural de la Cooperación Floreal Gorini*) www.centrocultural.coop, which is his main headquarters. These links will be discussed in more detail below.

The Argentine government's support for Boron's work can be seen by his appointment to the National Council of Scientific and Technical Investigations (*Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Cientificas y Tecnicas – CONICET*), which is directly dependent on the presidency.

Boron's three most influential works are Latin America in the Geopolitics of Imperialism (*America Latina en la Geopolitica del Imperialismo*); The Military Strategy of the United States in Latin America (*Estrategia Militar de Estados Unidos en America Latina*); and Socialism of the XXIst Century: Is There

Life After Neoliberalism? (*Socialism Siglo XXI: Hay vida después del neoliberalismo?*).

In his works he argues that establishing military control over Latin America is a key policy of the "Empire." The evidence for this is what he describes as the enormous U.S. deployment of troops, the construction of dozens of bases and "support" programs for the U.S. military in almost every country in the region. Among those he cites are a proposed disaster relief coordination center in Paraguay and other humanitarian programs.

Boron portrays each of these as a facet of a new U.S. military doctrine in which the "war on terrorism" morphed into a "war on drug trafficking" into what has now become a doctrine of "eternal warfare."

**Telma Luzzani,** an Argentine journalist who works for the government-financed Vision 7 Internacional and Radio Nacional. Her most recent book, Territories Under Surveillance: How the Network of U.S. Military Bases Operates in South America (*Territorios Vigilados: Como opera la red de bases militares norteamericanas en sudamérica*) with a U.S. soldier wearing a Nazi helmet on the cover, is a Bolivarian best seller. It is being touted on multiple Bolivarian websites as a visionary work that explains the "massive surveillance" of the U.S. Southern Command over Latin America.

As most Argentine authors, she describes the British Falkland Islands (*Islas Malvinas* to Argentina, who claims ownership of the southern isles near Antarctica) as a strategically important outpost that is key to U.S. regional hegemony.

While the justification for the bases may change over time, Luzzani said, "what won't change is the physical presence and strategic objectives" of the bases.

In an interview touting her book Luzzani states as fact that,

After studying Pentagon documents and interviewing several specialists I have been able to draw a clearer map of the U.S. military bases in the Southern Cone. I was able to draw two maps: one of the presence of the Marines in Central America and one that shows, in more detail the Southern Command's bases in South America. . . The bases have always been a vital link in the existence of any empire, and they are more efficient if one can keep them, like spies, wrapped in secrecy. . . They may be smaller, have few personnel assigned to them, be more well hidden, but they provide the necessary logistics to deploy troops on a vast scale.

**Stella Calloni**, widely regarded as one of the journalists closest to Fidel Castro and Hugo Chávez and a model journalist within the Bolivarian structure. An Argentine, she lived abroad during Argentina's military dictatorship. Fidel Castro wrote the prologue to a recent very flattering biography of Calloni titled, Stella Calloni: Intimate (*Stella Calloni: íntima*).

Calloni's recent emphasis, publicized on the Bolivarian website, is on what she calls "soft coups" (*golpes de estado suaves*) in which the Empire uses proxies such as police strikes and unrest in the military to try to topple the revolutionary governments. The strategy consists of illegal ways of creating a situation of chaos, organized by the Empire. It occurs whenever governments take popular measures and provoke the CIA to attack them.

Calloni describes a police strike for higher wages, and the subsequent unrest in Argentina in December 2013, which led to numerous incidents of lootings as part of the U.S. counter-insurgency strategy to topple unfriendly governments. Argentina's Fernández de

Kirchner echoed Calloni's analysis in statements on the strike.

Rather than acknowledge that inflation of more than 30 percent had eroded the low salaries for police, then averaging about $600 a month, the government attacked the strike as an act of treason.[26] From Calloni's perspective the police and criminal groups controlled by the police were implementing a counterinsurgency strategy through "coup vandalism" and "undemocratic chaos."[27]

Calloni supports her hypothesis in similar events in Bolivia, Ecuador, Honduras and Paraguay, where, she says, one can lay the responsibility for seditious actions at the feet of U.S. agencies and foundations often use as fronts for U.S. agencies. Nothing in any of these cases, as in the case of Argentina, could be the result of legitimate grievances against revolutionary governments, which are one with the people.[28]



Presidency of the Nation of Brazil

**Cristina Fernández with Fidel Castro, January 2009**

None of these writers or policymakers operates in a vacuum. They and their work are linked through an extensive web of cyber hubs that aggregate material, link to and promote each other, and are featured on the official websites of the governments of Cuba, Venezuela, Argentina and elsewhere. Those outlined below represent only a small fraction of the network, selected to show how they operate, rather than to exhaustively diagram the network itself.

In Argentina, one of the most sophisticated centers for bringing the various streams of thought together is the Floreal Gorini Cultural Center, with an impressive new building in down town Buenos Aires. The first floor is largely a library and bookstore devoted almost entirely to the works of Fidel Castro, Ché Guevara, Karl Marx, and many of the authors mentioned above.

The center also runs Latin American Long Distance Learning Program, (*Programa Latinoamericano de Educacion a Distancia – PLED*) that offers training programs online or in person.[29]

One example of the overlap in the courses offered is one called "Latin America, the Caribbean and Imperial Geopolitics" (*America Latina y el Caribe en la geopoíitica imperial*), taught by Atilio Boron. The center, in turn, is connected to numerous publishing houses, bookstores, universities and websites.

Another important hub is called **Mopassol**, which regularly features Stella Calloni and targets SOUTHCOM for criticism. It is also linked to a series of books, speakers and conferences that promote her work and those of likeminded individuals.

Another very active hub is called *Contrainjerencia* or Against Interference, referring to the imperialist interference in the

hemisphere. Note the connection with multiple Cuban directed sites, as with the Bolivarians, and the Argentine government news agency Telam.

Contrainjerencia in turn jointly promotes different Bolivarian training courses with another web hub, www.manuelugarte.org.

Another hub that ties into the networks above is the Cuba-based Alternative Visions (*Visiones Alternativas)* website, established following a 2001 journalism conference in Havana. The site focuses heavily on *Militarización Made in USA*, (http://pl-va.prensa-latina.cu/militarizacion/) which in turn extols the need to attack and defeat U.S. geostrategic plans to extend it hegemonic reach over the entire hemisphere (http://pl-va.prensa-latina.cu/militarizacion/geoestrategia/geoestrat.htm .)

Another important piece of the network is the Argentina-based *La Poderosa*, (www.lapoderosa.org.ar) meaning the powerful revolutionary movement sweeping Latin America. The site, featuring Ché Guevara in his trademark beret and his famous motorcycle on its homepage, declares itself part of "a Latin American revolutionary movement, a part of the battle of ideas, with Ché's motorcycle and the light of the Cuban lighthouse."

The website goes out of its way to say its contributors and hosts are anonymous, arguing that it is truly a collective work of different members who are working toward "recuperating the concept of 'power' and 'politics' because that is how a new history will be written. So we fight their 'power,' their 'politics,' their 'democracy' with poverty, illiteracy and infant mortality."

But as with the other sites, it is not a stand-alone enterprise. It owns a magazine and

links to a host of other Bolivarian websites, primarily Cuban in this case.

## Conclusions

U.S. influence in Latin America, particularly as it relates to military and security doctrine with the region's armed forces is waning quickly and dangerously. What is filling the vacuum is a particularly dangerous new doctrine of asymmetrical warfare and permanent confrontation with the United States that has serious, but little understood consequences for U.S. national security.

While U.S. historic influence has not always been beneficial, since the final decade of the Cold War a consistent policy of support for democracy, the rule of law, civilian control of the military and human rights has reshaped the political landscape in Latin America. Militaries became increasingly institutionalized under civilian control; the entire region except for Cuba returned to democratic government; freedom of expression and the media were almost unfettered; judicial structures were strengthened; and, statist, populist policies largely fell into disrepute.

But that dynamic was relatively short-lived. Since the 2004 birth of ALBA – financed by Venezuelan oil, Chinese loans, and Cuban intellectual capital, and supported by Iran – authoritarianism, radical populism, and a disdain for the rule of law and human rights are again on the rise.

The new radical populism encompasses multiple nations working in concert, each providing significant contributions to the project. This includes Iran, Russia, China and other extra-regional actors whose commitment to strong authoritarian structures, disdain for independent media, and a belief that the armed forces primarily serve the revolution,

and strong antipathy toward the U.S. make them natural allies of the Bolivarian Revolution.

What has gone largely undetected and unstudied are the significant moves this bloc and its allies have made to eradicate U.S. military doctrine, economic influence, and political thought. The military doctrine in particular has been replaced by a dangerous new set of tenets advocating and justifying the use of WMD against the United States, and citing as models Hezbollah and al Qaeda. U.S.- trained officials have been forcibly retired, U.S.-trained units disbanded, and ongoing contact with the U.S. military and security structure has been sharply curtailed.

Undergirding the overall ideological and methodological thrust is an extensive network of intellectuals, journalists, and academics whose work is promoted, praised, and amplified through an interlocking grid of websites, bookstores, online university courses, printed media and academic journals. All have strong ties to the governments of Argentina, Venezuela, and Cuba; and, extensive links to Iran, China, and Russia.

This network uses state resources to advance its ideology and doctrine. The narrative being created, while not yet dominant, is far more advanced in the military and intellectual centers of learning that is generally acknowledged by U.S. policy makers.

The absence of a strong U.S. counter narrative and more active presence has made its remaining allies far more reticent to publicly engage the Bolivarians. In discussions with leaders across the region, there is a growing feeling that the United States has abandoned the battlefield and will not stand with them in a crisis. Therefore, it may be considered better to acquiesce to Bolivarian demands, fight from

within UNASUR and other structures, and hope for the best.

Gen. Kelly is correct in warning that the U.S. loss of influence is real and dangerous. There is still time to engage in the battle of ideas, doctrine and ideology. Until the United States chooses to do so, the field is open to those who wish it harm. PRISM

## NOTES

[1]   The BRIC countries are Brazil, Russia, India , China and South Africa. For details of the deal signed with Argentina and the new strategic partnership see: "Putin signs nuclear energy deal with Argentina," DW, July 12, 2014, accessed at: http://www.dw.de/putin-signs-nuclear-energy-deal-with-argentina/a-17782006.

[2]   Briana Lee, "Chinese President Xi Jinping Brings Billions on Visit to Latin America," International Business Times, July 22, 2014, accessed at: http://www.ibtimes.com/chinese-president-xi-jinping-brings-billions-visit-latin-america-1635626.

[3]   The countries Obama has visited once are: Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica and El Salvador. He has visited Mexico five times.

[4]   From FY 2008 to FY 2012, U.S. aid to Latin America dropped from $2.1 billion to $1.8 billion, a 13 percent drop. See: Peter J. Meyer and Mark P. Sullivan, "U.S. Foreign Assistance to Latin America and the Caribbean: Recent Trends and FY2013 Appropriations, Congressional Research Service, June 26, 2012. In 2013 and 2014, U.S. aid dropped by another 9 percent and 13 percent respectively. See: Adam Isacson et al, "Time to Listen: Trends in U.S. Security Assistance to Latin America and the Caribbean, 2013, accessed at: http://lawg.org/storage/documents/Time_to_Listen-Trends_in_U.S._Security_Assistance_to_Latin_America_and_the_Caribbean.pdf. Within this context, funding for USSOUTHCOM has dropped 26 percent in fiscal 2013, after already suffering substantial cuts in previous years. See: "SOUTHCOM's Counter-Drug Efforts Hit by Budget Cuts," Institute for Defense and Government Advancement, April 26, 2014, accessed at: http://www.idga.org/homeland-security/articles/southcom-s-counter-drug-efforts-hit-by-budget-cuts/.

[5]   "La Casa de América Latina presentará dos nuevas publicaciones," Agencia Noticias del Libro de Irán, July 5, 2014, accessed at: http://www.ibna.ir/vdcfx0d0yw6dxva.,7iw.html.

[6]   The Alianza Bolivariana Para los Pueblos de Nuestra America was founded in 2004 by the Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez and then Cuban President Fidel Castro. Since then it has grown to include Ecuador, Bolivia, Nicaragua, Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Saint Vincent and Grenadines. Iran and Syria were granted observer status in 2007. Suriname, whose president, Desi Bouterse, is a convicted cocaine trafficker, and Salvador Sánchez Cerén, the recently elected president of El Salvador and former Marxist guerrilla leader have announced their intention to join in 2014.

[7]   Veronica Smink, "Qué hará la polemica secretaría 'para el pensamiento' en Argentina?" BBC Mundo, June 4, 2014, accessed at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/mundo/noticias/2014/06/140604_argentina_secretaria_pensamiento_nacional_en.shtml. This followed Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro's decision to create a vice ministry of the supreme happiness of the people," designed to help the least fortunate members of society. See:  "Maduro crea un Viceministerio para la Suprema Felicidad del Pueblo," BBC Mundo, June 24, 2013, accessed at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/mundo/ultimas_noticias/2013/10/131024_ultnot_venezuela_viceministerio_suprema_felicidad_az.shtml.

[8]   United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, "Global Study on Homicide 2013: Trends, Context, Data," April 2014, accessed at: http://www.unodc.org/documents/gsh/pdfs/2014_GLOBAL_HOMICIDE_BOOK_web.pdf.

[9]   For a more detailed look at the criminalization of the Bolivarian states see: Douglas Farah, "Transnational Organized Crime, Terrorism, and Criminalized States in Latin America: An Emerging Tier-One National Security Priority," Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, Carlyle, PA, August 16, 2012, accessed at: http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/display.cfm?pubID=1117.

[10]   Posture Statement of General John F. Kelly, United States Marine Corps, Commander, United States Southern Command, Before the 113th Congress, House Armed Services Committee, February 26, 2014.

[11]   Visiones Alternativas, accessed at: http://pl-va.prensa-latina.cu/militarizacion/mapas/mapabases.htm.

[12]   The most recent example was in Argentina, where in June 2013 the president purged more than 30 senior officers and named Gen. César Milani, a loyal former head of army intelligence.

[13]   Visiones Alternativas, accessed at: http://pl-va.prensa-latina.cu/militarizacion/articulos/geoestrat/1.htm.

[14] Verstrynge, born in Morocco to Belgian and Spanish parents, began his political career on the far right of the Spanish political spectrum as a disciple of Manuel Fraga, and served as a national and several senior party posts with the Alianza Popular. By his own admission he then migrated to the Socialist Party, but never rose through the ranks. He is widely associated with radical anti-globalization views and anti-U.S. rhetoric, repeatedly stating that the United States is creating a new global empire and must be defeated. Although he has no military training or experience, he has written extensively on asymmetrical warfare.

[15] For a more comprehensive look at the role and seminal writings of Sánchez Ramirez, the convicted terrorist known as "The Jackal," see: Farah, op cit.

[16] Verstrynge, op cit., pp. 56-57.

[17] Bartolomé, op cit. See also: John Sweeny, "Jorge Verstrynge: The Guru of Bolivarian Asymmetric Warfare," www.vcrisis.com, Sept. 9, 2005; and "Troops Get Provocative Book," Miami Herald, Nov. 11, 2005.

[18] "ALBA School of Defense and Sovereignty Opens," Anti-Imperialist News Service, June 14, 2011, accessed at: http://www.anti-imperialist.org/alba-school-of-defense-opens_6-14-11.htm.

[19] ALBA School of Defense and Sovereignty Opens," op cit.

[20] Robin Yapp, "Iran defense minister forced to leave Bolivia over 1994 Argentina bombing," The Telegraph (London), June 1, 2011.

[21] Eloy Pacheco, "Evo Morales apela a la unidad de nuestros pueblos sin EEUU, December 3, 2011, accessed at: http://www.celac.gob.ve/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=271%3A-evo-morales-apela-a-la-unidad-de-nuestros-pueblos-sin-eeuu&catid=1%3Aactualidad&Itemid=5&lang=en.

[22] "Unasur apreuba creación de la Primera Escuela Suramericana de Defensa," Telesur, February 20, 2014, accessed at: http://www.telesurtv.net/articulos/2014/02/20/unasur-aprueba-la-creacion-de-primera-escuela-suramericana-de-defensa-3451.html.

[23] http://www.umbv.edu.ve/index.php/mision.

[24] "Venezuela, Argentina sign military cooperation agreements," Xihnua, April 26, 2014, accessed at: http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/world/2014-04/26/c_126436208.htm.

[25] Emiliano Guido, "Sin bases no hay imperio," Mirador al Sur, (no date) accessed at: http://sur.infonews.com/notas/sin-bases-no-hay-imperio.

[26] "Argentinian looting spreads amid police strikes," Associated Press, December 10, 2013, accessed at: http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/dec/10/argentinian-looting-spreads-police-strikes.

[27] Calloni interview by Roberto Caballero titled "Alerta Stella Calloni sobre golpes suaves en Latinoamerica" January 13th, 2014, accessed at: http://www.contrainjerencia.com/?p=81282.

[28] Calloni expounds her theory of the "foundations" as fronts for U.S. actions in a piece titled "The Silent Invasion" (*La invasion silenciosa*), Cuba Debate, April 7, 2009, accessed at: http://www.cubadebate.cu/opinion/2009/04/07/la-invasion-silenciosa-iii/#.U20wDC8wInY.

[29] The entire list of courses can be found at http://www.centrocultural.coop/blogs/pled. The list of classes dealing with the U.S. military strategy toward the Southern Cone can be found at: http://www.centrocultural.coop/blogs/pled/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/la-estrategia-norteamericana-en-el-cono-sur.pdf.

## Photos

Colombian special forces perform demonstration maneuvers for Secretary of Defense Robert Gates and Manuel Santos, Oct. 3, 2007.

# Colombia

## A Political Economy of War to an Inclusive Peace

BY DAVID KILCULLEN & GREG MILLS

S uch progress has been made in Colombia that it is hard to remember that only 20 years ago, the country was renowned not for its practical people or its wonderful cities and rain-forests, but for its cocaine-fuelled murder rate. At the height of the drug war in the 1990s, Colombians suffered ten kidnappings a day, 75 political assassinations a week, and 36,000 murders a year (fifteen times the rate in the United States).[1] The military and police competed with an array of guerrillas, gangs, *narcos* and paramilitaries. Guerrillas had so isolated the largest cities that urban-dwellers traveling as little as five miles out of town risked kidnapping, or worse. Twenty-seven thousand two hundred thirteen people died in 1997-2001 alone.[2] Colombia entered the 21st century at risk of becoming a failed state. Since then, national leaders have turned the situation around, applying a well-designed strategy with growing public and international support. Kidnappings, murders and cocaine cultivation are down, government control has expanded, and the economy is recovering. Talks in Havana, Cuba, offer the hope of peace, even as fighting continues on the ground in key areas. But the situation is shakier than it seems—indeed the very success of Colombia's current campaign carries the risk of future conflict.

In this paper, which draws on fieldwork in Colombia between March 2009 and August 2014, we examine Colombia's turnaround, explore current issues, and offer insights for the future and for others facing similar challenges. We consider the conflict's political economy, by which we mean the dynamic social-political-economic system that frames people's choices within incentive structures created by two generations of war. Our key finding is that, with some significant exceptions, key commanders of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (known widely by their Spanish acronym, FARC) and others have become what we call "conflict entrepreneurs," seeking to perpetuate war for personal gain rather than to win (and thereby end) the conflict. Therefore, remarkable as it is, today's military progress won't be enough to end the war in a way that guarantees Colombia's peaceful future. We argue that a comprehensive conflict transformation is

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needed—one that moves Colombia from a political economy of violent exploitation, to one of inclusive, sustainable peace.

## Background

From Spain's conquest in the 1500s, through resistance to colonialism in the 18th century, to the liberation wars of Simón Bolívar in 1812-19, the area that is now Colombia has seen near-continuous conflict. Colombia is the oldest democracy in Latin America, but has been at war for 150 of its 195 years of independence: there were nine civil wars and more than fifty insurrections in the nineteenth century alone. Colombians have learned to live with "democratic insecurity."

Historically, conflict arose between Liberals and Conservatives, political blocs that mirrored a stratified, segmented society of European oligarchs controlling factories and huge estates, excluded rural and urban poor, and marginalized Indian and Afro-Colombian minorities. Colombia's temperate, urbanized, populated, developed center contrasted with its tropical, rural, sparsely inhabited, neglected periphery. Structural inequality and lack of opportunity created fertile ground for revolutionaries seeking to overthrow the system, and those living outside the law.

Ironically, today's conflict arose from the pacification process after Colombia's bloodiest episode of social conflict, *La Violencia*, which left 300,000 dead between 1948-53. The murder of Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, a Liberal leader, unleashed savage violence among Liberal and Conservative militias, in a nationwide bloodletting Colombians still remember with horror. The conflict rapidly expanded beyond its original causes, and tore the social fabric apart. Although it derived, at least initially, from conflicts among Colombia's political elites in the

cities, the violence fell most heavily on rural and small-town communities, where partisan violence among local groups was often sponsored by outside (principally urban, elite) actors. This pattern of violent clientelism ended only in 1953 when both parties, recognizing they were powerless to stop the violence they had unleashed, asked the military to step in to end the conflict. The period of martial law that followed was the Army's sole 20th century intervention in politics—and it resulted in a 1957 political settlement, brokered by the military, in which Liberals and Conservatives agreed to share power, alternating at the head of bipartisan National Front governments for the next 16 years.

This cosy reconciliation among elites—which, by definition, excluded the poor, rural, and indigenous workers and peasants who had been most heavily affected by the violence—ended *La Violencia* but created the conditions for future conflict. In particular, the deal excluded Communist armed movements, as well as more moderate Marxist groups, that had emerged outside the traditional Liberal-Conservative dichotomy as a result of the violence. The Communist Party refused to join the National Front reconciliation process; several Communist militias refused to disarm, instead establishing autonomous zones (which the central government called "independent republics") in defiance of Bogota.[3] Because these "republics"—and the armed groups controlling them—rejected the National Front arrangement, successive Colombian national unity governments (both Liberal- and Conservative-led) saw them as a threat, and a potential trigger for collapse of the entire 1957 peace deal and the return of massive violence.

Conflict indeed began to intensify after 1959, part of a region-wide rise in unrest after the Cuban Revolution—rural violence, for example, rose 30 percent in 1960-62.[4] From 1959, with help from U.S. special warfare teams and civil agencies, Colombia improved its counterinsurgency capabilities, developed Plan LAZO (a comprehensive Internal Defence strategy), and sought to suppress the independent republics.[5] Evidence in late 1963 that Colombian guerrillas had received weapons and training from Cuba underlined the regional dynamic, and prompted government action against the "independent republics."

In May 1964, the Armed Forces attacked the "Marquetalia Republic" led by Manuel Marulanda Velez. The assault pushed Marulanda's guerrillas into the neighbouring "Republic of Rio Chiquito" where in July 1964 a confederation of guerrilla groups formed the Southern Bloc. "Declaring themselves 'victims of the policy of fire and sword proclaimed and carried out by the oligarchic usurpers of power,' the new coalition called for 'armed revolutionary struggle to win power'"[6] and renamed itself the FARC *(Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia)* two years later. Also opposing the government were the rural ELN *(Ejercito de Liberación Nacional)* the Maoist Chinese-oriented EPL *(Ejercito Popular de Liberacion)* and a decade later, the urban M-19 *(Movimiento 19 de Abril)*. The Army, in turn, received support—sometimes helpful, often unwanted or embarrassing—from right-wing paramilitaries that had formed to defend communities (and wealthy landowners) threatened by the guerrillas.

M-19 demobilized in 1990 and transformed itself into a parliamentary political party, but FARC and ELN opted to continue the struggle, alongside EPL. FARC quickly turned to criminal activity to fund its struggle. As the distinguished Colombia analyst David Spencer points out, "FARC never received the external support it wanted. Fidel Castro hated Communist Party organizations and the Soviets only provided political and moral support. FARC was always self-supporting and discovered drugs in the early 1980s. [FARC leaders] always intended it to be a temporary means of financing to fill the gap until external support could be found, but the amount of money eventually seduced them so that by the early 1990s they were totally in."

With the collapse of Communism in the early 1990s, the prospect of external support receded even further, and narcotics became a key source of finance, along with kidnapping and extortion. Drugs brought in an estimated $3.5 billion annually by 2005, or 45 percent of FARC's funding. The paramilitaries, likewise, received three-quarters of their income from drug cartels, to which they hired out their services.

This created a huge overlap between guerrillas and gangsters in Colombia. FARC has indeed evolved into a criminal-insurgent hybrid: the system it spreads to areas under its control creates its own exploitative and violent political economy, where Marxism provides a veneer for racketeering built on drugs, illegal mining, extortion, robbery and kidnapping. Colombia's insurgency has merged with criminality while FARC leaders (among others) have emerged as conflict entrepreneurs—they have discovered the value of crime as an enabler for their pursuit of raw political power.

Ideologically-motivated insurgents fight for objectives extrinsic to conflict; they stop fighting when those objectives are achieved. States operate the same way: as Colombia's Defence Minister, Juan Carlos Pinzon points

out, "governments don't fight wars just to fight—they fight to build a better reality for their people."[7]  By contrast, conflict entrepreneurs fight to perpetuate a conflict, since its existence creates wealth, power and status for them: their goals are intrinsic to conflict. When their stated political objectives cease to help maintain a profitable conflict, conflict entrepreneurs simply change the objectives and continue the conflict. FARC, like the militarized criminal groups (*bandas criminales*, BACRIM) that emerged from the paramilitaries, is a classic example of this war-as-racketeering phenomenon, but it is not the only one. Many African conflicts, in particular—including clan warfare in Somalia, conflicts in Sudan and the Congo, and the Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda and the Central African Republic—show a similar pattern.



Graffiti portrait of Pablo Escobar.

Likewise, the Haqqani network in Pakistan, Mexico's Zetas, and several Libyan militia groups can be considered conflict entrepreneurs.

## Defeat into Victory?

By 1996 Colombia was losing the battle against this criminal-insurgent complex. Drug cartels—Pablo Escobar in Medellín, and the rival Cali cartel—had subverted Colombia's democracy and brought violence to its cities. In the countryside, paramilitaries had united into the *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia* (AUC) and branched out into drugs, extortion and extrajudicial killing. FARC had escalated from a guerrilla war to a War of Movement phase in its modified People's War strategy, achieving a string of major victories between April 1996 and December 1999. Main force FARC columns, operating openly in large formations, proved capable of defeating battalion-sized Army units and seizing and holding territory.[8]

By the end of the 20th century, on the Army's admission, the guerrillas controlled territory stretching "from Ecuador to Venezuela, had built themselves considerable infrastructure in the southeast around Caquetá and Meta, and not only had Bogotá surrounded, but had deployed guerrillas into its outskirts. Road transport between the major cities was very difficult, if not impossible."[9]  FARC's victories—and its expansion, which for the first time directly threatened Colombia's major cities—were a wake-up call for Colombians. Many had previously seen the guerrillas (to the extent they thought about them at all) as a nuisance, a problem for *campesinos* but no threat to business-as-usual in Colombia's sophisticated centre. Suddenly the threat

seemed real, prompting a national mobilization.

Elected in 1998, President Andrés Pastrana initially pursued peace talks, creating a demilitarised zone centred on San Vicente del Caguan, including a "peace camp" at Las Pozos. But he broke off talks in February 2002 after the guerrillas showed no willingness to abandon the armed struggle, continued the fight outside the demilitarised zone, exploited the peace talks to gain breathing space, and used their Caguan enclave (demilitarized only by Colombian forces—FARC maintained a strong armed presence) to massively expand cocaine production and attack Colombia's cities.

Colombian military leaders realized that something had to change, and began developing plans to break the deadlock. These eventually resulted in a major FARC defeat at Mitu, which signalled the government's new resolve and marked the beginning of Colombia's remarkable turnaround. Pastrana had earlier formulated *Plan Colombia*, a $10.6 billion effort formally known as the "Colombia Strategic Development Initiative," which "was a determining factor in the return of government control to wide areas of the country."[10] Partly U.S. funded, and launched in 2000, Plan Colombia was initially focused primarily on the drug war, but gained impetus after the 2001 al-Qaeda terrorist attacks, which freed Washington to expand cooperation beyond counter-narcotics into anti-terrorism. Encouraged by this boost, though largely relying on their own capability (Plan Colombia accounted for no more than five percent of the effort, which was driven by Colombians themselves) the military turned the tide, a process that hastened after the election of President Alvaro Uribe in August 2002.

Uribe took the fight to both guerrillas and paramilitaries, personally driving the effort, turning the guerrillas' strategy—the "combination of all forms of struggle" that treated armed action, agitation and propaganda, economic action and political negotiation simply as facets of a unified struggle—against them through his concept of "democratic security." Under Uribe, and a series of talented and capable Defence Ministers, Colombia went from widespread insecurity to expanding normality. Military recruiting surged—the Armed Forces grew from just under 205,000 in 2002 to 288,000 by 2013, and the National Police from 110,000 to 178,000 in 2013. More importantly, the number of professionals (as opposed to two-year conscripts) almost quadrupled from 22,000 in 2002 to 87,000 by 2010. The defence budget rose from three percent of GDP to over four percent during the 2000s, partly financed through a 1.3 percent "Wealth Tax" on businesses and well-off Colombians.

Colombia's military rose in quality as well as quantity. New equipment—Blackhawk helicopters, Super Tucano counterinsurgency aircraft, unmanned aerial vehicles, precision guided weapons, and the latest communication and surveillance technology—paralleled the creation of a special operations command and increased investment in training. While the military and police bore the initial burden, follow-up efforts were led by the *Centro de Coordinación de Acción Integral* (CCAI), a reconstruction and stabilization organization created by, and reporting directly to, the Presidency. As in earlier periods, low-profile U.S. assistance helped—but the talent, energy and leadership that drove success were all Colombian.

Uribe tackled the nexus between the insurgency, paramilitaries and drugs through efforts to demobilize AUC, which succeeded in 2006, prompting a dramatic drop in criminal violence. As David Spencer argues, much of this violence "was also being perpetrated by FARC. The initial success of Democratic Security was in generating a huge drop in crime from all sources, merely by the government occupying and patrolling all of the municipalities." By protecting communities that had previously seen little or no state presence, Uribe removed the main rationale for the paramilitaries. He also promoted demobilization and reintegration of guerrillas, infrastructure improvement and popular dialogue throughout the countryside.

The effect was dramatic. Homicides halved from 28,837 (70 per 100,000) in 2002 to 16,127 (35 per 100,000) in 2011; kidnappings plummeted by 90 percent from 2,882 to 305; and car theft more than halved from 17,303 to 10,269.[11] The drop in kidnappings, in particular, brought a sense of relief and progress to Colombians. Security improvements helped the economy develop, creating a virtuous cycle of governance, growth and stability. Foreign direct investment rose to $19 billion by 2012, enabling further spending on security. Economic growth averaged five percent during the ten years from 2002, enabling fresh investment in infrastructure, and funding the expanding and professionalizing military and police.

Uribe led a hands-on approach to popular dialogue, holding televised *consejos comunitarios* (Community Councils) each weekend across the country, where he and his entire cabinet travelled to small towns and city districts. This created a public forum that was both local and national, in which community members could pose questions, and raise concerns, directly with the President and his ministers. It also began to include in the national dialogue the marginalized communities that had been co-opted or intimidated by guerrillas. Uribe visited most of Colombia's thousand-plus municipalities and 32 departments in his eight years—many more than once—creating not just positive public relations, but a feedback loop that helped his administration fine-tune its policy through an active action-learning cycle.

Uribe's "democratic security" programme was extended by his successor, President Juan Manuel Santos—one of Uribe's last defence ministers—whose *Sword of Honour* campaign aimed to degrade FARC while consolidating control in 140 contested municipalities. *Sword of Honour*, developed in late 2011 using Operational Design principles by a hand-picked team that included some of the most gifted and battle-experienced officers in Colombia, called for increased pressure on FARC, quick impact projects in contested districts (from water reticulation, sewers, bridges and roads, to community sports centers) and the creation of nine Joint Task Forces to take the fight to FARC bases. The current iteration of the plan (Sword of Honour III) includes 12 Joint Task Forces intended to penetrate FARC strongholds, while territorial brigades and police secure contested areas, and civil agencies bring governance and development to normalizing districts.

As discussed below—and as inevitably happens in war—things have not worked out quite as planned. Still, there has been a steady increase in reintegration, with 1,350 guerrillas demobilised in 2013, and 24,856 since 2002. A further 6,000 FARC have been killed in Army raids, Joint Task Force deep-penetration

operations, or precision strikes by the Air Force. But the insurgents, under tremendous pressure, have not stood still. General Juan Pablo Rodriguez, by 2014 Chief of the Armed Forces, admits that, "FARC is not stupid. They adapt and change, and every day is more difficult for us." This can be seen in the most recent FARC numbers of approximately 8500 full-time personnel and 10,000 part-time members as of September 2013, suggesting that despite all the pressure it was under, the organization had still managed to recruit, replace losses, and continue to operate.

Since 2010, the Colombian government has effectively used its operations Sword of Honour and Green Heart to steadily affect terrorist and criminal groups, their violent methods and financial means. In terms of fighting structures, by 2014, the FARC had about 6,900 fighters (a 25% reduction), the ELN 1,495 and BACRIM 3,400, showing the smallest size in at least 15 years. Fifty-five FARC leaders, 17 from the ELN and 42 from the BACRIM have also been killed or captured through targeted operations.

Colombian government data showed that 90 percent of municipalities did not register any terrorist attacks in 2014; 95 percent experienced no subversive actions; 82 percent of the population did not report presence of active terrorist structures or criminal gangs; and 94 percent of the country had no recorded cases of kidnapping. As of 2014, only 6 percent of the Colombian population was directly or indirectly affected by terrorist actions.

With respect to FARC's financial and material means, the Armed Forces have also achieved notable success. The reduction of coca crops to 48,000 hectares and the seizure of 1.6 out of every three kilograms of cocaine potentially produced, as well as the fall of

kidnapping by 97 percent, represent strategic blows against FARC's funding. Regarding materiel, the Armed Forces have seized 248.1 tons of explosives and 18,583 explosive devices, and destroyed 69,411 improvised explosive devices (IEDs) since 2010.

That said, as it loses territorial control, FARC has been forced to drop back a stage in its strategy, abandoning the War of Movement, returning to guerrilla operations in the countryside and urban terrorism. Instead of frontal attacks on cities and military bases, FARC hides among the population, using People's Militia—urban underground cells—to snipe at soldiers, intimidate communities and extort businesses, employing IEDs to deny access to base areas.

President Santos restarted peace talks, announcing in his August 2010 inaugural address that the "door to peace is not closed." This led to exploratory talks with the rebels in February 2012, which produced a six-point agenda for formal negotiations that began in Havana in November 2012 and continue today. Santos made it clear that unlike previous talks, this time military operations will continue until a deal is reached. The government is also addressing the social basis of the conflict, through the 2011 Land Restitution and Victims' Law—to redress human rights violations by all sides—and social programs including Acción Social and a new Department of Social Prosperity.

## Current Issues

From this brief historical sketch it should be clear that despite a turnaround so dramatic that some call it "The Colombian Miracle," Colombia still faces a robust insurgency.[13] Current issues include sustainability, the

civil-military gap, village governance and security, and the FARC-criminal nexus.

## The dilemma of sustainability

Colombia needs a sustained effort—lasting 15-20 years—to consolidate its gains, but these could be undone overnight if talks fail, or if peace allows FARC (supported by less than five percent of Colombians) to bounce back. More fundamentally, Colombia's government seeks to end the conflict on favorable terms—whereas FARC, as conflict entrepreneurs, seek to preserve the conflict. They regard peace talks as just one more phase in an ongoing struggle that serves their business interests as much as their political goals.

For the military, after hard-won battlefield success, huge expansion, and a massive growth in public support and prestige, there is a different dilemma. Military commanders understand they must sustain a local security presence, and remain involved in governance and economics, for the foreseeable future, so that civilian agencies can work with the population to extend governance, improve services, and reduce the structural inequality and exclusion that provoked the insurgency. This will take enormous political commitment over a long time—historical benchmarks suggest that post-conflict stabilization may last twice as long as the conflict that preceded it.[14]

Such a commitment, however—on top of the massive growth in budget, manpower, and prestige of the past decade—brings personal and institutional incentives that carry the risk that the military, too, may become stakeholders in a political economy of war, with institutional interests in preserving a state of conflict. This risk may be worth taking—without presence in contested areas, it is hard to see how the conflict can end—but it is still a risk.

## The civil-military gap

Simultaneously, civilians need to step more actively into the space created by the military, lest soldiers be left holding an empty bag—or, worse, become tempted to usurp civil authority in order to get the job done.

As designed *Sword of Honour* envisaged civilian agencies assuming administrative functions, and Police taking over cleared areas, freeing troops to maneuver against FARC bases. Under *Green Heart*, the Police companion plan to *Sword of Honour*, police were to assume responsibility for cleared ("green") areas, freeing the military for maneuver in contested ("amber") and FARC base ("red") zones. In practice, populations rejected the Police, while civilians proved unable to fulfil their role in a timely and effective manner. The military was forced to step into the gap, leaving troops pinned down in administrative, security and integral action roles, rather than doing what only soldiers can do—keeping the enemy under pressure to set conditions for successful peace talks. As one analyst puts it, "we're not killing FARC fast enough to put enough pressure on them to achieve a peace settlement, because we're soaking up the Army doing things that are really the job of civilians."[15]

Thus, while military progress is impressive, civilian performance is lagging, creating a gap guerrillas can exploit. Unless the government creates a permanent presence at village level to replace the FARC system that has dominated communities for so long, destroying today's guerrillas will only create a vacuum to be filled by successive generations of insurgents and criminals. This is a fundamental challenge: military progress without civil governance either leaves the military pinned

down, protecting every bridge, schoolhouse and office; or it makes the population vulnerable to guerrillas once the military leaves.

## Village governance and security

As one commander of a territorial brigade pointed out, the Army doesn't in fact maintain a permanent presence at village level—troops establish bases at municipio (equivalent of a U.S. county) level, or in departmental capitals, then send out patrols that visit villages only periodically, and stay only briefly. They never sleep in villages (to avoid violating civilian property rights by sleeping in schools or private houses, a practice the Army banned several years ago) but retire to patrol bases at night.

When soldiers arrive, guerrillas retreat to the hills or nearby jungle. They leave a network of informers—underground cells the Army calls RATs ("terrorist support networks", *redes de apoyo al terrorismo*)—to watch the village while they're gone. As soon as the soldiers leave, the guerrillas return. Villagers who interact with soldiers know that as soon as the sun goes down, or at most in a few days, the guerrillas will hold them to account for whatever they do or say.

Civil government has no permanent presence at village level either: the mayor of each *municipio* (which may include 200 villages) represents the lowest level of formal administration. Most mayors remain in their offices in district capitals, rarely visiting villages. Instead, they liaise with village-level Community Action Committees, (*Juntas de Acción Comunal*, JACs), informal bodies with no status under the constitution. Most governance at village level is done by JACs, and where FARC has a permanent presence, the guerrillas influence membership in the JAC so that, in the words of one soldier, "the neighborhood is the guerrilla front."[16]

This dynamic—fragmented or absent civil governance and episodic military presence, combined with permanent local presence of



**Kogi children in a rural village in Colombia.**

the guerrillas—creates a "double brain drain." Government supporters are systematically culled as the military's episodic visits expose them, but then leave them unprotected. Meanwhile, villagers see FARC as the legitimate system, and those with talent and ambition disappear into the movement. Money, brains and jobs—in that order—flee contested areas, and once gone are extremely difficult to get back.

### FARC-Criminal Nexus

FARC-BACRIM collaboration exemplifies the strange bedfellows that emerge in a political economy of war, when conflict entrepreneurs see opportunities to perpetuate the violence from which they benefit. Most paramilitaries demobilized under the 2006 agreement but by then, some had become little more than bandits, and these evolved into BACRIM (bandas criminals). Having given up their political agenda—it was now all just business— BACRIM were willing to collaborate with anyone (including FARC) who could advance their goals of plunder and profit. For its part, FARC saw an opportunity to spread government efforts more thinly by establishing temporary alliances of convenience with criminal groups, and to use proxies to protect its cocaine economy, and to hide within criminal networks. This makes sense: as a conflict entrepreneur, if your interests are commercial rather than political, why pose as an insurgent and risk being killed by a Special Forces raid or a 500-pound laser-guided bomb? You can make more money, and have a more comfortable life as a criminal, protected by civil rights and criminal law, merely risking arrest in a country with no death penalty.

Dealing with this kind of ingrained violent criminality demands more than police: a viable justice system must include courts, corrections and effective formal and informal legal institutions. But delays in the court system, and overcrowding of jails, mean that some detainees end up serving their sentences in holding cells in police stations. Judges shy away from custodial sentences for all but the most extreme crimes, realizing there is no room in the correctional system—hence many violent offenders, even notorious BACRIM and guerrilla members, are quickly released.

This frustrates police and military officers, who see known criminals and insurgents walking free, able to retaliate against witnesses. Over the long term, such impunity—for people whom the community and law enforcement are convinced are guilty—can prompt people to take the law into their own hands and (in extreme cases) result in extra-judicial killings, as has happened in the past in Colombia, as in many countries. But change is hard to imagine without a structural shift in the incentives that make people conflict entrepreneurs—in other words, without transformation from a political economy of crime and conflict, to one of sustainable and inclusive prosperity and peace. This is a daunting challenge, but it is the fundamental task of peace building: after generations of conflict, it should be no surprise that making peace should be difficult or require a wholesale transformation.

### Insights

Colombia is at a complex inflection point. The insurgency is far from spent: many guerrillas remain in the field, and even many demobilized fighters remain committed to revolutionary ideologies, and might vote for FARC or hard-left candidates if FARC were to create a political party. Peace offers FARC, within its

"combination of all forms of struggle," the opportunity to trade a tenuous military position for a stronger political one through negotiation. It may seek to manipulate grievances, mobilize populations and capture the state through the ballot box, a "revolutionary judo" move like Bolivarian revolutionaries elsewhere. Moreover, peace offers FARC racketeers the option to drop their political agenda and (like AUC) become BACRIM.

This is not the place for detailed policy prescriptions, which are, in any case, a matter for Colombians. Nevertheless, this analysis suggests several insights for the future, and for others experiencing similar challenges. We can divide these into political, military and economic insights.

### Political Insights

Politically the irony is that the military's very success may undermine support for its ongoing efforts to maintain a stabilizing security presence in contested areas. As we have seen, national mobilization happened because the guerrillas began to threaten Colombia's cities. As the military rolled FARC back, the threat perception in Colombia's urban core (where the vast majority of Colombian voters live) dropped—but so in turn did the public sense of urgency. People want the war to be over, and now that FARC seems less threatening, other concerns predominate. This combination of war fatigue and shifting concerns on the part of urban Colombians helps the guerrillas.

Government's key challenge is to sustain political support without (on the one hand) letting voters slip back into apathy, or (on the other) putting Colombia on a perpetual war footing. What is needed is a genuine social transformation—one that transforms the terms of the conflict by creating a more inclusive society for excluded and marginalized populations that are FARC's principal constituency. This in turn requires recognition that FARC and BACRIM are conflict entrepreneurs seeking to perpetuate violence for personal gain, so that extension of government presence and rule of law to the very local level of society is critical.

Related to this, given the failure of civilian agencies to deliver the governance and reconstruction effects envisioned in *Sword of Honour*, political leaders need to recognize that the critical counterinsurgency element today is not the military effort, but rather the ability of these civilian agencies to backfill that effort. Local civil governance—and the willingness of civil agencies to support a comprehensive national plan—demands political leadership. Since civil agencies don't work for the Defense Minister, such leadership can only come from the Presidency. This suggests that a balance is needed between pursuing peace talks themselves, versus extending civilian governance so as to free the military to generate enough pressure on FARC to ensure a favorable outcome for those talks.

A third political insight is the recognition that—as in *La Violencia*—the peace settlement from one conflict can create the seeds of another. In that previous case, exclusion of some Colombians from the National Front led to "independent republics," and suppressing these republics created today's insurgency. A future peace settlement that lets conflict entrepreneurs unfairly control territory or government institutions could lead to a "soft takeover" by groups that have been defeated militarily and whom very few Colombians support. But equally, excluding such actors from politics could set the conditions for another insurgency, and denying them

economic opportunity could increase criminality, as insurgents rebrand themselves in the manner of BACRIM. Finally, a settlement that penalizes military or police for actions during the conflict, while giving blanket amnesty to guerrillas, may create a constituency against political integration—as soldiers worry whether some future government may punish them or their families for acts that were legal and seen as necessary at the time.

## Military Insights

A key military insight is the need to redouble efforts to secure the at-risk rural population—people willing to work with the government, but living in FARC-dominated areas. These people are the seed-corn of future rural stability, and must be protected at all costs. Periodic raiding or patrol visits expose them to retaliation as soon as soldiers move on. This in turn systematically culls community leaders in contested areas. The only solution is permanent presence—troops must live, permanently, among the people at village level, creating a safe enough environment that local communities feel confident to identify RATs and insurgent networks, and reversing the brain drain by helping JACs, community leaders, and talented local people regain control of their own villages.

By lifting the pall of fear off rural communities, the loss of money, brains and jobs can begin to be reversed. Village outposts, supported by district quick-reaction forces and embedded police and administrative officials, can create a framework for radical improvement. Until civil agencies and police backfill the military, there will be insufficient troops to secure all contested districts—until then, there will be a need to prioritize key districts and redirect effort away from tasks that are

properly those of civilians, toward a single-minded focus on population security at the local level.

This effort (primarily the role of Territorial Brigades) needs to be complemented by an effort to fully unleash the Joint Task Forces, accompanied by Special Forces and supported by air and maritime power, to radically increase pressure on remaining FARC strongholds and on BACRIM. The goal is not to kill or capture every last guerrilla, but to convince FARC negotiators that they are in a closing window of opportunity to achieve peace before their forces in the field are destroyed. In the crudest terms, the military needs to seize control of the guerrillas' loss rate—driving that rate upward, until a sufficiently high rate of kills, captures and surrenders is achieved that FARC leaders understand their best option is a negotiated peace. At the same time, intensive targeting of BACRIM can help convince insurgents that criminality offers no sanctuary.

It may seem premature to consider demobilization and restructuring—what we might call a "peace dividend"—while peace is still in doubt. But structures like a national guard that lets demobilized veterans serve part-time in their home villages, a rural constabulary (under regular police commanders and responsive to local civil authority), or a reconstruction corps that provides employment and training to ex-soldiers and enables infrastructure development, are worth considering now. These create a pathway to peace that soldiers can understand, and prevent demobilized personnel from the Colombian Armed Forces being drawn into criminality or destabilizing political activity.

## Economic Insights

Economically, one insight is the danger of

the military becoming enmeshed in the local economy and crowding out the private sector. There's no doubt that security improvements have helped the economy develop. Pro-market policies helped Colombia reduce poverty by 38.4 percent (from 49.7 percent in 2002 to 30.6 percent in 2013) and cut unemployment by 46 percent (from 15.6 percent in 2002 to under little over eight percent in 2013). Reducing public debt to below three percent of GDP, and an export-led growth strategy, facilitated economic recovery, with Colombia's economy achieving sustained growth (6.4 percent in the first trimester of 2014). Direct Investment has been growing over the last years (30.4 percent of GDP in the first months of 2014) and there are higher tax revenues that

have accompanied the economic growth. Together with improvements in security, this established a positive cycle.

But change is not only about financial figures and riches. According to public figures, public health care coverage expanded from less than 25 million people in 2002 to 45 million at the end of 2013, and "basic and medium" education coverage from 7.8 million to 8.7 million students in 2013. This has required improving the aspect of counterinsurgency that most campaigns struggle with—connecting improvements in security with sustainable employment creation, especially in rural areas. The government has a role in wealth creation, by assisting with necessary physical infrastructure to help create markets, and with farming inputs. But governments must walk a fine line



Luis Perez

**Slum housing in Colombia**

between rewarding success while preventing outright failure. Job creation is key, because it will help dissipate much of the sense of grievance that has historically fuelled conflict.

Another insight is that more thought is needed on how the military can include the private sector, to expedite small, local development projects that directly benefit local economies, facilitate private business and encourage private investment. A number of ideas might be explored: embedding civilians, from NGOs or the private sector, with military units in a sort of Colombian Pioneer Corps, or exploring mechanisms for public-private partnership beyond simply engaging with chambers of commerce or extant investors. It is precisely the investors who are not already present that one wants to attract; first by knowing what opportunities they are interested in, and second by understanding and facilitating their requirements. Efforts to promote and protect investments in employment-generating businesses are key to reversing the money/brains/jobs drain from local communities, and here Colombia might lead a change in global thinking, and offer a new model to be emulated.

## Conclusion

Fifty years ago in Vietnam, John Paul Vann said that "security may be ten percent of the problem, or it may be ninety percent, but whichever it is, it is the *first* ten percent or the *first* ninety percent…Without security, nothing else we do will last."[17]  Colombia has achieved an amazing turnaround in security that offers lessons for others facing similar challenges, and has put the country within striking distance of peace for the first time since Vann deployed to Vietnam way back in 1963.

But if this paper shows anything, it is that Colombia today is entering a new phase of struggle, a political war in which fresh challenges will emerge. Should a peace settlement be achieved, there's every likelihood FARC will continue its efforts under another guise. Military force will diminish in importance, effectiveness and relevance: you cannot apply lethal force against unarmed protestors or cadres operating in civilian clothes in the cities. Colombia will need new approaches that respect human rights, but can prevent a takeover as in Venezuela or Bolivia, by conflict entrepreneurs who simply adapt to new conditions. Ultimately, a more inclusive society, an economy that helps marginalized and excluded populations share in economic opportunity, the extension of rule of law and civil governance to every level of society, and economic policies that bring money, jobs and talent back to the areas that have suffered most heavily, are critical steps in conflict transformation. This will be extremely difficult—perhaps even harder than the military struggle—yet it will be utterly essential if Colombians are to achieve peace with victory. **PRISM**

## NOTES

[1]  See Steven Dudley, *Walking Ghosts: Murder and Guerrilla Politics in Colombia*. New York: Routledge, 2006, p.2.

[2]  Information supplied by the Police Intelligence Division, Bogota, 10 December 2010.

[3]  These "Independent Republics" included Agriari, Viota, Tequendama, Sumapaz, El Pato, Guayabero, Suroeste del Tolima, Rio Chiquito, 26 de Septiembre, and Marquetalia.

[4]  See Dennis M. Rempe, "Guerrillas, Bandits, and Independent Republics: US Counter-insurgency

Efforts in Colombia 1959-1965" in *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, Vol. 6, No. 3 (Winter 1995), pp. 304-327.

[5] *ibid.*

[6] *ibid.*

[7] In conversation with a delegation of African leaders visiting Bogota, 19th June, 2014.

[8] At Puerres in the department of Norino on 5 April 1996 resulting in 31 government troops killed; Las Delicias in Putumayo on 30 August 1996 with 31 killed and 60 wounded; La Carpa in Guaviare on 6 September 1996 with 23 dead; Patascoy in Guaviare on 21 December 1997 with 22 killed and 18 wounded; El Billar in Caqueá on 5 May 1998 with 63 dead and 43 wounded; Miroflores in Guaviare on 3 August 1998 with 9 dead and 22 wounded; Mitú in Vaupes on 1 November 1998 with 37 dead and 61 wounded; and Jurado in the department of Chocó on 12 December 1999 with 24 government troops killed.

[9] Discussion, Bogota, 9 December 2010.

[10] Oscar Naranjo, 'Colombia Shows the Value of Cooperation', *New York Times*, 17 April 2013.

[11] *Ministerio de Defensa Nacional Colombia*.

[12] See Milburn Line, 'Trying to End Colombia's Battle With FARC', *Foreign Affairs*, 27 March 2012.

[13] See for example Peter J. Moons, *The Colombian Miracle: How the Government of Colombia Beat Back an Insurgency and Saved the Nation*, 2013.

[14] Insurgencies can last 15-30 years, while reconstruction often takes far longer. For example, the Malayan Emergency began in June 1948 and the insurgents were effectively neutralized by 1959. However, it took another 30 years—until 1989—for Communist Party leaders to surrender. During that time the Royal Malaysian Armed Forces (with assistance from Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom) maintained an internal security role, while the government undertook a national development plan to address the grievances that had driven the insurgency. Likewise, a U.S. Defense Science Board summer study in 2003 found that stabilization and reconstruction operations undertaken by the United States since the end of the Cold War lasted, on average, ten years.

[15] Discussion with a Colombian strategic analyst, Tolemaida, August 2014.

[16] Interview at forward operating base with troops of JTF Nudo de Paramillo, 12th June 2014.

[17] Quoted in Neil Sheehan (2009), *A Bright Shining Lie: John Paul Vann and America in Vietnam*, Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, Kindle Edition, Locations 1206-1207.

## Photos

U.S. Army Sergeant Kornelia Rachwal gives a young Pakistani girl a drink of water as they are airlifted by Chinook from Muzaffarabad to Islamabad, Pakistan, 19 Oct 2005.

# An Easier Service

## Is the Department of Defense Getting Good Value from Humanitarian Operations?

BY STEPHEN G WALLER

> *Serving God is doing good to man,*
> *but praying is thought an easier service*
> *and therefore more generally chosen. – Benjamin Franklin[1]*

M r. Franklin's commentary on human nature and our tendency to take the easy route, even if that route does not serve the public interest, is still pertinent today. When one analyzes the Department of Defense's (DoD) humanitarian activities, we see that tendency in evidence. Cold War era inertia, reluctance to expose failures, and a culture of short-assignment-cycle accountability have all contributed to a lack of introspection and evaluation of DoD's humanitarian work. Cost efficiency is calculated using only current costs, even as the deferred future costs of a mismanaged humanitarian action may dwarf those in the current budget cycle. With a lack of evaluation come misguided budget priorities and unproductive – even counterproductive – activity. Yet the tide is turning, and some solutions for better service are within sight.

DoD's humanitarian activities have a longstanding, rich role in the theater commander's portfolio. Ambassadors love them. Photo ops are plentiful, with happy host nation recipients smiling for the camera. Yet, a comprehensive analysis of return on investment has not been carefully done by any organization within DoD, and the link between humanitarian activities, particularly in health, and subsequent security is tenuous at best.

Many thoughtful observers see a limited role for DoD in non-kinetic scenarios. DoD's humanitarian efforts may blur the boundaries between defense, diplomacy, and development ('The 3 D's'). Each 'D' has its own lead federal agency, and all have large, complex mandates. Some would say that there is little need for any of those agencies to stray into another's lane. Others would argue that the term "humanitarian" should not be applied to military forces, even medical, because they do not have "neutrality" in the Red Cross sense (The Congress and Title 10 do not agree.) Yet there are clearly tasks that intrude on more than one lane, such as doing development work in an insecure environment.

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The spillover into diplomacy and accomplishment of diplomatic goals by medical and humanitarian interventions has been called "track two diplomacy," falling outside the customary diplomatic "track one" channels.[2] There is a large body of scholarly work on "track two," and much anecdotal support for its effectiveness. Health activities, while clearly beneficial to individuals or communities, are less clearly linked to the achievement of security goals.

On the other hand, many careful observers believe that such efforts can pay dividends in mutual security. Both DoD and the Department of Health and Human Services have placed "health attaches" at selected embassies worldwide, to facilitate the use of health interventions and cooperation in achieving political and diplomatic goals. These individuals operate in close coordination with the regional Combatant Command, but the outcomes are rarely evaluated in a scientific way.

DoD brings rapid response and world-class logistics capabilities that are essential to an effective response to large, sudden disasters, especially when security is also an issue. The deployment of portable air traffic control to Port-au-Prince airport after the 2011 Haiti earthquake could not have been done so well by any other nation or agency. The Chinook helicopters used in the Pakistan earthquake of 2005 filled a vital humanitarian lift role that no one else could do. Surely, deployed military hospitals or medical teams, even in non-emergency humanitarian situations, must provide a similarly clear benefit?



Gunnery Sgt. Chago Zapata, U.S. Marine Corp

**U.S. Navy Chief Jeffrey Cavallo examines a 13-year-old Iraqi child during a Humanitarian Assistance Operation in the village of Ash Shafiyah, Iraq. This HAO provided medical and dental treatment to more than 115 Iraqi citizens.**

Historically, most of the non-crisis DoD humanitarian efforts fell under the rubric of training for future military missions. The Defense Security Cooperation Agency funded much of this work and kept a second focus on its own raison d'être: security cooperation with allies. Recent DoD policy elevated "stability operations" to a core military competency, equivalent to combat operations.[3] U.S. military forces are now expected to be ready to perform all tasks necessary to maintain stability and order when civilian agencies cannot. Not surprisingly, medical care and disaster response are key components of both stability operations and security cooperation programs. There are indistinct borders between activities that support DoD's national security mandate and those activities that reduce transnational health threats. DoD carries out these activities without the clarity or the oversight that could be easily provided.

Former Secretary of Defense Robert Gates often talked about "the other elements of national power." He spoke of "Building Partners" (BP) and "Building Partner Capacity" (BPC) to illustrate the complexity of modern defense-development-diplomatic missions.[4] BP is the entry contact with another nation, when diplomacy is strained or non-existent. DoD humanitarian activities, especially non-threatening medical interventions and disaster response, can open the door to create non-zero-sum benefits for both the recipient and donor nations. Humanitarian deployments like the Medical Civic Action Projects (MEDCAP) and the medical efforts of Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT) often fall into this category. My own experiences in a 30-year Air Force medical career were largely of this type. BPC activities require a more mature, collegial partnership, often resembling

development more than diplomacy. DoD can provide education and training, exercises, and equipment that create resilience in an allied nation, and produce mutual security. Both BP and BPC missions can relieve our government of future military or humanitarian disaster response costs and responsibilities, but when do health interventions lead to better security?

## The Hypothetical Relationship Between Health and Security

Do humanitarian efforts to improve the health of an allied nation lead to improvements in its stability and security? On its surface, this seems like a simple question with an obvious answer. In reality, the causal link from health and other humanitarian intervention to security progress is tenuous at best. It may be that security improves due to economic progress, and health indices rise from those same economic changes – not directly from better security. Human and national security may directly improve health indices, but health improvements may not directly contribute to better security. This distinction is important because other organizations, such as the U.S. Agency for International Development and the World Bank, are charged with leading economic progress. Yet the DoD invests substantial resources in humanitarian health programs, with the goal of enhancing mutual security.

In fact, DoD invests enormous resources in humanitarian "global health" (GH) work. In September 2012, the Kaiser Family Foundation published an informative and comprehensive review of GH activities in DoD, and estimated that DoD spent $600 million on such work in the prior fiscal year.[5] This review defined GH activities and policies as "those with actual or potential impacts on the health of populations in low- and

middle-income countries." This definition contrasts markedly with other recent thoughtful attempts to define GH in the academic and medical literature. The author believes that a more rigorous definition of DoD's role in GH may inform and enhance this discussion.

To improve clarity, DoD should define GH from its own perspective. There are a number of academic definitions in the medical literature, but none fit DoD's unique role and interests in humanitarian work. An Institute of Medicine's report in 2009 states that GH is: "health problems, issues, and concerns that transcend national boundaries, and may best be addressed by cooperative actions with the goal of improving health for all people by reducing avoidable disease, disabilities, and deaths."[5] Some members of the leadership of the Consortium of Universities for Global Health, a rapidly-growing North American academic community, proposed a comprehensive definition of GH: "an area for study, research, and practice that places a priority on improving health and achieving equity in health for all people worldwide. Global health emphasizes transnational health issues, determinants, and solutions; involves many disciplines within and beyond the health sciences and promotes interdisciplinary collaboration; and is a synthesis of population-based prevention with individual-level clinical care."[7]

Several of the principles of the U.S. Government's Global Health Initiative (GHI) provide additional insight into global health: encourage country ownership and invest in country-led plans; build sustainability through health system strengthening; strengthen and leverage key multilateral organizations, GH partnerships, and private sector engagement; increase impact through strategic coordination and integration; improve metrics, monitoring, and evaluation.[8] To the extent that DoD GH engagement activities are aligned with the objectives of the GHI, an operational definition of GH for DoD could utilize some of these principles. Given the primacy of DoD's security mission, its role in GH is focused on mitigating transnational threats and limited by design to those situations where mutual security can be nurtured or where its world-class logistics expertise is essential to the meet humanitarian challenges. There are indistinct borders between activities that support DoD's national security mandate and those activities that reduce transnational health threats.

How do these attempts at defining GH influence the DoD? Not at all, if we use current doctrine to judge. There is no definition of GH (or international health) in the definitive Joint Publication 1-02, DoD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms. A search of other relevant Joint Publications finds the term GH rarely used, and when it does appear, it comes from quotes lifted from the literature of international or non-governmental organizations. The services' doctrine is equally quiet. The glossary of the Air Force Instruction 44-162 (International Health Specialist Program) defines Global Health Engagement, but not GH itself. Likewise, a cable sent last summer from the Assistant Secretary for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict exhaustively defined GH in eighteen mind-numbing lines of text. The cable definition includes transnational threats, focus on the underserved, a multidisciplinary effort, both prevention and clinical care, building host nation capacity, and stabilizing host nation governments. It was not wvery different from the scholarly journal articles cited above, and too long for a memorable sound bite.

The author recommends that DoD consider a definition of GH that emphasizes the importance of health to national and international security and a definition of Global Health Engagement that is jointly applicable and leaner than the USAF version. DoD should continue in its important role, particularly in those situations where there is a lack of security or where world-class logistics are immediately needed. DoD's role is also based on the importance of success in GH to national security. Health issues that transcend national boundaries can upset regional stability and require DoD intervention to repair. Proactive attention to these issues and threats can position DoD to respond more effectively. DoD has tools to address GH extend far beyond its Military Health System and medical research laboratory assets. Consistent with the established emphasis on multidisciplinary

perspectives and collaborative efforts in GH, DoD can call on logistics, engineers, transportation, interagency, and non-governmental organization partners to accomplish its GH goals. To honor all these complex missions and components, I propose the following definition for DoD: "Global Health is the protection against transnational health threats by cooperative, sustainable efforts for improvements in health."

Limiting GH engagement by DoD to activities that are "sustainable" is a new, higher standard than we have seen in the past. It is a broadly accepted standard, in GHI and most of the humanitarian community, and it should be the standard in DoD as well. Keeping a focus on sustainability assures continuous engagement with other stakeholders in the interagency, host nation, and non-governmental organizations. (The National Guard's "State



Military relief efforts included addressing health concerns following the earthquake in Haiti as part of Operation Unified Response, 2010.

Partnership Program" is a fine example of this.[9]) Programs that teach preparedness or disaster mitigation lessons, for example, create resilience in partner nations and regions, and reduce dependence on DoD for response to contingencies that are best handled locally. In an era of downsized budgets and increasing opportunities, partner nation resilience and sustainability in GH engagement are essential.

Better clarity of purpose brings an ethical perspective that is presently missing in DoD humanitarian operations. The great ethical principles of respect, beneficence, and justice are analogous to three key pillars – ownership, sustainability, and equity – of a successful humanitarian health intervention. When the humanitarian agenda is driven by the donor, without host nation consultation, we often find a lack of ownership, a "unilateral cooperation" that fails to sustain the improvement. When the host nation stakeholders are not given equal empowerment to plan and execute the humanitarian mission, the lack of equity often leads to wasted resources and a monument to foolishness, such as a new school building now being used as a stable. Insisting on accountability and transparency by the host nation authorities is also integral to ethical humanitarian operations. Doing all this effectively requires nuanced cultural understanding and thoughtful engagement. The right balance of ownership and "donorship" can lead to better mutual security and appropriate development.

DoD's role in Global Health can be called Global Health Engagement (GHE). I propose GHE be defined as; "the utilization of appropriate military assets to promote GH." Regardless of the definition chosen by DoD, having clarity on these concepts could lead to better doctrine, better planning, and smarter oversight of related activities in DoD.

## Attribution, Not Association

Finding scientific support for a determinant relationship, what scientists call "attribution," is difficult. Events can occur simultaneously ("association") without a cause-and-effect relationship. The current hierarchy of scientific evidence today puts greatest credence in answers derived from a systematic review, which is a thorough study of all the appropriate literature and combination of the best work to reach a convincing outcome. Efforts to do this to confirm the health to security connection have been frustrating. Searches of the world-class Cochrane Systematic Review database and the vast resources of the Web of Science search engine produce no scientific literary works to support a direct causal linkage. Other objective, reliable sources of information on this topic, like UK's Chatham House, Harvard's Global Health Institute, and the World Health Organization, confirm that there is no direct relationship. However, its pervasive use to justify military humanitarian medical work gives the health-security link an exalted status, like that of Plato's "noble lie."

Circumstances can bear heavily on the appearance of a direct causal linkage. In a complex humanitarian crisis (both humanitarian and kinetic), especially when the decline in health has been acute, the linkage between population health and security seems direct. Rapid declines in population health destabilize society and governments, and therefore create insecurity. But does improving health then reverse the security crisis? A humanitarian health program may be hypothetically related to security if it can help a less-stable government fulfill its obligations to the population.

In DoD stability operations doctrine, health services (especially public health services) are recognized as an "essential service" that populations expect their government to facilitate, if not provide directly.[10] Programs that successfully help the host nation meet this obligation could, at least in theory, directly enhance security. In this case, though, the health-security link may be indirect, or second order. The health-security relationship may be indirect, through other determinants such as governance, socio-economic status, education, or transportation/access to healthcare, or it may flow from security to health, but not from health to security. So should the intervention by DoD be in the directly linked sector, or through second order effects through improving health?

There are certainly anecdotes that support a causal relationship between health interventions and peace. The Pan-American Health Organization's "days of tranquility" vaccination campaign in El Salvador in the 1980's created cease-fires and an eventual opportunity for diplomacy to end the longstanding civil war.[11] The modern-day International Health Regulations promulgate methods of surveillance and control of a potential pandemic that creates stability and security for all nations.[12] On the contrary side, the health of armies has always been a direct factor in security. The world was safer and more secure after diseases and non-battle injuries – an absence of health – decimated Napoleon's Army during the Russian campaign of 1812. (Nearly 90 percent of his 400,000 casualties were from disease



Vasily Vereshchagin

**Following Napoleon's retreat from Russia there was a saying, alluding to the Russian winter and the costs of disease and the elements to Napoleon's forces, that Generals Janvier and Fevrier (January and February) had defeated Napoleon.**

and hypothermia.)[13] The ability or inability to maintain the health of fighting forces has affected the outcome of nearly every conflict in history.

The assumption that better peace and security are the outcomes of civilian humanitarian health programs is based on circumstantial evidence, argues Alex Vass and others. They believe that the factors of proximity, an accurate definition of peace, and other confounding variables more precisely describe the linkage. To establish an irrefutable scientific correlation, one must be able to account for the specific contribution of a humanitarian health program to a security outcome. It is more convincing when that specific contribution is withdrawn, then re-introduced, and the security outcome relationship continually shows the expected effects. For complex humanitarian situations, or even in deliberate planning scenarios, this is very difficult to accomplish. However, that does not excuse DoD for failing to evaluate the actual long-term impact and return on investment of its humanitarian programs. At the end of the day, in spite of wishful thinking, health may be a second or third order determinant of peace and security, and DoD's investments in humanitarian health programs should recognize this.

## The Essential Ingredients

I believe there are potential solutions for the challenges of validating DoD's engagement in humanitarian work for security objectives. There are two essential ingredients: DoD must



SSGT Charles Reger, U.S. Air Force

**Somalian children wait for food to be provided during Operation Provide Relief, 1992. A congressional fact-finding delegation toured several humanitarian relief sites to assess the impact of U.S. aid in the country.**

first define exactly what it hopes to accomplish. Second, DoD should monitor and evaluate its efforts with greater rigor. Measures to accurately do this can be implemented in this fiscal year, without additional resources or appropriations, and without new Congressional authorization.

To date, the efforts to monitor and evaluate military humanitarian operations are in their infancy, piecemeal and ineffective. DoD Instruction 3000.05 *Stability Operations* directs the robust monitoring and evaluation of stability activities, including humanitarian assistance and medical care, under the direction of the Combatant Commanders. These line officers trust their medical officers to do "the right thing" in humanitarian operations, unaware that there is little scientific evidence of exactly what that might be. In my experience, there has been a disappointing lack of dialogue on this topic between the line leadership and the medical officers, and unwarranted confidence continues. One solution is to begin to do honest monitoring and evaluation of humanitarian outcomes, and to use the lessons learned to change policy and behavior.

I have proposed the implementation of a system of outcome assessments of humanitarian missions, using a simplified "scorecard." The scorecard questions focus on proper planning, coordination, empowerment of host nation stakeholders, execution of the mission, and on measuring outcomes that are sustainable by the host nation. The scorecard questions are written in a yes-no format, to force the responder to provide an opinion on success or failure of that aspect of the mission. All stakeholders from the host nation party, the U.S. embassy, the Combatant Command, and not just the deploying team, should reply, and equal weight is given to their responses. Each

scorecard is tallied and the mission is given a score. Using this value as a method of judging relative value of the mission, Combatant Command headquarters can rank all the missions supported during a fiscal year, and use this ranking as part of the decision process in preparing subsequent budgets and priority lists for humanitarian efforts. The scorecard can also be a tool for long-term impact evaluation, a neglected aspect of DoD's evaluation efforts. Currently, there is no similar method of analyzing humanitarian missions for relative value, and only anecdotal efforts to translate lessons learned into more efficient use of resources in subsequent fiscal years.

Humanitarian missions come in many flavors and sizes – crisis and deliberate action, teaching only, hands-on health care only, infrastructure development, sector-specific or broadly-based – but all share a common core of procedures and metrics that can be objectively compared. The resultant analysis of these common factors will be a limited view of the mission, and often the commander or ambassador will have priorities that dominate the analysis. We argue, however, that without a common core analysis that can "rack and stack" the group of missions supported by higher headquarters, some opportunities to do better next year are lost.

There is much low-hanging fruit to evaluate. For example, there may be substantial value in agile portability in crisis responses. Equipment and personnel packages that can respond within the "golden hour" can provide a robust return on investment in both kinetic and humanitarian crises. There should, however, be investigations of which packages work best in which situations. We should know the definition of a "golden hour" of response (a concept from emergency medicine treatment

of acute injury) for disasters, and how that might vary for responses to different scenarios, like earthquake, flood, explosion, or other potential disasters. We should know the strengths and weaknesses of the "cluster system" disasters response used by the UN to organize crisis action into sectors.[15] (Some would call them "siloes of excellence.") We should know which types of missions create resilience and which create dependency on continued donated services. We may find that health interventions only lead indirectly to mutual security, through programs that provide economic development or better education. These answers come from careful evaluation of outcomes, and varying the initial conditions in sophisticated ways. Host nation stakeholder inputs provide unique insights into these issues, as well as the unintended consequences of an intervention. Many unanswered questions remain, and the evidence for setting reliable standards is very thin.

There are a number of civilian humanitarian organizations engaged in systematic reviews of disaster response scientific articles and reports, and such expertise could guide some of DoD's efforts. The Pan-American Health Organization, headquartered in Washington, DC, has a long record of advocacy for disaster mitigation and preparedness, expertise that could be shared with DoD's humanitarian mission leaders.[16] Interaction, a consortium of nearly 200 non-governmental humanitarian organizations, has an active Evaluation and Program Effectiveness Working Group, and much familiarity with working with military groups.[17] Evidence Aid, a disaster response systematic review group, could assist DoD for mutual benefit.[18] Their reviews show that few civilian humanitarian organizations are doing effective priority setting, and DoD

does well at this. Coordination of efforts and avoidance of redundancy is a second area that DoD does well and the civilian humanitarian community does not. The "quality" movement, so prominent in military medicine today, has yet to have a substantial impact on humanitarian work, and DoD can bring much experience to the table in this area.

There is a lot to learn about the science of devising an effective exit strategy, particularly in areas where the pre-disaster situation was pitiful. The most effective exit strategies are created with the mission plan, so key factors are monitored from day one. An efficient method for analyzing an exit strategy is with a spreadsheet listing the many contributing factors, giving each a stoplight color daily, and using the consolidated picture to guide exit decisions. The spreadsheet is a helpful tool in clarifying progress or failures, and in engaging ambassadors, political leaders, and the Combatant Command on redeployment timing. I have seen this technique work well in the redeployment of a helicopter squadron from flood relief in Africa and in the use of a portable Air Force hospital in Houston after flooding of their major hospitals during Tropical Storm Allison in 2001. Knowing when and how to implement exit strategy analysis, and the best tool for the commander to use, can pay enormous political and fiscal dividends for DoD.

## An Easier Service or the Best Return on Investment?

Defining DoD's role in using humanitarian health programs for security goals can and should be done. I propose such a definition, but only to begin discussion. Equally important is the implementation of scientific evaluation of humanitarian missions. This can be

done quickly, without new authorization or appropriation legislation. Then DoD can get on with the business of national security, using the humanitarian response tool in the most effective ways. Having good intentions is not enough.

Benjamin Franklin recognized the hypocrisy of substituting good intentions for good works. For DoD to avoid this "easier service" trap in its humanitarian efforts, we must be clear in our intentions, sustainable in our actions, and compulsively thorough in our evaluations. Together, even in the face of a tenuous link between health interventions and peace outcomes, DoD can deliver on its peace and security mandate to the taxpayers and the Congress. PRISM

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## Photos

Tomb site of Ahmad Shah Massoud in Panjshir

# The NATO Campaign in Afghanistan

## Comparisons With the Experience in Colombia

BY DICKIE DAVIS

*Just days after 9/11, Congress authorized the use of force against al Qaeda and those who harbored them – an authorization that continues to this day. The vote in the Senate was 98 to nothing.  The vote in the House was 420 to 1. For the first time in its history, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization invoked Article 5 – the commitment that says an attack on one member nation is an attack on all. And the United Nations Security Council endorsed the use of all necessary steps to respond to the 9/11 attacks.  America, our allies and the world were acting as one to destroy al-Qaeda's terrorist network and to protect our common security.*
– President Barack Obama, West Point, December 1, 2009

I n June 2014 I accompanied a field trip organised by the Brenthurst Foundation, a South African non-governmental organization, to Colombia. The aim of the trip was to look at what lessons could be learned from the Colombian Government's successful campaign against the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). Having developed, over the last 10 years, an in depth knowledge of the war in Afghanistan since 2001 I was struck by both some of the similarities and differences between the two countries, and the attempts by the international community to help.  This article looks at the campaign in Afghanistan as the NATO mission comes to a close, drawing comparisons with the Colombian experience as appropriate. It focuses on five areas: campaign goals and the linkages to values and culture; campaign ownership; corruption; troop numbers; and military capacity building.

When the U.S.-led coalition launched Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) in 2001, its aim was the defeat of terrorist elements operating from Afghanistan. It sought to achieve this by defeating Taliban military forces, removing their government from power and destroying those elements of al-Qaeda operating in Afghanistan. The longer-term aim of the coalition was to

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create a stable, democratic Afghanistan that would no longer be a safe haven for terrorists. OEF started as a conventional warfighting operation that used air power, Special Forces, and troops from the Northern Alliance to defeat the Taliban, and this phase was very successful. However, many key Taliban government members and military commanders escaped. An end to combat operations was declared by OEF in May 2003, and at this point the operation focused on stabilizing the country.

While there had been tactical engagements with small numbers of the Taliban in the south and east of the country ever since their fall, by 2005 the numbers and size of these engagements increased considerably. In effect, during the period from 2001 to the start of 2005, the Taliban achieved strategic survival and then began to run an offensive campaign in Afghanistan, which they hoped to grow from guerrilla warfare to conventional war fighting.

The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), as approved in the Bonn Agreement of December 2001, deployed under a UN mandate as soon as the agreement was signed. Initially, ISAF was deployed to Kabul, thus securing the new government's seat of power. However, the mandate included assistance in the training of Afghanistan's armed forces, assistance in reconstruction and, most importantly, for expansion of ISAF throughout Afghanistan. The ISAF mission was formally taken over by NATO in August 2003, and expansion, initially to the north of the country, was started in December 2003 and completed with the inclusion of the east of the country in October 2006. Until the expansion of the mission to southern Afghanistan in July 2006 the majority of NATO force-contributing nations

regarded the operation as a peacekeeping mission. Thus, with OEF seeing Afghanistan as being at the end of a conventional war and ISAF initially viewing Afghanistan as a peacekeeping operation, it was not until the completion of ISAF expansion that the whole international military effort could be put on a common doctrinal footing: that of counter-insurgency.

Throughout the period 2007 – 2009, the Taliban-led insurgency grew in intensity, particularly in the South and the East of the country, and ISAF and Afghan commanders made repeated requests for more forces and an expansion in the planned size of the Afghan Army. President Obama agreed to a troop increase in March 2009. In autumn, 2009 the President led a review of the Afghan mission, which resulted in an agreement to surge both U.S. and international forces for an 18-month period. Beyond this period there was a clearly-stated intent by the ISAF nations to disengage from combat operations, the date for which was subsequently set as the end of 2014. During the London Conference in January 2010 it was announced that the Afghan Army would be increased in strength to 171,600 and the Police to 134,000 by October 2011, thus providing the scale of forces necessary to enable an international troop drawdown. The hard fighting that followed over the course of 2010 changed the dynamic of the campaign and another U.S. review in December of that year confirmed the start of the drawdown as July 2011, with the end of 2014 set as the date for the end of the NATO mission. The exit strategy was confirmed at the Chicago NATO summit of May 2012.

The UN has been present in Afghanistan since October 1988 with a limited purpose of assistance and co-ordination, and as a result its

footprint has always been relatively small. Following the war in 2001, the UN role in Afghanistan remained one of assistance. In particular, it was felt that the mission needed to operate with a light footprint, in order to prevent it from being seen as yet another occupying power, and that an Afghan interim administration should quickly take the lead.

President Karzai formed the Interim Afghan Administration after the signing of the Bonn Agreement in December 2001. It was drawn from key members of the Northern Alliance and other important groups who had been driven from power by the Taliban. However, very few members of the interim administration and subsequent government had lengthy experience in running a country, and the civil service, almost destroyed by over 20 years of war and limited formal government, was ineffective. Furthermore, a democratically elected government had never governed Afghanistan; rather, traditional tribal structures had dominated, and these were based on patronage rather than on a culture of service provision to the electorate. As a result, warlordism remained a feature of Afghan politics.

Given the broad international consensus behind the U.S.-led war in Afghanistan, there was much support for the new government of the country from the international community. Lead nations were appointed to help rebuild key elements of the state and support the government in difficult areas. Nations and international organizations offered donations, although many did not want to pass their money through the Government and thus funded the projects directly. This approach gave the Government of Afghanistan some considerable co-ordination challenges.

## Issue 1: The Linkage between the Goals of an Intervention and Values and Culture

*No longer is our existence as states under threat. Now our actions are guided by a more subtle blend of mutual self-interest and moral purpose in defending the values we cherish. In the end, values and interests merge. If we can establish and spread the values of liberty, the rule of law, human rights and an open society then that is in our national interests too. The spread of our values makes us safer. As John Kennedy put it, "Freedom is indivisible and when one man is enslaved who is free?"*

– Prime Minister Tony Blair, Chicago, April 1999

When Prime Minister Blair made his Chicago speech in April 1999, Europe was in the middle of the Kosovo crisis. For the UK, this was followed by intervention in May 2000 in Sierra Leone. In fact, the overseas interventions of the 1990's involving British Forces were relatively short, self-contained, and largely successful. Thus by 2001 the UK had a doctrine for intervention and ten years of relatively successful practice as the backdrop for the interventions of the first decade of the 21st century. As Rob Fry remarks: "Wars in defence of liberal values are what the British people fought throughout the twentieth century, and these wars were wars of unnegotiable necessity. Wars in promotion of liberal values are what the British armed forces have fought for since 1991 and, by their very nature, they have been discretionary."[1] Looking back it is clear that "Chicago Doctrine" thinking had a huge influence on the conduct of the international community in Afghanistan and on the early stages of the

campaign. After the initial defeat of the Taliban in 2001, in an unstated way, it underpinned our plans to help put the country back on its feet. Yet the culture of the population, the very fabric of the nation, and the nature of its traditional systems of governance were so far removed from those of the Western countries involved, and the timescales involved so short, that there was bound to be disappointment and recalibration. The assumption that underpinned the Western approach was that for Afghanistan to be stable it needed a democratically-elected government based in Kabul that was accountable to, and delivered services to, the people. This had not been the Afghan way. When governance had been delivered it had been through traditional, family, village, and tribal structures, and through patronage. There was no deeply embedded culture of paying taxes to a central government or of that government delivering effective services.[2]

This issue has been at the heart of the debate between coalition members about whether the campaign was just about the defeat of al-Qaeda and the denial of safe havens, or whether it was about the much bigger task of nation-building in order to create a stable Afghanistan that was resilient to the return of such an organization. At the beginning of the campaign ambitions were high. For example, the official end-state for the UK engagement in Afghanistan, as written in 2003, included phrases such as "broad based, multi ethnic administration;" "reducing poverty; respecting human rights."[3] By 2006 however, people were beginning to talk in terms of "Afghan good enough" and by the time of President Obama's West Point speech of



An impromptu shura, or town meeting, takes place during Panjshir province Governor Bahlol Bajig visit to the district for the groundbreaking of a new school in the Tul district of Afghanistan, May 28, 2007.

December 2009, the objectives were much more specific and limited: "To meet that goal, we will pursue the following objectives within Afghanistan. We must deny al-Qaeda a safe haven. We must reverse the Taliban's momentum and deny it the ability to overthrow the government. And we must strengthen the capacity of Afghanistan's security forces and government so that they can take lead responsibility for Afghanistan's future."[4] The order of the words "security forces" and then "government" in the speech is significant. As the true scale and costs of the challenge of delivering against a Chicago Doctrine – a compliant end-state in Afghanistan – became apparent, the countries involved began to curtail their ambitions and time-limit their engagement. What made getting Afghanistan back on its feet such a difficult task was not just the fight with the Taliban, the lack of Afghan human capacity,and the endemic poverty; it was that the whole society operated in a completely different way to those of its helpers.

This is not a circumstance unique to Afghanistan. Sir Andrew Green, writing in August 2014 about British recent engagements in the Middle East, commented: "The fundamental reason for our failure is that democracy, as we understand it, simply doesn't work in Middle Eastern countries where family, tribe, sect and personal friendships trump the apparatus of the state. These are certainly not societies governed by the rule of law. On the contrary, they are better described as "favor for favor" societies. When you have a problem of any kind, you look for someone related to you by family, tribe or region to help you out and requests are most unlikely to be refused since these ties are especially powerful."[5] I would venture that he might have gone too far in saying that "democracy as we understand it" does

not work; but rather that to get it to work in a way that the West understands is probably an activity measured in generations.

So what? First, the lesson must be that if we set out to change values as part of an engagement, we need to have a deep cultural understanding of the society in which we are engaging and of what changing values in that society actually means. Second, we need a clear understanding of where we are prepared to compromise our own values in order to enable progress and, where such compromise is unacceptable. There are countless examples of where this issue has impacted on the campaign; perhaps the best is in our approach to dealing with warlords and powerful figures that were suspected of involvement in the drug trade and in wider corruption. Initially, coalition forces worked with them to defeat the Taliban, but following the Bonn peace process the international community became increasingly reluctant to engage them, preferring to deal with government and provincial officials who often had little real power. A short quote from President Karzai in 2008 expressing his frustration over the removal of Shir Muhammad Akhundzada highlights the dilemmas often faced: "We removed Akhundzada on the allegation of drug-running, and delivered the province to drug runners, the Taliban, to terrorists, to a threefold increase of drugs and poppy cultivation."[6] It is fair to record that during Akhundzada's governorship in 2001-2005 Helmand province appeared relatively secure, but it is also fair to note that he was accused of actions that did not accord with a Western value set, to the extent that the UK Government felt uncomfortable/unable to work with him. I am not attempting to pass judgment on whether removing him was the right thing to do, I am

merely pointing out the fact that the upholding of values in this case, as in others, had consequences for the campaign, and that such decisions must not be taken unconsciously. A case study of international engagement with General Dostum would highlight similar issues.

Third, the challenge will often be compounded by the timescales required to effect cultural change when set against the relatively short tenures of western governments. The flip side of this issue is that if the West accepts these limitations, then large scale engagements need to be less about changing values and more about national interests. Tony Blair, speaking again in Chicago, this time in 2009, argues that the doctrine should be unchanged and that what is required is "engagement of a different and more comprehensive kind; and (the struggle) can only be won by the long haul."[7] The problem for the West is that in a conflict that is not about a direct threat to one's nation or national survival, our pain threshold is relatively low and our attention span short.

The danger is that the West will slip into isolationism, ignoring the global challenges of population growth, poverty and youth unemployment until they generate issues that are too big to be ignored. In short, if we are to attempt to prevent such scenarios there is a strong case for engagements to be smaller, earlier and longer term; in this respect current policy talk of "up stream capacity building" is unsurprising.

Finally, if this challenge exists at a country-to-country level, it also exists at a military-to-military level. The NATO armies engaged in Afghanistan are now much more aware of the importance of cultural training, but we have been here before and let it slip. While researching for this paper I came across an article by Norvell B. De Atkins entitled, "Why Arabs Lose Wars," written in 1999; it proved to be a fascinating study of both Arab and U.S. military cultures, and the reason this subject is so important if we are to engage successfully. It also points to some of the reasons why the Iraqi Army might be having its current challenges in dealing with the threat posed by ISIS/IS.[8]

## Issue 2: Ownership of the Campaign

President Obama's December 2009 statement on his objectives in Afghanistan includes the phrase "so that they can take lead responsibility." For a campaign that had, by then, been running for just over eight years and during which there have been two Afghan Presidential elections and three administrations, this is a thought-provoking remark. It gets to the heart of the second major issue: whose campaign is it? The contrast with the Colombian experience could not be starker. In 1999 the Colombian Government recognized the seriousness of their situation and came up with a national plan to change the situation. This plan has continued through three Colombian presidencies. They have, of course, received international support and assistance, but it was their plan, which they controlled, and through schemes like the one percent wealth tax, they put national weight behind the plan. The bottom line is that they owned the campaign.

The start point in Afghanistan in 2001 was very different. Following years of fighting, first against Soviet occupation and then internally, the country was fragmented. Government had broken down and when the Taliban came to power, whilst improving law and order, they did little to aid the country's recovery. In the process much human capital left the country,

and during the conflict in 2001 several key potential leaders were killed: Ahmad Shah Massoud on 9 September, and Abdul Haq on 26 October. By any standards, rebuilding from such a low point was going to be demanding. The first challenge was to produce a peace/political settlement from which things could move forward. For Afghanistan this was the Bonn Conference of 2001 at which 25 "prominent" Afghans met and set out a path for establishing a democratic government in Afghanistan. With the benefit of hindsight the flaw in the process was the exclusion of the Taliban; now, some 13 years, later there is acceptance that for a lasting peace to be built, talking to the Taliban is essential, for such peace needs to be inclusive. In 2001 there was recognition that the Northern Alliance could not be allowed to dominate the country, but many of the politicians who came to represent the Pashtuns in Government had been absent from the country and in exile for many years. It says much about the individuals who gave up comfortable lives in the West and came back to the herculean task of rebuilding their country. Nevertheless, good intentions are not enough and traditional power brokers quickly reasserted themselves, some with the backing of members of the Transitional Government and some with the support of Western forces. As the insurgency gained momentum and the ISAF effort increased, "security" and "government" became slightly detached, with President Karzai criticizing ISAF and U.S. operations when they caused civilian casualties and, for example, becoming vocal about stopping night raids and the use of aircraft near populated areas.

Talking with an experienced Colombian soldier I was struck with his reply to my question on how he viewed the FARC: after saying that they were good fighters he said "but they share our blood." Karzai's approach to the Taliban has always included this sentiment; indeed it is reported that once the Taliban had gained power they asked him to become their ambassador to the United Nations and that he refused. If the Afghan Government had been given a totally free hand in the running of the campaign would they have tried to bring the Taliban into the tent earlier?

With the brief exception of a period in 2006/7, President Karzai did not run a specific "war cabinet" with the aim of taking national control of the war effort and using all the levers of national power. This lack of a formal Afghan Government-led mechanism for running the war has been problematic. Whilst the Afghan Government and ISAF have agreed on much, and in the latter years of the campaign increasingly so, ISAF and the international community have not always deferred to an Afghan lead. As early as 2003 the Afghan Minister for Defence argued for a massive build-up of Afghan Forces to secure the country against the return of the Taliban, for he did not believe that the West had the stomach for a long fight and the casualties that would ensue. It nevertheless took until 2009 to agree to his proposal. If defeating the Taliban mattered more to the international community and to the credibility of NATO than it did to the Afghan Government, there were always going to be some potentially uncomfortable adjustments after ISAF left.

I would not wish to pretend that this is easy ground, for any country committing troops and funding to a coalition operation abroad will wish to retain a major say in how the campaign is run. But the lesson is that if responsibility for the conduct of the campaign is not owned by the government of the country

in which it is being run, the campaign will not be truly unified across all elements of national power and this will certainly come at a cost and may undermine the whole campaign. It is interesting to reflect upon what might have happened if the Afghan Government had been fully in the lead from the beginning.

### Issue 3: Corruption

The touchstone topic that falls out of the first two issues is corruption. While corruption is generally defined as "the use of public office for private gain" there are considerable national variances. For example, the extent of political lobbying that is allowed in the U.S. would, in some countries, be regarded as corruption. But while the margins might be arguable, the core issue in Afghanistan was simple: if a country is going to commit its' taxpayers money to helping another country, it needs to be sure that the money is going to be spent and accounted for properly. The challenge for the Afghan Government was huge: while the intended method was a democratic government delivering services, in practice in a number of provinces it was power-brokers rather than governors who called the shots. To make matters worse Afghanistan did not possess a working civil service to support the government, and any staff that did exist had generally been trained by the Soviets. Additionally, the illicit economy in Afghanistan was and is huge, largely buoyed by the drug trade. The response to this situation by many governments and donors was to try and channel funds directly to projects, cutting out the Afghan Government. However this undermined the very legitimacy of the Government they sought to support.

By 2010, ISAF had become so concerned with the problem of corruption that it set up an anti-corruption task force to look at the issues surrounding ISAF contracts. As of 2013, Afghanistan sat at 175th out of 177 countries on Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index (which defines corruption as the misuse of public power for private benefit). In April 2014 the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, John Sopko, said in a report for the U.S. Government, "If we don't take advantage of this opportunity and get serious about corruption right now, we are putting all of the fragile gains that we have achieved in this — our longest war — at risk of failure."

The lesson from the campaign is that this issue cannot be ignored; it is central to the legitimacy of any government and as such has a major bearing on a counter-insurgency campaign when, at its core, the government is trying to win the support of its people. How could we have done better? I would suggest that the following represent areas for study. First, and this links to Issue 1, it can be argued that corruption had become so embedded as a way of getting things done in Afghanistan that it had become part of the culture. We have to be alert to this from the beginning of an intervention and establish better ground rules at the start. The military and civilian agencies all did things in the early days that enabled corruption in order to get things done quickly, when in hindsight it may have been better to spend less and move more slowly. Second, in Afghanistan we should have put a huge, early effort into training the civil service, thus giving the government the capability to administer the country and deliver services. Third, there must be better ways of applying intelligence and technology to improving our understanding of money flows within a country like Afghanistan. When the ISAF anti-corruption

task force began to understand part of what was going on the results were illuminating for the campaign as a whole. Ultimately, the government of the country needs to take the lead in the anti-corruption fight, for failure to do so undermines their very legitimacy.

In Afghanistan, lack of action has often degenerated into the international community criticizing the Government with little resultant action and consequent damage to the campaign as a whole. For too long the military regarded this issue as "not in their lane."

The contrast with the Colombian approach is huge. Here the Government recognized that this was a key issue that needed to be tackled as part of their overall strategy, and they have actively done so. They have, for example, introduced external oversight of the

defense budget and used polygraph testing extensively in their police and customs organizations.

## Issue 4: The Surge

Now that the surge, and the debates and reviews that led to it, are receding into history, it would be easy to overlook this part of the campaign. But it is worthy of review because it worked; it blunted the momentum of the Taliban campaign, regained lost ground and, importantly, bought the time and space needed to grow the Afghan National Army and Police.

The tension that lay behind the reviews prior to the surge are likely to be ever present: military commanders will want to mitigate risk by ensuring adequate force levels, politicians



Staff Sgt. Markus Maier, U.S. Air Force

**Eight U.S. Army soldiers supervise firing training for soldiers of the Afghan National Army (ANA)in 2013.**

will want to mitigate risk by limiting exposure and cost. These are, of course, both legitimate concerns. The tension is compounded because this is a problem set to which it is difficult to have a right answer, as there are so many other factors at play; such as the quality of the troops and effectiveness of the plan to which they are being applied. Indeed, the surge in Afghanistan was accompanied by several changes of emphasis in the military approach to the campaign which in themselves produced a real effect: much was done to promote better partnering with Afghan forces and to promote unity of effort across ISAF and coalition forces as a whole.

For the military the lesson is that we must get better at explaining the military logic behind the numbers. Unfortunately some of this logic will be country specific and thus learned only during the campaign. For example, by the time of the surge we had a very good idea of the amount of ground that an ISAF company partnered with equivalent numbers of Afghan soldiers and Police could secure. We could therefore redraw the boundaries of Task Force Helmand after it had been reinforced by the surge to match troops to task. In 2006 there was one battle group for the whole province; after Operation Moshtarak, the British brigade size Task Force was focused entirely on central Helmand. This changed the dynamic, for company commanders now had roughly the right force levels to execute their missions in accordance with counterinsurgency doctrine. The change after that point was dramatic.

Ultimately the lesson of the surge is that numbers of boots on the ground is relevant in a counterinsurgency and, despite technological advances, is likely to remain so for a while yet. Under-investment in troop numbers will have

a cost; reviews of the current conflicts in Libya and Syria will be interesting in this respect. The same has been true of the Colombian campaign; growing the Colombian Armed Forces to get the force ratios right, re-equipping and re-training them was key in their turnaround of the campaign.

## Issue 5: Military Capacity Building

In recent months we have witnessed the collapse of the Iraqi Army in Northern Iraq in the face of an ISIS/IS onslaught. After so much engagement and money spent by the U.S. and coalition partners how could this happen particularly when on paper ISIS/IS is much smaller, less well armed, and has received little coherent, external, military capacity-building support?

Napoleon is credited with the remark that "morale is to physical as three is to one." It is interesting then that military capacity-building, conducted by international forces, tends to focus on the physical component: equipment, doctrine, and training. The moral component is much harder. Ultimately, the force must believe in the society, its leaders and the cause for which it fights; reward, recognition and patronage also have important parts to play for these are tools that bond societies and leaders to the force. It was also Napoleon who said "a soldier will fight long and hard for a bit of colored ribbon." After more than 13 years of fighting, the Taliban have lost virtually every single tactical action. In terms of military capability they are completely outclassed, yet they keep on fighting and have not given up: why?

Commentators are now looking at the Afghan Army and asking: "Post 2014 how will they perform?" History may offer some pointers: after the Soviet Army pulled out in 1989 the Afghan Army fought on, only fragmenting

when the last Soviet advisors left and Najibullah's regime collapsed. Physically they are in good shape, they have grown in size and capability, particularly over the last six years, and they now have plenty of combat experience. Anyone who has worked with the Afghan Army over the course of the last 13 years cannot fail to be impressed by their progress. While they lack some of the enablers used by ISAF, what they possess physically far outmatches the Taliban. The answer, perhaps uncomfortably for the military, will lie in the politics.

There is a flip side to this equation in that a military that oversteps the mark, does not respect the people it operates amongst, or is controlled for private rather than public gain can become an instrument for repression and ultimately a liability for the politicians. The Colombian experience is very illuminating in this respect, for, as part of their campaign turn-around, they have been very tough on abuses by their security forces and have firmly established civilian control of the military.

## Conclusion

Interventions such as that in Afghanistan are unique to the country, and are a blend of art and science for which the variables are infinite: for every rule there will be exceptions. But for such interventions to stand a chance of success they require a deep understanding of the country, its culture, politics, and the key societal differences; and recognition of the paramount importance of local ownership, leadership, and solutions. Gaining the trust of the people is vital and in the battle for hearts and minds tackling the abuse of public power for private gain is a key factor. Numbers of boots on the ground matter and early under-investment will come at a cost to the campaign.

Physically building a military force is potentially the easy part of capacity building; linking it to its people and government, placing it correctly within its country's society and culture, and thus giving it a reason to fight is much more challenging yet vital for success. When the counter-insurgency campaigns in Afghanistan and Colombia are studied side by side there are some thought-provoking differences in all of these areas. PRISM

## Notes

[1]  Wars in Peace, Chapter 7, Strategy and Operations, Rob Fry, RUSI Publications 2014.

[2]  The challenge, in this respect, was much greater than experienced by the international community in the Balkans; where many of the planning the engagement had gained their experience.

[3]  A stable and secure Afghanistan restored to its rightful place in the community of nations and enjoying mature relations with its neighbours; with a self-sustaining economy, strong institutions and a broad-based, multi-ethnic administration committed to eradicating terrorism and eliminating opium production; reducing poverty; respecting human rights, especially those of women and minority groups; and honouring Afghanistan's other international obligations.

[4]  http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-address-nation-way-forward-afghanistan-and-pakistan.

[5]  http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/11037173/Why-Western-democracy-can-never-work-in-the-Middle-East.html.

[6]  http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/afghanistan/6615329/Afghan-governor-turned-3000-men-over-to-Taliban.html.

[7]  http://www.tonyblairoffice.org/speeches/entry/tony-blair-speech-to-chicago-council-on-global-affairs/.

[8]  http://www.meforum.org/441/why-arabs-lose-wars.

# An Interview with

# Stephen Hadley

*Did the first George W. Bush Administration have the correct organization, structure, and functions for the National Security Staff? Did the NSC system exercise effective management our efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq?*

*Hadley*: To this day the Tower Commission report of 1987 contains the best thing written on the proper role of the National Security Advisor. There is only one thing I would quibble with, and we saw it in the Afghanistan and Iraq situations. Because of Oliver North (and Iran-Contra), the Tower Commission emphasized that the NSC and the National Security Advisor should not get involved in operations, which is absolutely true. But I think one thing we've learned since the Tower Commission report is that implementation management is a task for the NSC – not to do the implementation, but to see that it is being done by the appropriate agencies of the government.

The NSC system has served our country well in developing a process for raising issues for decision by the President. But once you get a policy decision by the President, the issue is implementation and execution. I think that is a new frontier for the interagency process; not that the NSC is going to run operations, but the NSC has the responsibility to ensure that the policy decisions coming from the President are actually implemented and executed effectively. We spent a lot of time doing that in the Bush 43 administration.

We tried a number of ways of doing this. In terms of Afghanistan, the first step was what we called the Afghan Operations Group (AOG). The AOG was an interagency team that met at least once a week or even more often in their office at the State Department. They were supposed to develop plans, to assign responsibility, task due dates, and really move the implementation and execution of our policy in Afghanistan. I always said that I would give the NSC policy development process a "B," but the interagency implementation and execution process only a "D," not

just for the Bush administration, but for any administration. I think the AOG was a "B minus" in terms of what it did. It was a first step to having interagency coordination and oversight over the implementation and execution, a good first step.

When Zalmay Khalizad was Ambassador to Afghanistan we developed an implementation strategy called, "Accelerating Success in Afghanistan." When I was Deputy National Security Advisor, we did this in the Deputy's Committee. We developed a series of initiatives to try to address political, economic, and social issues. We not only developed the programs, but in a parallel process in the Office of Management and Budget, Robin Cleveland ran an interagency process to find the funding for it so that when we presented it to the Principals and then to the President for approval, it was an implementation plan that had funding associated with it. I think it's the only time we did that, but it should be a prototype for how we do implementation. When you get a policy decision, you ought to have an interagency process in which people divide up the tasks, take responsibility, indicate who is going to be in charge, what the due dates are, and have a parallel OMB-led budget process that makes sure you've got the funding for all of it. Indeed, we made sure that whenever there was an initiative that came up on the policy end, in the paper that would go to the Principals, there would be a fiscal annex which indicated whether there was a money requirement, and if so, how much was funded from where, how much wasn't funded, and where we were going to get it. Again, it probably in the end was honored more in the breach, but it was one of several efforts to focus on the implementation and execution piece.

*Hadley*: The next incarnation of implementation management was after the "surge decision." We needed somebody full-time to oversee implementation and execution. I just couldn't do it full-time due to the other things I was responsible for. That's when we brought in Lieutenant General (LTG) Douglas Lute. I resisted efforts from Secretary Rice and Secretary Gates to put him directly under the National Security Advisor. I told them he would have to have a direct line to the President, but the way we did it was while he had direct line to the President, we always went in to the President together, so he was not a separate voice. I thought it would empower him so that he could call up the Secretary of State or Secretary of Defense and say, "You are falling down on the implementation and execution." And so LTG Lute did exactly that. He had an interagency group to develop implementation plans that would assign agencies responsibilities and due dates. He would particularly, for example, get civilians tasked to go to Iraq, an area where the State Department was very slow. LTG Lute would have a weekly meeting, and he would say to the State Department, "Alright, your number was 15 people by today, where are you, how far behind are you, when are you going to get it done?"

Complex operations require that you integrate political, economic, civilian, social, and developmental objectives involving many agencies. You have to coordinate it in the interagency. And that's what we tried to do with LTG Lute. This was basically a recognition that you could not make the Iraq strategy succeed if it was left to the bureaucracy to be executed

in a routine manner, because in the ordinary routine course it would not get done in time. We tried to get LTG Lute to inject a sense of urgency and accountability into the process.

*In both Afghanistan and Iraq, should we have brought our allies in on the initial planning? Should the advantages of securing a broad range of international support have weighed more heavily in our strategy and plans, especially for Iraq?*

*Hadley*: One of the things I think I have to talk about is this notion that there wasn't a plan for post-Saddam Iraq, which is just not true. The dilemma was the following: the President wanted coercive diplomacy; he wanted to prepare a war plan, and to be seen preparing forces in order to give strength to the diplomacy. But he was hopeful that Iraq could be resolved diplomatically, and that Saddam could be convinced either to change his policies or to leave. There were a lot of people who, of course, didn't believe that. They thought that Bush came in with the settled intention to go to war, and that diplomacy was just a cover. They thought the diplomacy was designed to fail in order for the President to have a pretext to go to war, which was not the case. Indeed, the President never really decided to go to war until late in the process. But the dilemma was, if we started, and it became known publicly that we were planning for a post-conflict, post-Saddam Iraq, everybody would say, "See, we told you, the diplomatic effort is not real, they're already preparing for war." And we would undermine our own diplomacy. So we had a dilemma, you had to delay the post-war planning as much as you could because you didn't want to jeopardize the diplomacy, but you still want enough time

to develop the post-war plan. We did the post-war planning in the Deputy's Committee. I think the problem, systemically on that, turned out to be something that was identified in a study that James McCarthy did for Donald Rumsfeld and that he briefed me about in 2005. And what he said was, "the charge that you guys didn't do post-war planning is wrong. I've seen the planning; it wasn't bad. But what you didn't understand was that while military plans were being developed by CENTCOM, there was a system for translating those military plans into operational orders all the way down to the squadron level. There wasn't an established way of taking that post-war planning and putting it into the process, with implementing orders all the way down to the squadron level. So, you did all the planning, but it had no legs."

I assumed Jay Garner (head of the Office for Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance - ORHA) was briefed on all these plans. He says he was not, and I can't understand why he wasn't; we certainly had him in some of the meetings where plans were being devised at the end. But I know from people who were then lieutenants and captains, they didn't have any instructions on how to handle the post-war problems. So, there's a systemic problem: when you do these integrated operations and you have a post-war situation, and you're going to have to do integrated execution, we don't have a way of taking the post-combat plan and turning it into interagency guidance that goes down to the field. And that of course was one of the things we tried to fix, post-surge, by having LTG Lute run the interagency process.

The last piece we got in place was the political dimension. Paul Wolfowitz said we should have gone very quickly to an interim

government and passed authority to the Iraqis as early as possible. That's exactly what the plan was. It's ironic. The problem was the Iraqi Governing Council, which was a step to move in that direction, did not work because the Iraqi elite were not ready to participate.

And one other thing: you know the military piece of this post-war planning was of course Phase IV. The actual military piece that was developed by CENTCOM called Phase IV was briefed a couple of times to the President and to the NSC Principals. It was separate from, but in parallel with what we were doing with the Deputies, which was all the other post-war planning. I was told by someone who participated in the planning at CENTCOM at the time those Phase IV plans were done that, "You know, you need to understand that the military did not think that Phase IV was their responsibility."

The view was, "When we get rid of this guy (Saddam), we are going home." It's interesting that General Tommy Franks resigned shortly after Saddam was toppled. Now you can understand General Franks had been in two wars, he was exhausted; but the military apparently never embraced the Phase IV mission, and the best lesson from that is something that General John Allen said at a review of the Iraq War about two, two and a half years ago. Allen said, "The thing I've learned from Iraq and Afghanistan is, that when you do your planning, you need to begin with Phase IV and what you want it to look like; how you are going to get it to look like that? And then work backwards." So, where you want to end up informs your Phase III, II and I planning about how you are going to get there. This was a new idea to me; we didn't do it that way. I don't think the United States has ever done it that way. And that's exactly the right way to do it,

and the reasons why all these lessons learned studies are so important.

After the past three years, we've now decided that the Middle East is still important to us. It's a threat to the homeland, and we need to get more engaged. We've got a reasonable strategy, and it may work after a year or two. First in Iraq, and then if we've succeeded in Iraq, and we've bought some time in Syria to build forces, maybe we will succeed in Syria. But, if we're not going to have to "mow the grass" every five or ten years dealing with a terrorist threat in the Middle East, we are going to have to get active and try to transform those societies: to help them provide effective governance to their people, give them reasonable economies that provide jobs, give them some participation in their governments, some sense of dignity and worth, or we're just going to have to be doing this again. And so the lessons from our efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq are terribly important because somebody's going to have to develop a plan for how we are going to strengthen these societies so they can deliver for their people, and so they do not become again such congenial places for terrorist recruitment.

*And it's so hard. In Libya, we did just the opposite. We had "no footprint" after the kinetic phase. We delivered the Libyans from a dictatorship and into chaos.*

*Hadley*: And you would have thought we would have learned from Afghanistan 1990, right? We walked away. Afghanistan 2001 and Iraq 2003, we learned that lesson. We weren't going to walk away, and that's why we had a post-conflict strategy, even if we didn't do it very well. The basic problem is, we spent nearly 50 years, post-Vietnam on an enormous

effort to learn how to recruit, train, fight, and improve our military, so we have the best military in the world. We have not made a similar effort to develop the capabilities we need to do post-conflict operations. They are largely civilian capabilities. They're in the U.S. government and private sector, and we have not developed a systematic way to identify, train, exercise, deploy, do lessons learned, and improve. We just haven't done it. And so every time we have one of these, whether it's Bosnia, Afghanistan, Iraq, or the 2011 Arab Awakening, we are starting from scratch. In Bosnia we tried relying on international organizations but it didn't work. We tried it in Afghanistan, dividing up responsibilities among countries: the Germans had the police, Italy had the justice sector, the UK had narcotics. We divided it all up, everybody had a piece. This was an effort not to be unilateral. To be multilateral, but everybody's piece was small enough that it was everybody's second or third priority, and it never got done! So we gave it to the military, not exclusively, but we gave the military the lead, supported by all U.S. government agencies, in Iraq in 2003. And it turned out, the military didn't have the total skill set either! So, you know, this is a systemic problem. It is not an NSC process problem per se, but it is an implementation and execution problem. We have not developed the kinds of capabilities that we need. And I think we're going to come at it once again, when, after the kinetic phase against ISIS, there's going to have to be some work done. How are we going to do that?

*The other view is that of General Daniel Bolger in his new book: he basically says we won the war in Iraq and Afghanistan after we captured the capital cities and got the*

*government in place. He thinks we should have left in a few months.*

*Hadley*: We had that conversation. We had that conversation when it was clear we were going to war, and the President had that conversation with his NSC Principals. He asked, "So, if we get rid of Saddam, what is our obligation to Iraqi people? Is it Saddamism without Saddam, or, putting it another way, a strong  military leader within the existing system that simply agrees that he will not support terror, and will not develop WMD, will not invade his neighbors, and will be not quite as brutal to his own people as Saddam was. Is that okay?" The President's view was we would get rid of Saddam Hussein for national security reasons, not because we were promoting democracy out of the barrel of a gun. We were going to have to remove him for hard national security reasons, but then what was our obligation to the Iraqi people? He said, "We stand for freedom and democracy. We ought to give the Iraqi people a chance, a chance with our help, to build a democratic system." And that's how the democracy piece got in, not that it had to be a Jeffersonian democracy, not that it had to be in our image, not that we wouldn't leave until the job is done, but we would give them a chance. And once we got into it, we realized that there had to be a democratic outcome because that was the only way you would keep the country together: Sunni, Shia, and Kurds working together in a common democratic framework. Otherwise, the country was going to fall apart. As we thought about it and got well into it, it was also clear that there was the potential that Iraq could be a model for the Middle East because in the Middle East it was either Sunnis oppress Shia, or Shia oppress Sunnis, and both of them beat up the Kurds.

We wanted to show that Sunni, Shia, and Kurds could work together in a democratic framework and develop a common future, where the majority ruled but the minority participated and had protections.

The issue now will be the future of Sykes-Picot: is it dead, do we have to redraw the borders? The people I've talked to about that say, "If you start trying to redraw the borders, it will never end." Because there are no clean borders and people will make historical claims that will be overlapping; it's a prescription for turmoil and bloodshed. The issue is not redrawing the borders, the issue is changing the quality and nature of governance within those borders. That's what we tried to do in Iraq.

The other thing we did, that worked extremely well, was the Tuesday afternoon meetings of the Principals in the National Security Advisor's office, principals only: Vice President, Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, Chairman Joint Chiefs, CIA Director, the DNI. The only plus one was my deputy, who was the note-taker. We started this in 2006 before Donald Rumsfeld left. All the tough operational issues and strategy issues got vetted in that meeting, at the Principals level with no leaks, in a very candid exchange. They were the most useful sessions because we would hash things out, and all the issues were on the table. And it was invariably the Vice President, who would say, "Steve, this has been a very good discussion, now how are we going to get this before the President so he can make a decision?" That was an innovation in the second term that worked extremely well.

There was a Deputy's level working group that worked the details with some guidance from the Principals. So that way you make sure you're addressing the strategic, operational, tactical issues, and that's why you have levels that are organized, addressing issues at their appropriate level. The question is: can you keep it all knit together? That's what the National Security Advisor is supposed to do.

*On Afghanistan, early in the process, we settled on a "light footprint approach." Some in DoD also favored that approach in postwar Iraq. In retrospect, did we get this right or not? Any lessons here for the future?*

*Hadley*: The light footprint approach. Everybody says the experience of the Russians and the British in Afghanistan needed to be taken to heart. People forget that the Taliban were overthrown with no more than 500 CIA and military Special Forces on the ground linked up with the tribes; Special Forces on wooden saddles calling in airstrikes with GPS and cellphones. And that was powerful: for the Afghans, we did not look like the occupiers that the Russians and the British had been; we looked like liberators because we were the enabler of the Afghan people to throw off the Taliban. And that fact is why, even today, after all they've been through, 13 years later, most of the country still wants us to stay. So the light footprint was a brilliant strategy, and one of the reasons some of us were loathe to ramp up the U.S. force presence. It was precisely because we did not want to lose the mantle of being liberators and enablers and become occupiers.

And similarly, everyone says we under-resourced Afghanistan. When we did what I talked about earlier, "Accelerating Success in Afghanistan," one of the things we looked at was -- this is the fourth poorest country in the world. It has limited human infrastructure. You don't want to overwhelm that economy because what you get is corruption and

inflation. Well, guess what we got when we started throwing money into that economy: corruption and inflation. That was a reason for the light footprint approach in Afghanistan that made sense at the time.

We would have liked to have done the same process in Iraq, but there weren't any ground troops in Iraq that were going to dispose of Saddam. You remember the efforts we made: we had an overt training program and a covert training program, neither amounted to a hill of beans. Ahmed Chalabi was telling DoD he would give us thousands of people; he ended up with about 100.

The lesson for what we are doing today in Iraq is that a light footprint approach is exactly right. If you talk to Sunnis, if you talk to Shia, if you talk to Kurds, they are not asking for U.S. combat forces on the ground. What they are asking for are enablers: intelligence, training, weaponry, and embedded Special Forces to give them tactical support. And that's exactly what we should do. I spoke with Secretary Kerry about Iraq several months ago. He was thinking about Iraq in 2006 and 2007. I said to him, "It isn't Iraq in 2006 or 2007 that is the prototype for Iraq (and ISIS) today. It is Afghanistan in 2001, where we were enablers with somebody else's capabilities on the ground."

*Another vexing set of problems was our attempt to build-up the Army and police forces in Afghanistan and Iraq. In both countries, we struggled to start the process and had to endure many programmatic changes along the way. How did the NSC system work on these critical missions? Did the NSC system guide the process effectively, or was it also caught up in complex events and cross-cutting legal authorities? This question is a tough one, and*

*it involves the allies as well. The training of army and police in the future is going to be much more important, where indigenous people are in combat, and we are going to be in a training mode.*

*Hadley*: My sense was the military did the military training, and we went through a learning process. Initially we tried to train to American standards. My impression is we finally got the training right in Afghanistan under LTG William Caldwell, in terms of the military side. In terms of police training, State had that (until NATO training mission took it over, around 2009-2010).

Eventually we learned that we need to train to "good enough" standards, which are not necessarily American standards. On the military side we finally got the training right, this last time around in Afghanistan in 2010 and 2011. In terms of police training, State had that until the NATO training mission took it over, around 2009-2010.

The State Department Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) did not inspire confidence. It was all about turf, it was neuralgic. They never got it done, and at the end of the day we pulled the police training mission away and gave it to the military. Turns out the military is not the best police trainer, and so again it was a classic case where we gave it to the military by default because we don't have the kind of civilian capacity in place to do it right. So, I'm still not sure if we know how to do police training.

One of the things we decided is that Afghanistan needed something between a military force and police, they need a gendarmerie. So we tried to get the Italians, and others with these kind of forces, to do some training. We were probably slow to do that,

that's actually an area where international participation would've enhanced us. I'm not sure we now have a plan for how we are going to do police training. We need to start developing those plans and capabilities now! Or we won't have them, and we will screw it up again! It's very hard to do. We were more confident than we should have been that we could do it, and we had to learn a lot. The military also had to re-learn how to fight the war in Iraq, in 2005, 2006, and 2007, so we could actually do the Surge. That is really an issue: how does the military re-learn how to fight a different type of war, and do it in a timely way, so the war isn't lost! But the Armed Forces actually learned it, and implemented it, and turned the war in Iraq around. And that of course is the great story of Iraq. It was a war that was lost, then was won – our coalition forces working with Iraqi forces defeated al-Qaeda in Iraq. And if not for Syria and Maliki, we wouldn't be where we are today,

*Did Iraqi exiles play too strong a role? Intelligence was a big problem from the very beginning, and if you follow the memoirs of the people who were in DoD, the reason why Iraq gets off the track initially is because of bad intelligence on WMD, bad intelligence on the Iraqi infrastructure, bad intelligence on the Iraqi police, etc. There we were in Iraq and Afghanistan trying to protect the people, and we didn't know the first thing about them.*

*Hadley*: You also have that in Syria today. Why were we surprised by the turn of events there? We were surprised by it because we aren't there! With the Surge, we had a pretty good idea of what was going on in Iraq. General Stanley McCrystal had this incredible synthesis of operations and intelligence that

created a killing machine like we've never seen. But it was because he had lots of military assets and lots of intelligence assets to cover his back that he was able to do what he did. In Syria, we are surprised about the events because we aren't in Syria; we don't have intelligence assets there. We're relying on the Free Syrian Army and a few other people.

Iraq in 2003 was much the same thing. We hadn't been in Iraq for a decade. It was hard to have good intelligence about it. I think that one of the questions for the intelligence people is: did we do enough to pull together non-governmental experts?

The intelligence community still had the notion that, if you haven't stolen it, it isn't intelligence! In the past all they did was intelligence, rather than seeing themselves as an information aggregator. Going after non-traditional sources of information, and that's of course the promise of this explosion of cellphones and social media, we have information that we can mine in a way that we never could before; we can aggregate it, we can map it, etc. So one of the questions you can pose: are we working now to develop information about these conflict-prone societies and the various actors so we can design reasonable strategies to bring some stability to these countries once (and if) we get through the kinetic phase? Let's design now an information gathering strategy, so we won't be caught again without the information we need.

On the subject of exiles, I don't think they played too strong of a role. I mean, certainly some in DoD fell in love with Ahmed Chalabi, but the State Department hated him and the CIA hated him, and I basically as the Deputy National Security Advisor had to broker the peace to keep them all on the same page.

Chalabi may have affected DoD, but he didn't really affect us.

*Some members of the Administration have said since they left office that even without the WMD issue, the United States should still have invaded Iraq? Was the WMD factor, the most important one, or just one of many?*

*Hadley*: If you look at the UN resolutions in Iraq, there are four things that Iraq was in the dock for: WMD, invading its neighbors, supporting terrorism, and oppressing its people. And our view at the NSC was that they should be the grounds for going to war; they should be in the UN Security Council resolutions, and they should be in U.S. presentations to the United Nations. State resisted that, and they may have been right. Secretary Powell said, "Look, you have got to go with your best argument, and in this case, less is more," and the best argument was WMD. We at the NSC wrote an initial draft of the UN Security Council resolution that included all four elements, but Powell didn't want to use it. He wanted a resolution that was predicated on WMD, and then we could get a second resolution that would deal with the other things. Of course, the second resolution never came. Powell's speech was supposed to have all four pillars, and in the end it was a WMD piece, with a small and controversial portion on terror, and an even smaller portion on human and civil rights. It was a one legged stool, and if someone kicks out the leg of a one-legged stool, the stool falls over.

Should we have gone to war if there wasn't WMD? This is a tough question. The Deulfer Report says that Saddam would have gotten back into the WMD business. He had the capability to do it; he had the intention to do it.

Once he got out from under sanctions, he would have been back to WMD. I will remind you that once in 2005, 2006, and 2007, but particularly in 2005, once the Iranians get active in their nuclear program, you can bet Saddam Hussein would have been back in the nuclear business. So you can argue that maybe we should have gone into Iraq, even if we did not have solid evidence of the WMD.

I think as a practical manner, however, that the country wouldn't have. Just think of the practicalities of it. I say to people, "It was not so much an intelligence failure, it was a failure of imagination." Nobody ever came to me, the President of the United States, or anybody else I know of, and said, "You know I've got an interesting thought, maybe Saddam actually got rid of his WMD, but he doesn't want to tell anyone about it because he doesn't want the Iranians to know because he doesn't want the Iranians to take advantage of him." If you look at the reports I've heard about of the FBI debriefs of Saddam Hussein, that's what he says. But if you had had a red cell coming in to the Oval office, one of these outside the box, non-consensus intelligence pieces, that would have been a very interesting piece to put before the President of the United States, and would have provoked a very interesting conversation. So I think the problem wasn't really a failure of intelligence, I think it was a failure of imagination to think outside the conventional intelligence construct. We failed. We are guilty of that. I didn't think of it; the President never thought of it; nobody else thought of it. But one of the things we need to be able to do better is entertaining these kinds of out-of-the-box explanations.

I think that actually in the Surge, bringing outside people is one thing that helped the President get to where he needed to be, and it

is one thing that I am pleased that we did. He was talking to everybody about it. There are these two metaphors on the Surge that sort of clarify. One is Donald Rumsfeld. He kept saying "You know, teaching someone to ride a bicycle, at some point you have to take your hand off the seat of the bicycle." He must have said that 10 times, and finally on the 11th time the President said, "Yeah, Don, but we cannot afford to have the bicycle fall over." If you look at it from that standpoint, it is a wholly different construct. Second, the President said: "Casey and Rumsfeld are right. Ultimately, the Iraqis have to win this and take over, but we can't get from here to there, given where we are; we need a bridge to get the violence down and to allow people then to start the political process again." And that's what the Surge in Iraq was, it was a bridge. It was a bridge to basically enable what was the right strategy, but we weren't executing it in a way that would get us there. And so it's that sort of clarity of analysis and clarity of thinking that you can't always get from the system. Outside-of-the-box intelligence is hard. There are too few truths.

*In retrospect, did we have too few troops in Iraq after the shooting stopped in 2003? Could we have had a lean attack force and quickly transitioned to a fuller force for stability operations? To what extent did the Principals all understand the war plan? How did the military plan for "Phase IV" mesh with the civil plans for the new Iraq?*

*Hadley*: We talked about the problems of Phase IV. The plan was that after the fighting stopped, there would be Iraqi units that would surrender. We would vet those units, and take some of them and put them to work in some post-conflict reconstruction, cleaning up

activity. And when we were comfortable with their leadership, effectiveness, and loyalty, we would then give them security responsibilities. We thought that was going to be about 150,000 people, so we would have our forces, and our allies, and we would have 150,000 Iraqis. We thought this was going to work because in the latter days of the war, we heard from units in the north, whole divisions were negotiating to surrender with their equipment. But the war ended, and to this day, I don't know what happened to those units and what happened to their equipment; nobody surrendered as a unit. They all melted away with their equipment. So we found ourselves, if you think about our post-war plan, 150,000 people short. So initially, Secretary Rumsfeld and Secretary Powell agreed we have to try and get the allies. Powell went out, and said to all our allies, "We need troops, post-conflict stabilization troops, how about it?" Zero, zero. And there is a lesson there for what we are now doing in Syria. The coalition that we are putting together needs to have a comprehensive agreement on what they've signed up for, and what they are going to contribute. It's not just the initial operational campaign, the allies need to agree to stop some of the things they are doing, vet jihadists, and counter the propaganda. They've also got to agree to be supportive in post-conflict reconstruction, and they have to agree to put up some people for security.

So, the problem was we were 150,000 short; we went to the Arab states and asked, "Can you give us some people?" And they said, "No." And I think it's a failing on my part, I don't remember anybody in the NSC meetings saying, "You know Mr. President, you know why the violence is going up? We thought we were going to have 150,000 more troops, and

we don't have them. What are we going to do to fill that gap?" I don't remember doing it, because the answer would have had to be, we need more people, and that of course was something the Pentagon did not want to hear. But, we should have had that conversation.

*The Iraq surge decision was a very creative decision. It was the President, essentially, looking at all his military people and saying "You're wrong, I'm not taking your advice on this."*

*Hadley*: I don't think that's a fair statement. The President had an instinct on where he wanted to go in terms of the Surge. In October of 2006 I received a back-of-the-envelope estimate on what a Surge would look like, and it had the magic number five brigades, which gave me confidence that a surge was viable. The NSC staff were all proponents of the Surge. I was not reluctant, but I had a view that this was our last chance to get Iraq right, and we had to be sure. So I pushed back at them, saying, "Do the analysis again, run it again." The only finger I put on the scale was saying, "There will be a surge option coming to the President in this packet. You can put anything else you want, and you can say anything you want about it, but there will be a Surge option. Otherwise we will not be giving the President all the options."

So the President knew this was coming, but he wanted his team to be onboard. Initially Secretary Rice was not on board. The Vice President was not on board. Rice and State Department Counselor Phillip Zelikow were pushing, "Don't get involved in sectarian war, step back, preserve the institutions, and let it die out." One of the most interesting sets of meetings was in the first week of December

2006, when the President was dealing with his NSC Principals, asking all kinds of probing questions, but really trying to bring everybody onboard to what he thought he would ultimately decide on, which was the Surge option, and he did it. Rice finally said, "I'll agree to more troops, but you can't have troops doing the same thing they've been doing, they have to be doing something different." And that of course says, it's not just about the troops, it's about a new strategy. The Vice President was conflicted because he wanted to be loyal to Secretary Rumsfeld who was not a Surge proponent. But the Vice President was also hearing from others, and while Cheney was not an overt champion of the surge, he played a very interesting role. I think part of it was the he was comfortable with the process I was running, and he realized he did not have to be out there pushing the Surge; it was going to happen. So by the first week of December, the President had brought his team of NSC Principals on board – but he still had a problem with the military. He also had a new Secretary of Defense, Robert Gates.

We were ready to announce the new strategy in December, but the President said, "I don't want to give the speech now; I want Gates to have an opportunity to go to Iraq, and come back, and make a recommendation to me." So Secretary of Defense Gates went to Iraq and was persuaded by General George Casey that we did not need a Surge. At most, one brigade or two brigades would do. Gates later said, "I got suckered by the military, and I made a mistake." Then we had the meeting in the "tank" (at the Pentagon with the Joint Chiefs of Staff), which was the President's attempt to win over the military. The President understood that if there were a split between him and the military in wartime, when he's

changing the strategy, at a time when the country has largely given up on Iraq, and the Congress is going to oppose his strategy, a split between him and the military under those circumstances would be a constitutional crisis and would doom his strategy. A split within the military, between General Petraeus and the people who want the new strategy, and Generals Casey and Abizaid (the field commanders at the time), would also doom the strategy because Congress in hearings would exploit this. The objective was to have everybody in the senior military ranks in the same boat. It's okay if some lean right, and it's okay if some lean left, but they all need to be in the same boat. The meeting in the "tank" was the vehicle for doing that. The President and Vice President choreographed it in the car ride over. Cheney was going to smoke out the military Chiefs, but Bush was going to have to do the heavy lifting.

The Chiefs are not the operators; they are not fighting the war; they have to raise and train the troops, and they were worried about breaking the force. They made all these arguments about strain on the military, indefinite prospect of rotations to Iraq and Afghanistan, and what that would do to the force in the future. And they were right. But the President said, "The best way to break an army is to have it defeated." Then the Chiefs said the American people won't support a Surge, to which the President replied, "I'm the President, my job is to persuade the American people, you let me worry about that, you let me worry about the politics." They came back and said, "It will break the force, we don't have enough people," and the President replied, "I will get you more people." At that point, the Chiefs came out and supported the Surge. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Peter Pace has

already worked out that, "It won't be just a military surge, but a State Department surge, and an Iraqi surge. They will all participate." This was something arranged in the lead up to that December meeting.

The military objected to this being just a military surge; it should also surge civilians; it shouldn't be just Americans, but needed to include Iraqis. The President had gotten Maliki to agree to provide divisions, to provide brigades, to let it go on in a non-sectarian way, and to agree the insurgents could not have a safe-haven within Sadr city. In the end the President came out of the meeting with a rough consensus. The chiefs were grudgingly onboard, Secretary Gates had come onboard, and the President brought Secretary Rice onboard. Cheney was now freed to support it fulsomely. While they didn't think it was necessary, even Generals Casey and Abizaid in the field were willing to support it. The final issue was, do you give the new commander the option for five brigades, or do you commit the five brigades and say to him, "If you don't need them, you can send them home." Petraeus said, "I want the brigades," and the President resolved it.

How did the interagency system preform? The participants argued strongly their views, they interacted directly with the President, their needs were addressed, and at the end of the day they came on board. Efforts by the Congress to poke holes in the strategy largely failed. And so I think it was a good process, even if it wasn't one of the academic models that are out there in the literature. It wasn't a case of the President making a decision, and the military unhappily salutes, nor was it the Commander in Chief deferring to his military. It was the President actually bringing his military along, taking into the account the best

military thoughts, but making his own judgment about the politics and about the strategy, and about where we needed to be. The President got his military advice from his military, he heard them out, but in the end he made his own decisions. He worked to bring them along where he wanted to go. So, at the end of the day when he announced his strategy, the military was in the same boat. Some leaned right, some leaned left; it wasn't without grumbling, but at the end of the day, we avoided a constitutional crisis, we avoided a split in the military. And we had a strategy which, when he announced it, the world was stunned and couldn't believe he was going to do it. He sustained it, and fought for it, and we sustained it with the Congress because we had 40 plus votes in the Senate, controlled by the Republicans -- the Congress was unable to block the strategy, and it was implemented. Petraeus and Crocker made it happen on the ground, it succeeded, to the point that Senator Carl Levin at one point, a year or so later said "Bush was right about the surge, and I was wrong." PRISM

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# Shock Without Awe

## Military Lessons of the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands

BY ANTHONY BERGIN & KARL CLAXTON

Launched in July 2003, the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) was widely hailed as a textbook case of a sophisticated multinational intervention to stabilize a failing state.

Its tenth anniversary prompted a flurry of retrospectives on the extent to which the mission really was such a success story. Most experts continue to give RAMSI high marks for providing the circuit-breaker that halted serious violence and allowing rebuilding to begin. However that acclaim is increasingly accompanied by complaints that such a long and expensive intervention left some of the underlying political, social, and economic causes of the original crisis in place.[1]

The recent re-evaluations largely neglect military aspects of the mission. This is understandable since "the only thing all assessors agree on" in evaluating RAMSI is that getting guns off the street was crucial, done quickly, and well.[2] It is nevertheless a pity since studies of the military dimension are largely confined to works by practitioners who were personally involved early on in the mission.[3] Although a book-length U.S. analysis from 2007 focuses on security questions, its assessment period ends before severe problems re-emerged in 2006-07, and it squeezes the RAMSI experience slightly awkwardly into a counter-insurgency (COIN) framework more suited to the sort of higher intensity complex operations then underway in the Middle East.[4]

A fresh look at the military component of RAMSI indicates that Combined Joint Task Force 635's (CJTF 365) performance mirrored the strengths and limitations of the wider RAMSI mission. By leaving executive authority in the hands of Solomon Islands' elected politicians rather than transferring sovereignty to an interim administration (an idea that never had much regional support)[5] the overall intervention model kept unsustainable logging, localized money-politics, and uneven governance at the heart of the country's "patronage state."[6] That, however, provided a durable basis for the Solomons elite to accept "cooperative intervention" long enough to cement key state-building objectives, reject force as a tool for political competition, and establish what

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appears to be a durable political settlement.[7] A more intrusive mission would have become unwelcome much sooner.

Similarly, the way CJTF635 used irresistible military overmatch to deter rather than confront and defeat armed resistance—described as "shock and awe without the violence"[8] —deprived the mission of a climactic encounter with which to stamp its authority. It is nevertheless highly uncertain that RAMSI would have retained the legitimacy to prevail if its military component had sought decisive battles.

Instead, CJTF635 and RAMSI as a whole provided space and some new tools for Solomon Islanders to put violence behind them. Challenges remain, but peace seems more likely than not to endure.

## The Causes and Course of "the Tension"

Solomon Islands is a country of just over half a million people in the southwest Pacific Ocean. Nine major island groups stretch across a 1,500 km chain, approximately 2,000 km to the northeast of Australia. Sixty-three distinct languages and numerous local dialects are spoken, with English the official language and Solomons Pijin a lingua franca. More than half of its population lives on the large islands of Guadalcanal and Malaita. A British protectorate from 1893 until Independence in 1978, Solomon Islands was a site of bitter fighting
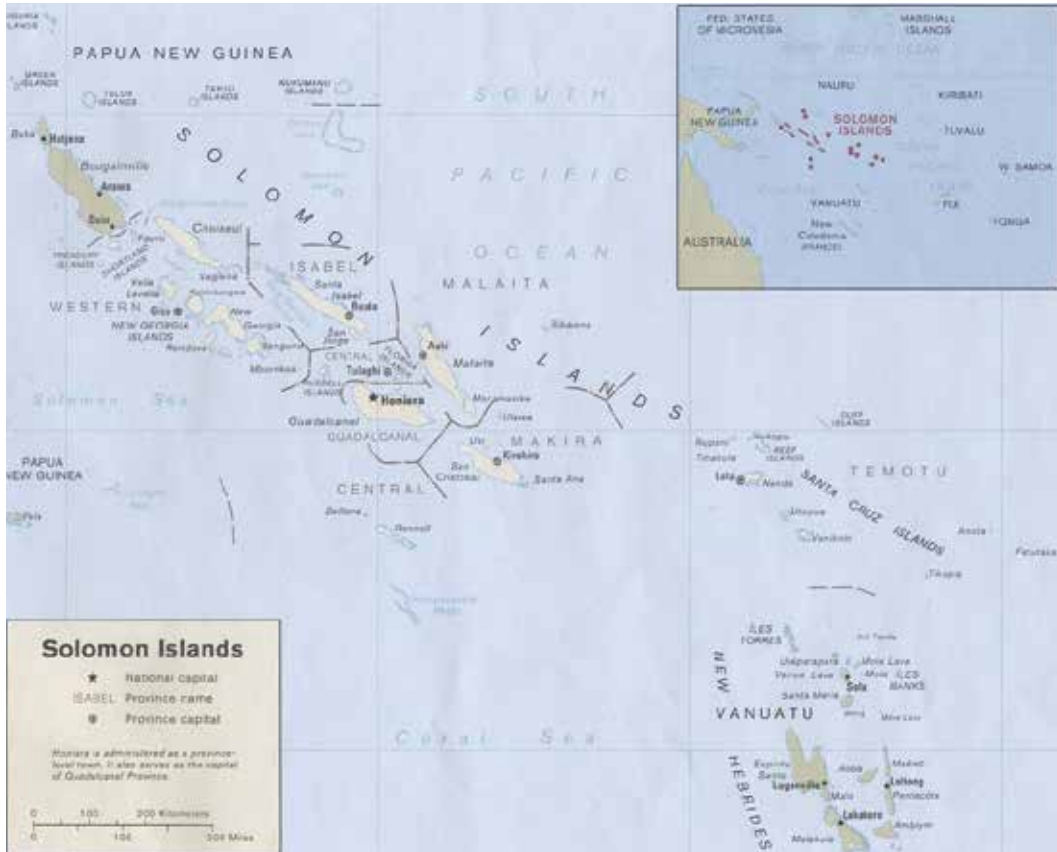


**Map courtesy of the US Central Intelligence Agency**

between Allied and Japanese forces during the Second World War, after which the capital moved to Honiara on Guadalcanal for its wartime infrastructure.

After the war, many settlers from densely populated Malaita Island, who see themselves as more assertive and entrepreneurial than their Guale neighbors, moved to take advantage of the greater economic opportunities available in Honiara and elsewhere on Guadalcanal.[9] The start of a violent campaign of harassment by Guale militants against Malaitans and other "outsiders" around Honiara in 1998 took most observers by surprise. Up until then, deft politics by community leaders had kept pressures in check for over a decade, during which time periodic strains and demands had been partly a product of genuine resentment but were also sometimes engineered to serve political objectives.[10]

Key ingredients of "the tension" included the weak authority and capacity of the postcolonial state; rapid social change; internal migration; inequality and jealousies over land issues and development disparities; Guale concerns about Malaitan dominance of government and business institutions; the presence of many underemployed and frustrated young men ("masta lius"—experts in the art of wandering aimlessly); inter-generational conflict over resource-distribution; leaders' instrumental use of "ethnic" divisions to promote their own popularity; the demonstration effect of the 1988-98 conflict in neighbouring Bougainville; and the disruption of patronage networks by declining demand for log exports due to the 1997 Asian financial crisis.[11]

As the harassment and intimidation spread, unrest quickly hardened into organized violence by militias. A Guadalcanal Revolutionary Army (GRA) claiming to represent the indigenous people of the province against unwelcome, disrespectful and disruptive guests became the more structured Isatabu Freedom Movement (IFM) that waged a violent campaign against Malaitans and demanded "compensation," while the Malaita Eagle Force (MEF) arose in January 2000 to protect the interests of the initial targets of violence.

Although casualties of the fighting were quite low by the standard of many conflicts, over 20,000 people were displaced, and government services and the economy ground to a halt. The Government effectively lost control of Guadalcanal, with Malaitans dominating the capital and Guale militants dominating the countryside.

In June 2000, the MEF, supported by elements of the Malaitan-dominated police force, forced a Malaitan prime minister they regarded as insufficiently pro-Malaitan, Bart Ulufa'alu, to resign at gunpoint and took control of the government. Following the coup, a ceasefire was negotiated between the MEF and IFM on 2 August 2000, followed by the signing of the Australian and New Zealand (NZ)-brokered Townsville Peace Agreement on 15 October. This led to the deployment of a small,unarmed International Peace Monitoring Team (IPMT) which withdrew, four months earlier than planned, in mid-2002 having done all it could. The signing of the Marau Peace Agreement on 7 February 2001 ended inter-ethnic violence on Guadalcanal (though a key Guale militant, Harold Keke, and his group kept up a violent campaign against all-comers along the rugged Weathercoast of Guadalcanal).[12]

With the end of the ethnic conflict however, the militant groups' command structures eroded, and undisciplined armed gangs emerged which turned to crime, pay-back

violence, compensation demands and extortion against the Finance Department, producing a near collapse of the national government and economy, around 250 murders, very high levels of sexual violence and a breakdown of law and order in Honiara. The country continued to spiral downwards.

Requests in 1999 and 2000 to lead a more forceful intervention were declined on the grounds of the longstanding practice that Australia is not a neo-colonial power and could "not presume to fix the problems of South Pacific countries."[13] As late as January 2003, Australia's Foreign Minister argued that sending Australian troops to occupy Solomon Islands would be "folly in the extreme," as it would be resented in the Pacific, difficult to justify to Australian taxpayers, and would not be successful as foreigners did not have the answers to the Solomons' deep-seated problems.[14] On 22 April 2003 Honiara made another such request.

### "Cooperative Intervention"

Following receipt of advice that Australia might this time be interested in helping, Prime Minister Allan Kemakeza, who had been elected in December 2001, flew to see Prime Minister John Howard on 5 June.

Although suggestions that RAMSI was conceived as a "convenient exit strategy" for Canberra from operations in Iraq (which Australia had invaded as part of the U.S.-led Coalition in March 2003) are overstated,[15] it was shaped by the post 9/11 and 2002 Bali bombings security environment.[16] While Australia had led major regional stabilization missions in Bougainville (1998-2003) and Timor Leste (1999-2013) before the start of the "national security decade," Foreign Minister Alexander Downer described the decision to

embark on a potentially decade-long "cooperative intervention" without an exit strategy in Solomon Islands as a "very important policy change" that set aside the bipartisan approach that had existed since 1975.[17] Canberra was determined not to "have a failed state on our doorstep."[18]

Although planning was already underway when the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI) published a report on 10 June calling for action,[19] preparations for that report had helped prompt officials' thinking and reframed the problem as a threat to regional security that engaged Australia's interests.[20] Canberra decided to intervene, subject to a formal request from Solomon Islands and Pacific Islands Forum support, on 25 June.

For the 14 other states of the Forum beside Australia and NZ—many of whom face complex challenges, are recently de-colonized, and wary of external interference—Honiara's request for help nevertheless resonated with a sense that regional countries must work together to address security and development challenges.[21] The Forum Foreign Ministers met on 30 June to consider intervening. The UN also supported the mission though it did not occur under UN auspices.

Governor General Lapli wrote to formally request help on 4 July; the Solomon Islands Government agreed to the mission on 11 July; special legislation setting the terms and conditions of the assistance package (the *Facilitation of International Assistance Act*) was endorsed by the Solomons Parliament on 17 July; and on 24 July, in Townsville, seven member states of the Forum including Australia, NZ, PNG, Fiji, Tonga, Samoa and Solomon Islands – signed the RAMSI Treaty authorizing RAMSI.

Shortly after dawn that morning, the first C-130 Hercules touched down in Honiara with

lead elements of the 1,400 troops, 300 police and officials from the nine Forum countries that were initially contributing. Troops also came ashore from the amphibious ship HMAS Manoora, crossing "Red Beach" where U.S. Marines had landed in August 1942.

Operation *Helpem Fren* was the local name given to RAMSI. The first Special Coordinator, Nick Warner, referred to it as a "unique and complex operation" as it came about as the result of an invitation from a democratically elected government, had a major focus on police work, enjoyed regional endorsement and participation, and was complex because of the mission's mandate to not only restore law and order but to rebuild the nation.[22]

The mission was multinational and multiagency from the start. Charged with orchestrating all RAMSI's components on the ground, Warner was from Australia's Foreign Affairs department. Police rather than military units led the security operations (though visibly supported by a capable military combat and logistics element) in order to signal that resistance would be a criminal matter. Technocrats drawn from the region's capital cities but particularly from Canberra were a key ingredient. RAMSI's eight defining characteristics were to be preventive, permissive, regional-in-nature, nationally led, supported by the United Nations, non-sovereign, police-led, and light in touch.[23]

RAMSI personnel were deployed as advisers and in-line across the three pillars of law and justice, economic governance, and machinery-of-government, through seven distinct phases. CJTF 635 was most prominent in the first and fourth phases:

■ **Phase One "commencement" stage:** Restoring security and budgetary stabilization were the most urgent tasks to be performed in RAMSI's opening phase.

Although conceived primarily as an ambitious state-building project, RAMSI took a "security-first" approach. In the planning
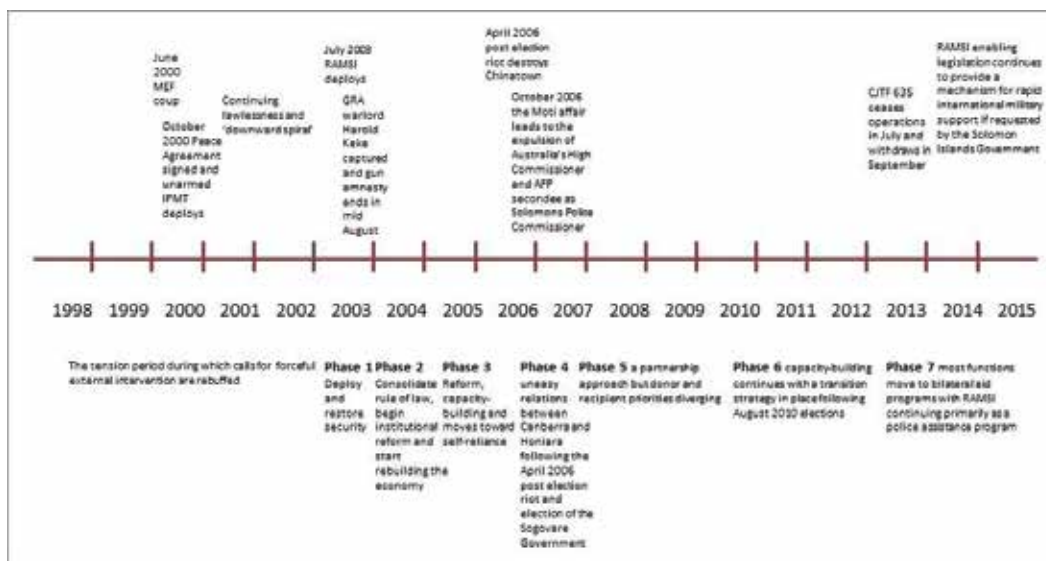


Timeline of RAMSI key events and phases

stages, the NZ Government had suggested an unarmed mission, which had worked well on Bougainville. But given the IPMT's experience as a "toothless tiger," and the lawless environment into which RAMSI would enter, planners opted for a muscular posture, designed to visibly signal that change was unstoppable. That approach worked. Some 3,730 firearms, including 700 high-powered weapons stolen from police armories, were destroyed during RAMSI's first year, with all but five of those surrendered during a 21-day amnesty, which removed the rationale that communities had to hang onto their guns for safety.[24] Despite the importance of RAMSI's military component, the military was never in the lead. Rather, it provided security backup and logistic support to unarmed Solomons' police and the international Participating Police Force (PPF) to remove weapons, demobilize militia, and provide basic physical safety. Seventeen regional police posts were established in all nine provinces within the first 100 days – including six in the first month – partly constructed, supplied, and wholly guarded at the seven "accompanied" stations, by military troops.

A key breakthrough occurred on day 21 of the mission with the arrest of the Weathercoast warlord, Harold Keke, who had shunned peace efforts and remained at large terrorizing communities with horrific acts committed by his highly disciplined, if eccentric, militia. Public displays of military might, important to deterring resistance throughout the first phase,[25] were particularly important in Keke's surrender. The sight of a huge amphibious ship offshore and medium helicopters overhead allowed Warner and the PPF commander, Ben McDevitt, to take some calculated risks, such as allowing Keke to walk away from meetings

where he could have been arrested, which ultimately led his whole gang to turn itself in. Although military planners had gamed various scenarios, there was no specific Plan-B should Keke take his gang into the bush to wage a guerrilla campaign, beyond requesting a special forces operation that would be expected to prevail though not necessarily quickly or without bloody fighting

- **Phase Two "consolidation" stage**: The second phase focused, throughout 2004, on the consolidation of the rule of law, cleaning-up the Solomons Police (removing 400 – a quarter – of its officers and arresting 88), beginning institutional reform, and commencing measures to revive the economy via a three-pillars approach.[26]

- **Phase Three "sustainability" stage:** Commencing in 2005, RAMSI's third phase built on the commencement of technocratic assistance by focusing on moves towards future self-reliance. These efforts emphasized capacity-building, training, and bedding down systems and reform.

- **Phase Four "a prickly" stage**: RAMSI entered a difficult period in April 2006 with poor preparations for the initially inconclusive national elections and unanticipated major riots that occurred when Snyder Rini, a former finance minister perceived to be especially corrupt, won. This was followed by a series of bitter rows between the Australian and Solomons Governments.

Rini's victory was met with public dismay and stoked much anger, possibly also partly incited by his political adversaries, which triggered two days of riots.[27] The riots targeted Honiara's Chinatown due to public suspicions about links between Rini and prominent businessmen of Chinese origin and Taiwanese

officials conducting cheque-book-diplomacy. RAMSI and Solomon Islands police were criticized for their response – widely seen as an "intelligence failure" for not predicting, preparing for, and preventing the looting and arson, and for the tactics of riot police.[28] The PPF and CJTF 635 had not been sufficiently supplemented for a possibility that, in retrospect, seemed all too likely, and during the event the response force on standby was not activated until too late to be effective.[29] China arranged a civilian air evacuation of people of Chinese origin and Rini resigned, replaced by Manasseh Sogavare.

As Sogavare was unsympathetic to Australia and held reservations about RAMSI, it was difficult for the mission to make progress during this period. The "Moti affair," involving Sogavare's choice of Attorney-General, saw an ill-advised raid on the Prime Minister's office by Australian members of the PPF, in addition to a series of episodes that poisoned Canberra's relations with PNG.[30] Sogavare did not seek to eject RAMSI, which remained popular with Solomon Islanders, and in some senses the mission continued on, but Australia's High Commissioner, the Australian head of the Solomons police, and other officials were expelled, and focus was distracted from RAMSI's efforts on institutional-strengthening.

- Phase Five "incremental" stage: With new governments in place in both Canberra and Honiara, a fifth phase commencing in early 2008 saw efforts on both sides to take a more patient, partnership-based approach, with neither side wanting to push the other too hard, but also saw priorities diverging. Successive Solomons governments appeared ever less interested in state-building and increasingly focused again on the usual

preoccupations with rural development and "acutely clientelistic" politicking.[31] The latter centered on leaders dispensing largess to supporters and, for the most part, neglecting to govern the country, using ever-growing constituency development funds, Taiwanese aid, and logging money to pursue highly localized rather than national causes.

Suggestions that RAMSI's military element was no longer truly required appeared probable, since CJTF 635 had taken a low profile to emphasize civil policing. RAMSI took a cautious approach, however, having been stung in April 2006. The ADF and NZDF contingents were, in any case, largely comprised of Reservists, and the deployment helped build the capacity of the PNG and Tongan contributors.

- Phase Six "transition" stage: By early 2010, the NZ Government felt it was time to start winding RAMSI down in favor of bilateral aid programs, and, following a reasonably smooth election in August, a transition strategy that had flagged the year before was put into place. The mission sought to balance the risk of leaving too soon with that of staying too long.

- Phase Seven "residual" stage: Defense personnel finally withdrew and RAMSI reconfigured primarily as a police-assistance program in mid-2013, ten years after it began. The RAMSI Treaty and its enabling legislation could, with some quick legal footwork, still help facilitate a rapid international military response (most likely by elements from 3 Brigade's Ready Battalion in Townsville – deployable within 24 hours) should the Solomons request urgent support again.

## Lessons Learned About Integrating the Management of Conflict

Any assessment of RAMSI's value as an example of integrated security efforts between police and military forces, uniformed and civilian officers and officials, government and civil society, and regional security partners, for use elsewhere in the world, depends on an evaluation of the mission's success.

Overall, there is little argument that RAMSI arrested the unravelling of the state and re-established a stable environment that allowed it to collect revenue, stabilize its finances, and start delivering services again. It also enabled businesses to trade and invest. RAMSI Treasury and Finance officials helped resurrect the Solomons' economy, which had been contracting before 2003 but has since achieved record rates of growth – albeit mostly driven by unsustainable logging exports.

RAMSI has, however, been an expensive endeavor at $2.6 billion (and the cost of two servicemen), and real concerns remain over continuing poor governance and growing economic dependence on fast disappearing forest resources in Solomon Islands. Experts are therefore obliged to ask whether different approaches might have achieved a greater return on RAMSI's substantial investment.

The key criticism made by some scholars is that RAMSI failed to address the root causes of the conflict and to change patterns of political behavior. According to that view, a top-down, technocratic focus on reform was not the only possible model, and may not have been the best option, for promoting enduring stability. Writing early in the mission, Tarcisius Kabutaulaka warned that RAMSI's emphasis on shoring-up a perennially weak central government, and its inattention to other pillars of society, could undermine its ability to achieve either the well-being of Solomon Islanders or security for the region, and might create a crippling dependency.[34] Writing five years later, John Braithwaite and his co-authors judged RAMSI a qualified success but felt it had for the moment "contained conflict but shelved specifics that fuelled conflict."[35] The two most prominent recent re-evaluations of RAMSI, by Jenny Hayward-Jones and by Jon Fraenkel and his co-authors, each suggest that a more modest state-building project that avoided creating parallel bureaucracies, or an alternative government for Solomon Islanders frustrated with their own leaders, would have been preferable.

Yet the decision by Howard and Downer to act against official advice, "with a spirit of state-building until the job was done, without any exit timetable," reflected their conviction that there is no exit strategy from our own region and that it is worth paying a premium for regional leadership.[36] It is unlikely that stabilization would have been nearly as quick or durable without the prospect that things would get better under a longer-term state-building program. In addition, since the law and justice pillar accounted for 83 percent of the cost of RAMSI,[37] less ambitious state-building efforts would have yielded only limited savings.

Concerns that RAMSI would deepen dependency, weaken the impetus for Solomons leaders to address challenges themselves, and introduce perverse incentives that entrench dysfunction have been partly borne out.[38] But is dependency a valid criterion by which to judge RAMSI? Tobias Haque argues that economic self-sufficiency is not a useful goal, given the Solomons' immutable economic geography as a small, isolated market recovering from collapse.[39] For him, and others,

dependency does not diminish RAMSI's achievement but does demand further innovation. As for the complaint that RAMSI did not try hard enough to transform local political behavior, its social license to operate rested on an understanding – partly tacit, partly reflecting RAMSI's mandate – that the mission would not interfere too much with unsustainable logging or associated localized money politics.[40] That reality not only constrained what could be achieved but also defined the bounds within which Solomons leaders were willing to let RAMSI rebuild the country's machinery of government over a long period. RAMSI arrested over 3,000 people, but the uncertainty of its welcome in 2006-07 suggests it would have achieved less, not more, had it attempted to drastically transform society.

Nor was there any appetite among Solomons politicians (or in the Pacific Islands Forum) for an interim administration to assume sovereignty even temporarily – RAMSI and the Solomons Government had to operate in parallel.

Criticizing RAMSI for not acting more decisively to try to reshape Solomons political and business practices seems akin to chiding CJTF 635 for deterring rather than seeking out armed clashes. While decisive encounters might, in theory, have been more transformative than impressive shows of strength not accompanied by deadly force – initial shock without much lasting awe – in practice, such violence would more likely have quickly sapped the force's moral authority (on which its efficacy partly depended.)[41]

If RAMSI is considered a success, what lessons might we draw for other stabilization missions? Ten military implications stand out:

- **Innovate**. The first lesson of RAMSI might be not to actually draw too many lessons from it, given the value derived from taking a fresh approach to unique circumstances. At the operational level, flexibly combining solid planning with inspired improvisation and willingness to accept sensible risks helped achieve crucial early wins such as Keke's surrender.

- **Harness the power of whole-of-government**. The ADF's operational tempo in mid-2003 (with commitments in the Middle East, Timor-Leste and elsewhere) produced an imperative for Defence to draw-down as fast as possible that sat slightly at odds with other agencies' acceptance that RAMSI was a long-term project. Nonetheless, preserving a unified whole-of-government voice – for example by sticking to a single daily reporting cable rather than multiple separate lines of communication to home agencies – allowed the four main (Foreign Affairs, Australian Federal Police, Defence, and AusAID) and other contributing Australian agencies in Honiara (such as Attorney-Generals, Treasury, and Finance) to accommodate such differences, and to avoid being micro-managed by Canberra. That collegial approach was a function of personalities, professionalism and leadership, but also benefited from habits of interagency cooperation formed in Canberra. Many officials had served together before. Such links can be fostered via secondments, exchanges, joint training, and Staff College.

- **Draw on the power of international partnerships**. RAMSI demonstrated that there are operational as well as political/legitimacy advantages to working in a multinational coalition. Although different forces' doctrines, capabilities, and styles needed to be understood and managed, the CJTF was able to utilize the strengths of each

contingent – such as the ability of the Melanesian platoons to develop a quick rapport with Solomon Islanders – to be more than the sum of its parts.[42]

■ **Pre-deployment training is especially critical for interagency and multinational operations.** The tight planning timeframe for RAMSI, and its innovative composition, meant that an early war-game was crucial to work out what effects the Special Coordinator wanted to achieve by specific milestones through the critical first month, and how to deliver those effects.

■ **Strategic communication can shape outcomes and save lives.** The use of a deliberate information campaign and messaging to signal the CJTF's edge over potential adversaries helped persuade some those who might otherwise have sought to conceal weapons beyond the gun-amnesty to hand them in, according to its first Commander, LTCOL John Frewen. Displays of strength, radio broadcasts, and community meetings were important in the Solomons.

■ **Seize opportunities at the ripe moment.** Notwithstanding their different scale, RAMSI occurred at a more opportune time than when the IPMT arrived following the 2000 Townsville Peace Accord, at which point the MEF was ascendant and war-weariness had not hit rock-bottom. At an operational level, RAMSI's recognition of Keke as a center-of-gravity, and the investment of effort to apprehend him, paid off.

■ **A deployable police capability complements the military as an instrument of national power**. The Australian Government judged the AFP's contribution to RAMSI so



Village children gather on the beach to watch the amphibious ship HMAS Manoora anchored in Lambi Bay at the start of RAMSI

useful that it created a standing, nearly battalion-sized, International Deployment Group trained and ready to be quickly dispatched to complement the ADF's different skills in order to promote regional stability (the ADF includes seven regular infantry battalions plus two Special Forces regiments). Notwithstanding their very different planning and operational styles, the two forces cooperated well.

■ **Force size has a quality all of its own.** The re-emergence of instability in Timor-Leste and Fiji, as well as Honiara in 2006, at a time when the ADF was heavily committed in the Middle East, underscored the value of putting sufficient boots on the ground. This contributed to the Government's decision to establish two extra regular infantry battalions. Drawn straight from his role at the head of the ready battalion of Army's "first-response" 3BDE, the Commander of the CJTF in charge of the initial military deployment was always likely to be a capable leader. And having a mid-ranking ADF officer helped signal that Defense was not in the lead. But the military mission's success probably came down to good fortune as well as good management; with a single O5 level officer initially commanding a multi-service and multinational force of nearly 2,000 personnel, since he was also heavily involved in in RAMSI's overall command team. A more senior ADF headquarters would have reduced risk.

■ Troops conducting stabilization missions need relevant training and equipment. The 2006 riots and death of an Honiara local man shot by RAMSI troops responding to a drunken brawl showed that infantry battalions require basic crowd control capabilities, notwithstanding the separation of police and military powers.[43]

■ Even open-ended major interventions eventually wind-down. For countries that invite intervention, RAMSI shows that requesting international security assistance need not entail even a temporary forfeiture of sovereignty and executive authority.

## Conclusion: Strong Military Performance is Insufficient but Necessary

Solomon Islands was a low-income country before the tensions and remains so now, but the existence of poverty and inequality do not dictate that violence will return. CJTF 635 helped offer space for Solomon Islanders to break the cycle of violence, perhaps for good. Challenges remain – especially with turbulence likely to accompany the end of logging – but stability seems at least as likely to endure as violence is to return.

Australia retains the motive and ability to promote positive Solomons responses to the full range of transformations underway within, above, and beneath the state.[44] Honiara's reasonably effective response to severe flooding last April (including unrest by residents of some evacuation centers[45]) and preparations for well-run elections in November indicate that the success of conventional capability-building supported by foreign aid, although hardly inevitable, is far from impossible. Scholars and development professionals are also, however, suggesting innovative approaches to economic,[46] migration,[47] aid,[48] land,[49] and other challenges likely to be intensified by the end of logging and ever-deepening money-politics.[50] Any successes will be relevant to fostering peace and prosperity both in and beyond the Solomons. PRISM

## Notes

1  For example Jenny Hayward-Jones, 'Australia's costly investment in Solomon Islands: the lessons of RAMSI', Lowy Institute Analysis, 8 May 2014.

2  Terence Wood and Stephen Howes, 'Introduction', in Terence Wood and Stephen Howes (eds.) *Debating Ten Years of RAMSI* (Canberra, Development Policy Centre, 2013) p 3.

3  For example LTCOL John Frewen, 'Communication as a Tactic', *Defence Magazine*, Canberra, Department of Defence, July 2005; LTCOL John Hutchenson, 'Helping a Friend', *Australian Army Journal* Vol 2 No 2, 2005; and Ben McDevitt, 'Operation Helpem Fren—A personal perspective', Australian Army Journal Vol 3 No 2, 2006.

4  See Russell W Glenn, *Counterinsurgency in a Test Tube—Analysing the Success of RAMSI* (Santa Monica, Rand Corporation, 2007).

5  Jon Fraenkel, Joni Madraiwiwi & Henry Okole, 'The RAMSI Decade: A Review of the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands', independent-review commissioned by the Solomon Islands Government with support from the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, 14 July 2014, p 8.

6  Matthew Allen, 'Long-term engagement: the future of RAMSI', ASPI Strategic Insight, March 2011, p 9.

7  Karl Claxton, 'Solomon Islands: the Freest and Fairest Election Money Could Buy?', *The Strategist*, 27 November 2014.

8  Jeni Whalan, 'The Power of Friends: the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands', *Journal of Peace Research* Vol 37 No 5, September 2010, p 12 (citing RAMSI's first Special Coordinator Nick Warner).

9  Matthew Allen, Greed and Grievance: *ex-Militants Perspectives on the Conflict in Solomon Islands* (Honolulu, University of Hawai'i Press, 2013) pp 137-156.

10  Jon Fraenkel, *The Manipulation of Custom: from Uprising to Intervention in the Solomon Islands* (Wellington, Victoria University Press, 2004) pp 44-53.

11  John Braithwaite, Sinclair Dinnen, Matthew Allen, Valerie Braithwaite and Hilary Charlesworth, *Pillars and Shadows: Statebuilding as Peacebuilding in Solomon Islands* (Canberra, ANU E Press, 2010) pp 95-133.

12  Clive Moore, *Happy Isles in Crisis: the historical causes for a failing state* (Canberra, Asia Pacific Press, 2004).

13  Australian Government, *Advancing the National Interest—Australia's Foreign and Trade Policy White Paper*, Canberra, 2003, p 93

14  Hon Alexander Downer MP, 'Neighbours cannot be recolonised', *The Australian*, 8 January 2003, p.11

15  In particular, see Daniel Flitton, 'A Pacific Escape: Australia, the US and Solomon Islands', *Australian Quarterly* Vol 75 No 4, July 2003 pp 6-8 and 40.

16  Sinclair Dinnen and Abby McLeod, 'The Quest for Integration: Australian Approaches to Security and Development in the Pacific Islands', *Security Challenges* Vol 4 No 2, 2008, pp 23-43.

17  Hon Alexander Downer MP, 'Statement to Parliament RAMSI', 12 August 2003.

18  Hon John Howard MP, 'Australian Foreign Policy', Address to the Sydney Institute, Sydney, 1 July 2003.

19  Elsina Wainwright, *Our Failing Neighbour-Australia and the future of Solomon Islands* (Canberra, ASPI, 2003).

20  Michael Fullilove, 'The Testament of Solomons: RAMSI and International Statebuilding' (Sydney, Lowy Institute for International Policy, March 2006) p 7.

21  See the Pacific Islands Forum, 'Biketawa Declaration' guiding principles for good governance and courses of action for a regional response to crises in the region, 28 October 2000.

22  Nick Warner, 'Operation Helpem Fren: Biketawa's First Success', speech at the Pacific Islands Forum Regional Security Committee Meeting, Nadi, 17 June 2004.

23  Fullilove, *Op Cit*, pp 10-17.

24  McDevitt, *Op Cit*, p 76.

25  Frewen, *Op Cit*, p 11.

26  Elsina Wainwright, *How is RAMSI faring? Progress, challenges and lessons learned* (Canberra, ASPI 2005) p 3.

27  Matthew Allen, 'The Politics of disorder: the social unrest in Honiara', in Sinclair Dinnen and Stewart Firth (eds) *Politics and State Building in Solomon Islands* (Canberra, ANU E Press, 2008) pp 39-59.

28  John Braithwaite *et al*, *Op Cit*, p 62.

29  Government of the Solomon Islands, Second Interim Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the April 2006 Civil Unrest in Honiara', 7 September

2007, pp 10-17. CJTF 635 only had 63 troops in Solomons at the time of the election, most of whom couldn't leave their posts providing security at Rove Prison—Joanne Wallis, 'A helpem fren in need: evaluating RAMSI', *Security Challenges* Vol 2 No 2, July 2006, p 30; and Mark Tamsitt, 'RAMSI Defence Summary', unpublished paper 2014, p 5.

[30] David Marr, 'Costly pursuit ends Moti deportation ruled unlawful', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 December 2011.

[31] Terence Wood, 'Lessons learnt on the role for aid', in Terence Wood and Stephen Howes (eds.) *Debating Ten Years of RAMSI* (Canberra, Development Policy Centre, 2013) pp 35-37.

[32] Jon Fraenkel et al, 'The RAMSI Decade', pp 20-21.

[33] Nicholas Coppel, 'Transition of RAMSI', ANU SSGM discussion paper, Canberra, 2012, p1.

[34] Tarcisius Tara Kabutaulaka, 'Failed State and the War on Terror: Intervention in Solomon Islands', East-West Center Honolulu, March 2004, p 1.

[35] John Braithwaite *et al*, *Op Ci*t, pp 151-164.

[36] *Ibid*, p 50.

[37] Hayward-Jones, *Op Cit*, p 4.

[38] Tobias Haque, 'The Influence of Culture on Economic Development in Solomon Islands', ANU SSGM discussion paper, 2012, p 1 and p 8.

[39] Tobias Haque, 'Economic transition in Solomon Islands', ANU SSGM In Brief, 2013.

[40] See Shahar Hameiri, 'The inconvenient truth', in Terence Wood and Stephen Howes (eds) *Debating Ten Years of RAMSI* (Canberra, Development Policy Centre, 2013) pp 17-19; and Terrence Wood, 'The causes and consequences of local voting in Solomon Islands', ANU SSGM In Brief, 2013.

[41] Whalan, *Op Cit*.

[42] Hutcheson, *Op Cit*, pp 51-52. Other national contingents may have lamented a relaxed attitude to unit-discipline by the Fijian 'rock-stars of international peacekeeping' but usually conceded they brought a particular flair to community engagement, for example.

[43] Ilya Gridneff, 'Honiara man shot dead by RAMSI soldiers', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 August 2010.

[44] Matthew Allen and Sinclair Dinnen, 'Solomon Islands in transition', in Terence Wood and Stephen Howes (eds) *Debating Ten Years of RAMSI* (Canberra, Development Policy Centre, 2013) pp 31-33.

[45] Richard Ewart, 'Calm in Honiara after two nights of rioting', Radio National *Pacific Beat*, ABC, 19 May 2014.

[46] Haque, 'Economic Transition', pp 1-2.

[47] Matthew Allen, 'Long-term engagement: The future of RAMSI', Canberra, ASPI, 2011, pp 11-13; and David Craig and Richard Bedford, 'Labour mobility and Solomon Islands Development', ANU SSGM In Brief, 2013.
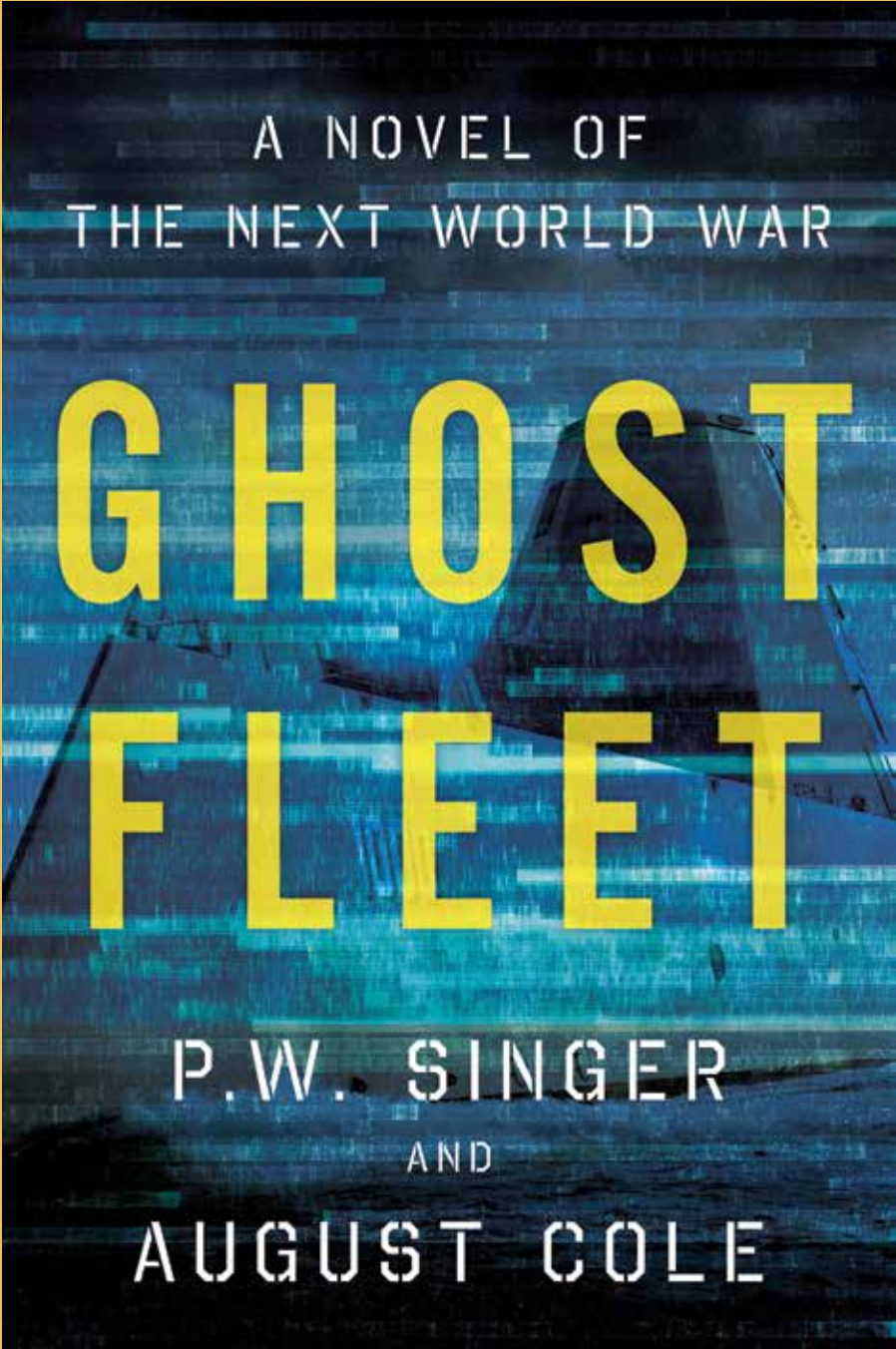
[48] Wood, 'Lessons learnt on the role for aid', pp 35-37.

[49] Marcus Pelto, 'High value urban land in Honiara for sale – deep, deep discounts available to the right buyer', *Development Policy*, 16 December 2013.

[50] Although most candidates in last year's election campaigned on a "time for change" platform, the apparent connection between sitting members' increased discretionary constituency development funds and more incumbents being returned than usual points to the further entrenchment of a cycle whereby rational choices by voters seeking leaders' personal assistance contribute to poor governance and reinforce those choices in turn. The problem isn't so much that leaders and voters don't take seriously the national motto – "to lead is to serve" – but rather that they do so at a profoundly local level. It might be unfair to condemn candidates' provision of solar panels, roofing iron, school fees, or small-scale water and sanitation projects to constituents as "frittering away" national wealth, since such help can be of real benefit to the poor (reducing deprivation as a potential spur for instability). But the seemingly vast SI $6 million (nearly U.S. $1 million) available to each Member of Parliament (often supplemented by income from business-favors, and sometimes allegedly from corruption) only translates to about U.S.$50 per citizen each year – not enough to be individually transformative but cumulatively enough to sap state funding for roads, schools, and hospitals. It also diverts leaders from dealing with difficult national issues, such as resolving commercial and landowner issues preventing the de-watering of a dangerously over-full mine tailings-dam – see Matthew Allen, "Gold Ridge Standoff Deepens," *DevPolicy*, 20 February 2015.

A NOVEL OF
THE NEXT WORLD WAR

# GHOST
# FLEET

## P.W. SINGER
### AND
## AUGUST COLE

# Book Reviews

## Ghost Fleet: A Novel of the Next World War

### REVIEWED BY BRENDAN ORINO

The year is 2035 and Chinese strategic patience has finally paid off. After decades of standing by, watching the United States parade its naval assets unimpeded through the Pacific and park its aircraft and personnel in its own strategic backyard, the Directorate—an alliance of convenience between China and its very junior partner Russia—strikes a near-fatal blow against America's technologically advanced, but network dependent, global defense enterprise. In search of natural resources and hungry for the international prestige denied to them for years, revenge has been a long time coming.

This is the setting for P.W. Singer and August Cole's forthcoming novel, *Ghost Fleet*. Drawing from their work on emerging military technology, new domains of conflict, and future warfare concepts, the authors open with a dystopian display of American military might, where everything that could go wrong does and in which the adversary has

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near-omnipotent visibility on every operational and tactical action taken. The United States' futuristic defense technologies and platforms of today, from the DDG 1000 guided missile destroyers to F-35 fifth generation fighters, are but obsolete relics, having proven less than successful from their first days in action. Promising to do everything, they did very little well.

And what is worse, when called into the fray America's most advanced weaponry, in addition to supplies of chemical and biological soldier enhancements, are either fully compromised or knocked offline by their own hitech nature or exposure to foreign supply chains. In a world where Google Glass equivalents are as ubiquitous as smart phones and cocktails of tailored stimulants have replaced caffeine (although coffee is still downed by the kitsch mugful), greater connectivity and globalization are not the panacea many still cast them as today. Instead, bringing countries like China into the international fold has given it surreptitious access through network-dependent hardware and domestic manufacturing facilities. Just as scary, China has usurped the employment of autonomous, robotic weapons—a field in which America once dominated—utilizing swarm after swarm of quadcopters and autonomous torpedoes where helicopter gunships and submarines once reigned supreme. They have also managed to perfect the tracking of nuclear reactors at sea to give its anti-ship missiles pinpoint accuracy, and space-based lasers make anti-satellite operations a breeze.

But even on the edge of defeat, Americans prove resilient and even devious, their exploits playing out in odes to American wars of the past and intelligence tradecraft reminiscent only of James Bond's dreams. After his and his

crew's escape from China's surprise attack on Pearl Harbor, Commander Jamie Simmons becomes a cause célèbre among his reeling Navy comrades and a despondent public. A female Marine leads a rag tag Hawaiian insurgency against Directorate occupation, keeping in mind lessons from Iraq and Afghanistan, and even calling themselves mujahedeen. Civilians play their part as well, from a brilliant energy scientist looking to revive the energy zapping rail-gun to a lone assassin, picking off high-profile Chinese citizens and soldiers to sow fear in their ranks.

Other American strengths do not go underestimated. Silicon Valley wiz-kids and genius computer programmers seek to topple the Directorate's cyber capabilities just for the challenge, and companies like Wal-Mart turn their vaunted logistics operations into weapons of efficiency. Anonymous, the international network of hactivists (perhaps one and the same as those patriotic Silicon Valley nerds), does digital battle with Hainan, although an actual alliance with the United States seems dubious.

Woven into this thriller are attempts to put in better perspective potential wars of the future, their complexity, and our own vulnerabilities. What is made quite plain is that while American technological advantage, business acumen, and scientific expertise are world class, their continued dominance, and more worryingly their excellence, is not inevitable. Enemies are more than capable of hacking American government networks, stealing weapons plans from defense contractors, and exfiltrating sensitive data from private American firms, putting national security at risk.

Singer and Cole open with a terrifying salvo, one in which America's enemies control nearly every domain—space, air, sea, land, and cyber. This control puts our nation's aforementioned strengths and trends in a different, less attractive light. What happens when American military networks, systems, and weapons stop functioning? Could our forces really fall back to non-networked communications (think letters and flag signals)? Could our warships navigate effectively without the global positioning system? Failure to adapt is certainly a danger for the military, but so too is any overreliance on technology.

More fundamental and basic skills, however, are on display when the "Ghost Fleet," non-nuclear, aging, and outdated ships from the 2010s, is called into action. Sailors, marines, soldiers, and airmen are put to the test, forced to operate without satellite communications, advanced command and control and targeting systems, and guided weaponry. Face-to-face with an enemy operating near-peer stealth platforms—probably made from stolen American designs—modern naval vessels, and effective cyber operations, the United States is no longer up against the once-maligned yet effectively persistent insurgents of the Middle East. With its technological overmatch diminished, America is fighting a very different war.

And while some things in this war are different, many others stay the same, albeit with various twists. Predictably, privateers appear ready to aid the American military effort, although this time they are financed by one of the world's richest men, sporting a diamond covered spaceship. Despite his individual eccentricity, he still finds inspiration in one of the most fearsome, but infamous contractors of wars past—Blackwater. Intelligence gathering goes much the same way, but instead of listening in on phone calls or intercepting

cables, the enemy is monitoring social media accounts to track fleet movements. Remember those Apache helicopters destroyed by Iraqi insurgents in 2007 after American soldiers posted geotagged photos to the web?

Of course, the enduring human elements of conflict are not forgotten. The sorrow of watching spouses, siblings, and parents ship off for the unknown is as heartbreaking as ever. But their sorrow is only matched by the elation upon their return, and the true despair when some do not. The family drama is real, but so is the sense of individual and collective duty, sacrifice, and fraternity. What's different, however, is who makes up this force of the future: gay men and women, female generals and admirals, a large number of Hispanics and Asians. Singer and Cole are right to point out that change in the ranks impacts the health of the force; in the end, it's not just what equipment or weapons are being fielded, but how they are being operated and by whom.

With nearly 350 footnotes, this work of fiction draws on the forefront of military science, research, and development. But what makes this work special is the authors' projections 20 years into the future; while it's true that today's military tries to think that far ahead, official reports do not always do creative justice to the tools at our service-members disposal. Uninhibited by the budget battles on Capitol Hill, the molasses-slow acquisitions process at the Pentagon, or the general political gridlock that pervades D.C., Singer and Cole bring their knowledge to bear in imaginative and original ways. To quote their own Pushkin-loving Russian colonel, "If there's one thing I am going to teach you, it's to stop thinking that things can work only the way you've been told they're supposed to. You can't win a war that way."

In their not-so-veiled criticism of today's military investments, Singer and Cole, both students of trends in military weaponry, kit, and communications, question the required "jointness" of large acquisition projects that water down their technical breakthroughs for the sake of interoperability and an overly broad array of requirements. But they are sure to highlight promising research in other areas with potentially breakthrough effects: wearable electronics, nanotechnology, 3-D printing, advanced textiles, and robotics are only a few among them. To their credit, they are also sure to note larger demographic trends, particularly among the millennial generation, and the impact they will have on the force of the future.

As they repeatedly harken back to previous conflict, Singer and Cole insist that this new fighting force truly internalize some of the most glaring lessons of wars past. In an attempt to keep history from repeating—or even rhyming, for that matter—leaders need to have a keen sense of history and its implications for future conflict. Technology and those who wield it may change, but those who neglect to understand the past are often doomed to repeat it. In the oft-quoted words of Sun Tzu, a strategist whose wisdom permeates the pages of Ghost Fleet, "He will win who, prepared himself, waits to take the enemy unprepared."

Instead of tackling the revolution in military affairs, third offset, Moore's law, demographics or other theories of technological revolution and military transformation in isolation, Ghost Fleet provides a glimpse of an adaptive, advanced, and complex force put to the test when its strengths become weaknesses. The authors' flare for action and adventure, combining the human experience of war with

a respect for groundbreaking science and an appreciation for history, makes the story all the more ambitious. Besides, it never hurts that the good guys mount a comeback. PRISM

## Blinders, Blunders and Wars

By David C. Gompert, Hans Binnendijk, and Bonny Lin
RAND Corporation, 2015
328 pages
ISBN-13: 978-0833087775

### REVIEWED BY FRANKLIN D. KRAMER

There are a few books every senior geopolitical leader ought to read. This book adds to that collection. It falls into the outstanding category because it demands thinking while and after reading. It does not require the reader to agree. It does require the reader to consider, contemplate, and evaluate—and especially for a senior geopolitician to determine whether a course of action actually will bring the consequences expected—or, alternatively, will be a blunder of dramatic proportions.

The book is built around the decision to go to war, and it builds on the well-established observation that many successful leaders have nonetheless led their nations into disastrous wars. It utilizes twelve case studies ranging

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from Napoleon's 1812 invasion of Russia to the United States' 2003 invasion of Iraq to describe how that has occurred. It offers an analytic framework to evaluate what went wrong and how better decisions could have been made, and then proposes that the use of the framework could help reduce the prospects of conflict between the United States and China in the 21st century. Not everyone will agree with the descriptions of the case studies; the accuracy and value of the analytic framework demands review; moreover whether it has real world relevance to the U.S.-China relationship is uncertain. But there are no more important issues for a nation than going to war, and by taking on the questions of how and when to do so effectively—and, as importantly, when to choose not to act—the authors, experienced policy-makers (and as a disclosure, friends and colleagues) – have put a key topic in front of decision-makers who will face such life and death decisions in the next decades.

The key thesis of the book is that those "who have blundered could have known better, for information seems to have been available at the time to have . . . supported better decisions. . . ." The important conclusion then is that "It follows that improvements are needed in how leaders and institutions use information…." As the authors say, though, while "simple in theory … implementing it is anything but." The theory, nevertheless, is certainly worth considering.

The book proposes that bad decision-making arises from a series of factors, most often the following eight:

- "information is ignored, filtered, misconstrued, or manipulated to fit predispositions,"

- "excessive reliance is placed on intuition and experience,"
- "arrogance, egotism, or hubris causes unwarranted confidence,"
- "a rigid but wrong strategic concept or vision prevails,"
- "contingencies are not considered,"
- "enemy will or capabilities are underestimated,"
- "operational difficulty or duration is underestimated," and
- "dissent and debate are stifled."

In the face of these problems, the authors have a three-fold prescription which they propose both the United States and China adopt: 1) establishing a new institution to provide independent policy advice (i.e. a type of red teaming); 2) better standards of analytic objectivity; and 3) more effective use of technology, particularly computer assisted analysis to evaluate contingencies. In addition to having both the United States and China use such approaches, they additionally recommend greater communications between the two countries, especially between the two presidents, national security institutions including the military, and nongovernmental connectivity especially think tanks, universities and the like (though it is fair to note that a great deal of dialogue, both structured and informal, already occurs).

Most who read the book likely will concur with the assessment that the leaders described in the eight case studies of failure (they offer four instances of good decision-making) badly overstepped—after all, history has proved that. The real question is whether, without the benefit of historical hindsight, those leaders would have made better decisions had they followed the authors' recommendations.

The problem that all decision-makers face is that they are imperfect human beings operating in imperfect institutions who cannot predict the future. They must go forward based on usually imperfect information, dealing with their own biases and experiences, and trying hard to achieve best results in a complex environment. It is no wonder Napoleon is said to have wanted generals who were lucky.

The fundamental challenge the authors present to policy-makers is: be more rational. Make sure you actually consider available information. Spend some more time thinking about alternatives. That is a good set of recommendations, but will they work to result in better decision-making? I think the answer is "sometimes," and that is a great virtue, but it is important to note that this is a prescription to avoid blunders, not necessarily to avoid war.

In developing national strategies, whether involving war or otherwise, leaders must consider, whether they realize it or not, the ends, ways, and means of the strategy as well as the risks involved in implementation. Overreaching ends, ineffective ways, under-resourced means, and improper risk analysis are pathways to failure. So, a rational view by the leader is critical. As Clausewitz has written, "No one starts a war—or rather, no one in his sense ought to do so—without first being clear in his mind what he intends to achieve by that war and how he intends to conduct it." And, as he also points out, it is critical to "discover how much of our resources must be mobilized." The lesson that the authors underscore is that the initiator of a war will not necessarily makes these decisions very well.

The authors' specific recommendations— an alternative source of independent policy advice, high standards of analytic objectivity, and greater use of computer assisted

analysis—reflect their own strong backgrounds as outstanding policy analysts. Considering them in reverse order:

■ Computer-assisted analysis should be welcomed, but in doing so, it will be very important to remember the dictum that "all models are wrong; some are useful." There was a great deal of modeling analysis during the Cold War involving nuclear and conventional battle issues, but no senior policymaker confused the models with real life. Greater modeling relating to the complexities of terrorism, insurgency, hybrid war, cyber-conflict, the implications of climate change, and other newer elements of the security landscape will be all to the good. While a decision-maker must avoid "paralysis by analysis," recognizing that there can be alternative outcomes as a contingency is contemplated or develops is important. Modeling might be especially useful to help disclose unanticipated inclinations to escalation. However, as a colleague Melanie Teplinsky has pointed out, there is a great deal of judgment up front as to how to build the model – what factors to consider, and what inputs the model will deal with. These judgments are not necessarily made by professional decision-makers and may take place long before any decision-makers see output from the model. For this reason, decision-making based on computer modeling is not necessarily any more objective than ordinary decision-making, although it may seem so. Ultimately, then, while utilizing computers to help think through contingencies can be valuable, human judgment will necessarily be called upon.

■ In making such judgments, no one will dispute the value of highly professional objective analysis, the second of the authors'

recommendations. The real issue will be who will determine whether such objective analysis is being provided. The case of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq likely will remain the exemplar of the difficulties. The intelligence community did not cover itself with glory nor did the policy community. As the authors show, neither appears to have been as objective as one would have wished. Saddam Hussein was a bad man and he ran a despicable regime. But the rationale for the war was an overhyped series of claims regarding weapons of mass destruction. Iraq raises the always critical issue of who guards the guardians?

■ The authors' answer to the guardians question is their third recommendation—to create a new body of independent policy analysis. Of course, there have been times when the President has sought assistance of this sort—generally in the form of Presidential commissions (sometimes with Congressional involvement), and there are existing bodies such as the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board or the Defense Policy Board. Asking for a second opinion can enlarge the debate—and especially for those who want to slow things down – that can be useful. But after all is said and done, it is precisely the job of the President and his National Security Council (NSC), along with the Congress, to evaluate the circumstances and make the policy decisions. A key reform for better decision-making would be if the President stopped making the National Security Council an implementing body and instead used it precisely to ensure that the departments are thoroughly analyzing and offering considered judgments for critical questions. To do so would require the end of "small group

thinking" where it is not "good form" to break with the consensus, and instead recognize that differences of opinion are often useful and not to be beaten down by turf battles and other bureaucratic maneuvers. An NSC with a mandate to ensure considered decision could be significantly smaller and much more valuable by operating to generate precisely the type of analysis the authors seek.

It is worth recognizing, however, that even the most rational and well-intentioned decision-makers can sometimes find themselves in deep difficulty. Consider the U.S., and subsequently NATO/coalition, war in Afghanistan. The original end was clear enough—retaliating against al-Qaeda in response to September 11. The original way was quite effective—war via special operations combined with the forces of the Northern Alliance. The original means were sufficient including supporting airpower and CIA funding. But war has a logic of its own, and as Clausewitz states, the "original political objects can greatly alter during the course of the war." That certainly happened in Afghanistan, as the original retaliation transmuted into a nation-building exercise, mainly influenced by the lessons after the Soviet defeat in Afghanistan, when the subsequent descent into disorder arguably led to the sanctuary and growth of al-Qaeda. Seeking to avoid such a result was a rational enough end, and as the original Bonn conference showed, there was a great deal of worldwide support for the nation-building approach. As it turned out, despite the understandable end, ways and means have been less than adequate. There was too high a degree of optimism on many levels. The difficulties of building an effective Afghan government are numerous, including issues of

Afghan human capital and whether the West actually had the capabilities to help create key institutions, such as effective ministries or police forces; the problems that Pakistan would present, including sanctuary and double-dealing; the issues of drugs, crime, and corruption; the interactions of culture and modernity; and the impact of the Iraq conflict, to name only a few. Could some of these issues have been better resolved if a new institution offered its ideas? Perhaps. Would thinking through contingencies have made a difference? Maybe. But it would be hard to say the effort was not rationally considered—it just has not turned out particularly well.

Would the lessons be valuable in the U.S.-China context? After all, that is the reason the authors say they wrote the book. There are grounds to be positive about the value of a highly rational approach. To begin with, American and Chinese interests coincide in certain important ways. Most clearly, each government is focused on enhancing its country's prosperity. In a global world, that requires interdependence. Moreover, at least some critical challenges facing each country – including energy, environment and climate change, weapons of mass destruction, and terrorism – can significantly benefit from a common approach.

But not all interests are in common between the two countries. Even in the economic area, there are serious differences regarding key issues such as intellectual property protection. The most obvious ongoing area of conflict is in the cyber realm, where there appears little likelihood of resolution. At the current level, cyber probably is not a flash point, but it does have escalatory potential. Moreover, the maritime claims that China has aggressively asserted in the East and South

China Seas have the potential to pull the United States into a conflict, as does the long-standing issue of Taiwan.

It would be easy to say that it is important not to overly escalate these disputes. But not only do the disputes involve third parties, so they are not entirely under the control of the U.S. or China, but they involve concepts and interests that, not only have rational content, but also have strong emotional aspects. The Chinese seem to have a penchant for periodically raising the levels of tension as, for example, drilling in waters contested with Vietnam. Moreover, especially on the Chinese side, there are additional emotional factors bearing on the relationship that may add to the difficulties of rationally limiting disputes. In particular, China has built as one of the pillars of its educational system the concept of "Never forget national humiliation," and it more recently has directly rejected what it deems to be "western values," even barring their teaching and discussion in schools. These emotional factors should not of themselves precipitate conflict, but they could cause it more easily to escalate in the event of a flash point. At that point, rationality would be at once most necessary and most difficult to achieve. The United States has thus far taken a measured and sensible approach to supporting its commitments without inflaming the overall situation. China, while more aggressive, has periodically backed off certain of its most problematic behavior, although its decision-making process remains opaque—and it is therefore far from clear whether it would consider a process approach along the lines suggested by the authors, and what freedom any group would have to make objective recommendations. Whether in a more dangerous situation, emotion might outrun calculation is, of course, always uncertain.

The authors' fundamental point of the value of rationality certainly would have critical value under such circumstances.

Indeed, this is the fundamental challenge that the authors raise—can rationality overcome emotion? In geopolitics, historically that has not always been the case. The great value of the book is that it is a cautionary tale designed to help generate that rationality. PRISM

## A Handful of Bullets: How the Murder of Archduke Franz Ferdinand Still Menaces the Peace

By Harlan K. Ullman
Naval Institute Press, 2014
256 pages
ISBN-13: 978-0833087775

**REVIEWED BY HANS BINNENDIJK**

There is a small plaque on a street corner in Sarajevo that commemorates the spot where Austro-Hungarian Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his pregnant wife Sophie were assassinated a century ago. It is surprisingly small given the world shaking events sparked there. The villain was Serbian nationalist Gavrilo Princip whose handful of bullets empowered him and fundamentally changed the course of history. Harlan Ullman's

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book just touches on the chain of events that led from a wrong turn taken by Franz Ferdinand's driver to the First World War. Interpretations of that chain of events range from entangling alliances to German war plans driven by railroad timetables to officials in various European capitals miscalculating risk and sleeping walking their way into conflict.

If you want to better understand why the First World War started, read Barbara Tuchman's *The Guns of August* or Christopher Clark's *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914*. But if you want to understand these events in a much broader historical and global context, read Ullman's volume. After digesting Ullman's book, that street corner plaque seems even smaller than before.

*A Handful of Bullets* ranges over two centuries and multiple disciplines to lay out keen perspectives on a vast number of past incidents and current issues. One reviewer opined that if presidential candidates for 2016 had but one book to read, "it is this one." The book's thought provoking analysis and recommendations are presented by a Fletcher School PhD and Vietnam veteran who has spent a half century serving the nation, accumulating wisdom, and advising a bipartisan list of top American policy-makers such as Colin Powell, John Kerry, John McCain and Chuck Hagel. So his assessments are worth heeding.

Ullman is able to hold together the broad scope of material that he covers by adopting two useful constructs. First, he argues that the assassination a century ago was the key inflection point in two centuries of history. And second, he argues that it triggered a process that has led to what he calls the Four New Horsemen of the Apocalypse, an updated version of the biblical four horsemen (conquest, warfare, pestilence, and death; each flowing from the former).

The Congress of Vienna reordered the world after Napoleon's defeat and reinforced the state-based international system established in 1648 by the Peace of Westphalia. It also strengthened the hold of hereditary rulers and stabilized European affairs until Princip struck. Several European wars did take place between 1815 and 1914, but they were not World Wars. During the first half of this century-long period until the Crimean War, stability rested on Britain as a balancer of power. During the second half, it rested on a flexible alliance system established by Bismarck. That system became more rigid and dangerous after Bismarck retired. Ullman argues convincingly that Princip's handful of bullets destroyed the increasingly fragile stability of the Congress of Vienna system and weakened the state-centric Westphalian system.

The Four New Horsemen according to Ullman are: failed governments, economic disparity and disruption, ideological and religious extremism, and environmental calamity. He argues that these four sets of fundamental problems also build one upon another, and that if left unchecked they will cause massive disruption around the globe. Ullman might have spent more time connecting these Four New Horsemen back to the events of June 1914. But he clearly demonstrates that a degree of globalization existed in 1914 and that the dangers inherent in these four new horsemen have accelerated as globalization has intensified during the past few decades. Those dangers were also exacerbated by the most recent inflection point, the 9/11 attacks and America's subsequent Global War on Terrorism. He notes that the 9/11 attackers had much in common with Princip. They were armed with box cutters

rather than a handful of bullets, but the reaction or over-reaction to their evil deeds fundamentally changed stability in the international system.

Failed or failing government ranks at the top of the list of dangerous horsemen. While Ullman addresses failing government around the globe, he concentrates on the United States and the Middle East. Noting the presence of failed government in the United States before, notably the Civil War, he concludes that the Vietnam War "began the disintegration of American politics and the dissolution of public belief in the credibility and honesty of government." As this disintegration spread, he argues that right and left wings increasingly came to dominate the two political parties, and middle of the roaders are increasingly vulnerable to being "primary'ed." He makes several fairly radical but perhaps needed recommendations to deal with failed government in the United States, including mandatory universal voting to assure that the political center votes, abolishing the two-term limit for Presidents, and a four year term for Congressmen. With regard to America's overseas activity, he concludes that using military force to offset failing government "mandates the toughest scrutiny."

Ullman's second horseman is economic despair, disparity, and disruption. He uses the example of the Tunisian fruit vendor whose self-immolation triggered the Arab Spring as a portent of a potential new Malthusian age. In grappling with what he calls economic ticking time bombs, Ullman dissects the buildup and impact the 2007-2008 American financial crisis in a clear and concise manner. Buy the book just to read Chapter 5 on this topic. His most interesting recommendation to deal with this cluster of economic problems is the creation of a national infrastructure bank in the United States, where the report card gives the world's largest economy a grade of D.

Ideological and religious extremism tends to flow from economic despair. Historically, Ullman recalls the crusades and Nazism as precursors to the Sunni and Shia extremism of today. But in this biting analysis, he does not spare extremism in the United States with its debates over "guns, gays, God, and gestation periods." Ullman argues that in dealing with religious fanaticism in the Middle East, the United States has mistakenly focused on symptoms not causes. He urges an offensive communications strategy designed to discredit and impeach religious extremism and hopes for an Islamic Martin Luther to reform that faith.

Rounding out this dangerous quartet, Ullman reviews a staggering list of natural and manmade disasters and demonstrates the devastating impact that they can have on global society. He concentrates on global warming as potentially the most devastating and suggests a series of U.S. bilateral executive agreements with major polluters to deal with environmental issues. The Obama administration seems to already have taken his advice with regard to China.

Interspersed with these four underlying trends, Ullman also assesses regional ticking time bombs, wildcards, the state of America's military establishment and American grand strategy. In his regional round-up, Ullman views a potential military attack on Iran's nuclear weapons capacity as potentially "catastrophic." He believes that another military coup in Pakistan is "not out of the question." And he assesses that China has far too many internal problems to solve and is not a state bent on hegemonic ambitions.

Appendix one of the book contains a public letter to the Secretary of Defense that Ashton Carter might want to read. Ullman lists the Defense Department's three crisis areas as people, strategy and money. He provides advice on all three in turn. He would cut spending on personnel benefits, reinstitute a partial draft, modify the Army's force structure, reduce the Navy's dependency on nuclear propulsion and reform the Unified Command Plan. He offers a more analytical approach to grand strategy which he calls a "brains based approach." And he suggests an array of ways in which America's European Allies might enhance their defense capabilities and share a greater portion of America's global defense burden.

A *Handful of Bullets* is sweeping and allows the author to comment on the major issues of our time. His critique is often withering and his recommendations call for fundamental change that will be difficult to implement. But if Ullman is right about the cumulative impact of his Four New Horsemen of the Apocalypse, such fundamental reforms may be needed.
PRISM

## REVIEWED BY DOUG BROOKS

Dr. Sean McFate is an academic, an Associate Professor at the National Defense University, but what makes his book The Modern Mercenary so worthwhile is his combination of military and real-world contracting backgrounds blended with an incisive historical knowledge of the subject matter. The Modern Mercenary seats the evolution of the unique stability operations industry, and especially the subset of international private security companies, into a larger historical context. It is an industry that has featured in the headlines for the past ten years for its operations in Afghanistan, Iraq and many places in Africa, but too often for the wrong reasons. McFate describes the value of the industry, parallels with the past, and then looks at how international contractors, especially the armed ones, can be controlled while

*Doug Brooks, a Washington, D.C.-based consultant, founded the International Peace Operations Association (IPOA) – later known as the International Stability Operations Association (ISOA), and served as its president for more than a decade. Special thanks to Naveed Bandali and Elizabeth Lang for their comments and suggestions on this review.*

providing valuable services to the international community and even the United Nations.

The Modern Mercenary offers an overview and analysis of the contractors who are supporting U.S. efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq, as well in almost every conflict and stability operation that the United States has been involved in for the past quarter century. The majority of McFate's historical insights come from his comparisons with the Condottieri of medieval Italy, the mercenary troops that dominated warfare there for centuries. He examines the motivations, incentives, and especially the shortcomings that the Italian city states faced when hiring foreign soldiers and entire armies in the days before professional citizen soldiers became the norm.

Extrapolating from the Condottieri model, McFate suggests that we have entered a new era of neomedievalism, "a non-state-centric and multipolar world order characterized by overlapping authorities and allegiances." This neomedievalism model does provide a compelling description of contemporary international relations. Sovereigns of the Middle Ages shared authority with the Pope, powerful warlords, and others which made for complex politics and intrigues. Compare that reality to today's circumstances: modern states are hardly the sole authority; numerous other actors are seen as valid authorities or voices as well, including NGOs, the UN, international courts, multi-national companies, and even international terrorist or criminal networks. In a truly Westphalian state-centric system, sovereigns would not feel so compelled to respond to allegations of human rights violations against their own people by Amnesty International, for instance, or fear the reach of international justice, or have to contend with giant corporations whose resources dwarf the GNP of many small countries. While the Pope's influence is not what it was a few centuries ago, NGOs, corporations and international organizations (including the Holy See) have stepped in to fill the vacuum and influence human events in ways that most states can only envy.

Is it then back to the Dark Ages for us all? Happily, McFate makes an able defense of medieval times as well, offering a persuasive case that the Dark Ages actually get a bad rap. "The world is not in decline but rather returning to normal, when no single type of political actor dominates the world state, as among different actors as it was in the Middle Ages, and the past four centuries of Westphalian supremacy by states is anomalous." Neomedievalism as a global system presents some drawbacks which will "persist in a durable disorder that contains rather than solves problems," although that does not seem so different from the obsolescent Westphalian model we have been enduring the past few centuries.

So what about the "mercenaries" of the title? McFate describes their modern rise as stemming from a growing faith in the free market that eventually paved the road for the international privatization of security. Much of the credit (or blame) falls on the United States which "opened the proverbial Pandora's box, releasing mercenarism back into international affairs," primarily because of the enormous security demands in Afghanistan and Iraq. Scores of companies, most newly formed, won security contracts in Iraq and Afghanistan, and thousands of local Afghans and Iraqis, Westerners and "third country nationals" (TCNs) were employed doing armed security in support of the missions.

McFate brings a refreshingly nuanced view of the stability operations industry that is rare

among academics. While total contractor numbers sometimes eclipsed U.S. military numbers in Afghanistan and Iraq, he is clear that armed contractors are always a small minority, i.e. somewhere in the neighborhood of 12 percent. The vast majority of contractors are doing more mundane reconstruction and logistical support tasks. He also confirms that the private sector is cheaper than state militaries due to their freedom to innovate, ability to scale up on short notice and independence from the bureaucratic inertia that plagues state (and UN) forces. Nor are private security companies inherently ruthless or evil as many of the industry's voracious critics will claim; McFate points out that, "there is plenty of evidence that private armies are more disciplined and effective than public forces in Sudan, Somalia …"

Academic literature includes numerous definitions and categorizations of the stability operations industry, and McFate offers his own perspective. He describes Private Military Companies (PMCs) as those that are in the line of fire or provide their clients lethal training and capabilities. PMCs are further split into the "Mercenary" type, offering offensive operations and force projection, and the "Military Enterpriser" type, which works to raise or improve armies and police forces, provides training, and helps equip their clients. McFate worked for one of these Military Enterpriser companies, DynCorp International – more on that later. The second category includes the Security Support companies providing non-lethal support, translation and propaganda services. The third category, General Services, includes the logistics, maintenance, transportation, construction and other non-lethal services that are not directly related to military operations.

The *Modern Mercenary* examines two case studies, both in Africa: Liberia and Somalia. McFate uses these examples to highlight what he sees as value that the private sector brings as well as trends that should raise concerns.

McFate was a principal player in the Liberia example where he was part of the DynCorp team that won the contract to build a professional Liberian army from scratch. He has previously written about this experience, but in short the company created a remarkable program vetting, training, and ultimately raising a small, professional army from the ashes of a bitter and divisive civil war. DynCorp had an extraordinary level of success considering the difficult circumstances in Liberia at the time, not to mention client issues, such as late payments, a complicated relationship with a contracting partner, poor government management and oversight, etc. Their success is especially notable when compared to the disastrous UN attempts to form a professional police force that was plagued with vetting issues, multinational disagreements, and poor long-term planning.

The "good, bad, and the ugly" of the Liberia contract offer some frank insights on why things did work, while discussing some of the many problems and conceptual issues involved. For instance, the Liberians themselves had very little input into the creation of their own army. On another specific instance, DynCorp manipulated Liberian politics to gain additional work and to ease their own contractual requirements. Nevertheless, one wonders if many of these problems would have been solved using a traditional military (or militaries) training program. Certainly the Afghan police program that I witnessed in 2006 was a convoluted affair with some dozen countries doing bits of the training, some

better funded and managed than others, but with very little coordination or standardization between them.

The Somalia example is also interesting, although it does not have the same depth as the Liberia section. McFate describes "a true free market with 'lone wolf' PMCs who fight for the highest bidder and become predatory when it suits them." The chapter provides some background on companies that have worked in Somalia, especially in terms of security sector reform (SSR) and coastguard operations. Further, it delves into the world of maritime security, a sector that grew rapidly to address the Horn of Africa and Gulf of Aden piracy issue. Like most previous analysts, he takes the UN line and is dismissive of what turned out to be the most successful private sector initiative (funded by the UAE in this case): the Puntland Maritime Police Force (PMPF). While McFate's book indicates that the PMPF disbanded, in fact they continue to operate and it is no coincidence that the most dramatic drop in Somali piracy coincided with the commencement of PMPF operations; more recently they have had some success against al-Shabaab. McFate is on firmer ground when he describes the innovations of the armed maritime private security companies that enjoy a perfect record when protecting their clients from Somali pirates. He also surveys some of the companies hired to support U.S. policies in Mogadishu to avoid having American "boots on the ground" in this location of past policy failure.

The Modern Mercenary concludes with a discussion of industry trends and recommendations, starting with industry resilience. McFate is very clear that the industry, in his opinion, is not going away and various attempts to eradicate or drastically curb the industry are doomed to failure. He further notes that the industry is globalized, so while many of the key concepts were pioneered by American and British firms working in Afghanistan and Iraq, many companies around the world have adopted the model, thus complicating efforts at regulation. He highlights the "indigenization" of the industry too, although some may nitpick on that count since many states have always suffered or tolerated indigenous warlords or gangs with ostensible veneers of corporate legitimacy. If they are not international, should they be part of this book? Finally, McFate returns to his case studies and ponders the two potential directions for international private sector services: the Liberian "mediated market" which he advocates, or the Somali "free market," which realizes much less regulation and more potential for mayhem in the neomedieval world we live in.

McFate presciently argues for market controls as the best way to harness and regulate the industry. He sees international regulation as slow and problematic, but prefers that larger clients (i.e. "super-consumers" – such as the U.S., UK, and UN) use their market power to demand norms and standards of the industry. It is unfortunate that he does not give much credence to the International Code of Conduct for Private Security Providers (ICoC) which is designed to do exactly what he advocates: enlist and coordinate the largest clients to ensure global standards for their private security companies. The ICoC was created through a broad partnership of states, civil society organizations, academics, and industry voices, but if thoughtful scholars such as McFate reject the concept then it does not bode well for the initiative – unless somehow an alternative framework swiftly emerges.

McFate also discusses some of the legal methods that the United States has at its disposal to hold private security personnel accountable, such as the Patriot Act and the Uniform Code of Military Justice (which he rightly believes is entirely inappropriate for civilian contractors). McFate gives short shrift to the Military Extraterritorial Jurisdiction Act (MEJA) as infrequently used and ineffective, a misperception that is the fault of the Department of Justice (DoJ) which has sought to downplay the law and refuses to provide data on the law and its enforcement. In 2007 a DoJ representative informed an astonished industry conference that there were more than sixty MEJA cases in all states of preparation and conclusion with many contractors jailed as a result. More to the point, while McFate describes the Blackwater contractors who were involved in the September 2007 Nisour Square shooting that left some 17 Iraqis dead, he claims that "they were simply sent home without punishment." However, as this review heads to publication, four of those involved are awaiting their fate in the hands of a jury. Criminal accountability of contractors operating in international contingency operations may be difficult and complex, but it can and has been done.

Although The Modern Mercenary is thought provoking and groundbreaking, coming from the industry perspective I nevertheless have a number of quibbles, though to be clear they do not diminish McFate's central arguments, which are compelling. His use of journalistic lingo and phrases at times in otherwise academic prose detracts from his arguments. The very term "private army" is frequently thrown out, but are we really describing "armies" or just security companies? Have any been involved in state-to-state conflict, which really would challenge the Westphalian system, or are they more accurately involved in providing protective security to clients in internal conflicts where a state's legitimate forces are opposed to what can only be described as "unlawful combatants" under international law? It is not like DynCorp and its peers are private armies that will be bidding on a contract to plug the Fulda Gap should the Russians become uppity again.

And are private security companies "paid to kill" and involved in "for-profit killing" or, like most domestic security companies, are they authorized to use force under specific (inherently defensive) circumstances? Will war be available "to anyone who can afford it" or are there numerous other complex constraints involved as itemized elsewhere in the book? Finally, as McFate emphasizes himself, the "mercenary" term is not entirely useful either. When I ran the International Stability Operations Association (ISOA), we determined that the real definition of the word "mercenary" as used in the media when discussing our industry was an entirely derogatory term that really meant "foreigners and business people we don't like." But as McFate points out, the "mercenary" term certainly helps journalists get their articles published.

And finally, do companies really sell their services to the "highest bidder?" Although a delightful concept to play with from a social science perspective, more often than not we see many companies competing for a small number of contracts. And yes, innumerable constraints can prevent companies from working for certain clients. Of course, some companies might not be Western, and McFate suggests new companies could emerge from Russia or China "with scant regard for human rights or international law" in order to win

contracts. Realistically, Western companies, working for the proverbial "anyone" can land their executives and employees in jail for violations of the International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR) or other laws, and how would it look to future clients if your company had a Robert Mugabe or North Korea as a former client? But assuming a company did win a contract with a Dr. Evil, how many former military professionals are willing to shed their revered veteran status, their family's respect and even risk their lives and liberties for a despot or international criminal? If international courts are one of the growing powers in a neomedieval world, would that not create greater legal risk for private operators violating international laws? A few rogue companies perhaps, but do not expect any geopolitical-altering mercenary invasion forces any time soon.

Will the industry grow? McFate believes so, describing limitless markets and opportunities in the future. Nevertheless, the larger contingency operations industry has actually waxed and waned over the decades. There were 700,000 U.S. contractors in the Second World War, 60,000 in Vietnam and so on, yet in every case the contractor numbers shrank dramatically and expectedly after the demand fell. McFate mentions "surge capacity" as one of the industry strengths, but companies can do the surging cheaply because they have far more freedom than governments to hire personnel on only a temporary basis. The large contractors today are substantially smaller than ten years ago during the height of the Afghanistan and Iraq conflicts, and predictably we are currently seeing a great deal of industry consolidation and downsizing. Even maritime security, which is featured in the The Modern Mercenary, has seen an enormous drop in

business as Somali piracy has dwindled to almost nothing and other regions, such as the Gulf of Guinea, have not had the expected growth in similar criminal activities.

Ultimately the book is a fascinating analysis comparing the old and new issues related to contracting. It boldly develops a compelling thesis and, my minor complaints notwithstanding, uses the "modern mercenary" concept to develop a convincing case for a neomedieval future. If so, we should expect a very interesting and complex time ahead for diplomacy, international relations and the political science field itself. PRISM

**REVIEWED BY LTC JOSEPH BECKER**

Grand strategy is an often controversial term in the vocabulary of United States foreign policy. Competing visions of the U.S. role in global affairs lead to watered-down policy pronouncements which must be evaluated in hindsight by their manner of implementation for a clear interpretation. In his latest book, *Restraint: A New Foundation for U.S. Grand Strategy*, Massachusetts Institute of Technology professor Barry Posen makes such an assessment. He identifies a relatively consistent pattern of activist behavior which he dubs a grand strategy of "Liberal Hegemony." This strategy, he argues, has been wasteful and counterproductive in securing U.S. national security interests, and he offers a competing vision for U.S. national security strategy. While most readers will find his arguments against Liberal Hegemony compelling, his grand strategy of "Restraint" will be divisive on a number of levels.

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Posen is clear and systematic throughout the book in defining his terms and developing his arguments. He scopes his use of the term grand strategy along national security lines related to the generation of military power, avoiding potential pitfalls of debate over issues such as public health or domestic policy. He defines Liberal Hegemony as a strategy of securing the superpower position of the United States largely through the active promotion of democracy, free markets, and Western values worldwide. Variations of this strategy have been championed on both sides of the political aisle by liberals and neoconservatives. His counterproposal, Restraint, is a realist-based grand strategy which focuses U.S. military power on a narrow set of objectives, relies on "command of the commons" to ensure global access, avoids entanglement in foreign conflicts, and actively encourages allies to look to their own defense. Posen advances a largely maritime-focused strategy to command the world's commons.

Liberal Hegemony is a strategy based upon a worldview that sees accountable governments as safe and secure partners for perpetuating the American way of life and non-accountable or non-existent governance as a threat that must be managed or ultimately rectified. It encourages a leading role for the United States in establishing and defending this order. It is this role which Posen believes to be ill-conceived and poorly defined, leading needlessly to wars of choice and the open-ended commitment of U.S. forces worldwide. Posen views the current network of U.S. alliances and security guarantees as largely a Cold War relic, allowing countries such as Germany, Japan, France, the Republic of Korea and even some of the Middle Eastern oil suppliers a free ride on the U.S. taxpayer. He also believes that

some of these commitments have encouraged reckless behavior, with Iraq and Israel as particular examples. Posen states that, since the end of the Cold War, policy-makers have consistently exaggerated the threats to U.S. interests in various regions of the world, overstated the benefits of military engagement, and embroiled the U.S. in a morass of identity-based conflicts with little hope for a solution. He argues that most U.S. allies could (and would) manage their own security if forced to do so and that they would naturally balance against threats to regional stability and the emergence of aspiring hegemons. Also, importantly, Posen bases his arguments on the assumption that great powers (current and emerging) will maintain a nuclear deterrence capability and this will largely reduce the likelihood of great power wars.

The grand strategy of Liberal Hegemony, in the form described by Posen, would likely have fewer supporters today than any time since the early 1990s. There is no doubt that the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, combined with the larger Global War on Terror, have been tremendously costly in terms of both blood and treasure, and that their long-term benefits are dubious. As of this writing, the Iraqi government faces mortal danger from extremist groups. Democracy in Afghanistan is a tenuous prospect at best. Lieutenant General Michael Flynn, the recently departed director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, was quoted in recent statements as saying that even after more than 13 years of war the U.S. is not safer and extremist ideology is "exponentially growing." There is little argument that business as usual is no longer an option in U.S. national defense.

While the status quo would seem to require a change, the level of disengagement recommended by Posen could be problematic in ways that his book fails to explore. The network of alliances and security guarantees maintained by the U.S. does more than simply abet stability in far-flung areas of the world. The U.S., as a nation, tends to be rather opinionated as to the conduct of world affairs. While rarely stated explicitly, security assistance in its various forms is one of the levers used by Washington to gain influence over the decision-making processes of other nations. A prominent example is Congress' linking of security assistance for Pakistan in 2011 to a concrete set of performance objectives. It is also true that countries hosting U.S. bases or deployments usually reap considerable economic benefits from those arrangements as well.

Unfortunately, balancing power is a dangerous game that does not always lead to stability. Posen argues, for instance, that the U.S. should remove ground forces from Japan and the Republic of Korea (ROK), believing that the South Koreans are more than a match for the North and that both Japan and the ROK will balance against China once they have to. But what if the Japanese and the Koreans assess the threat differently than the U.S.? What if one nation attempts to "buck pass" its security preparations to another nation and holds out too long? Stalin did this before World War II, expecting France to bear the cost of balancing against Germany. When France fell in six weeks, the stage was set for a Nazi invasion of Russia.

Balancing can also have unintended consequences. Posen states that, "Restraint aims to energize other advanced industrial states into improving their own capabilities to defend themselves…" But the capability to defend generally implies a capability to attack as well.

Japan's balancing against China would almost certainly arouse insecurities on the Korean peninsula, among other places. Nationalist tendencies in either location might also encourage a state to flex its newfound muscle. Reassurance to the other Allied nations attacked by Japan in World War II was one of the reasons the U.S. assumed responsibility for the security of Japan in the first place after the war. Perhaps the U.S. can no longer afford to be the guarantor, but abandoning this role will relinquish a measure of control that the U.S. maintains over its international environment. The U.S. will always maintain some responsibility to assist its allies and could be drawn into regional conflicts whether or not it prefers.

One of the assumptions underpinning Posen's argument is that countries act in their own rational self-interest. This aligns well with a realist view of nation states as individual actors on a world stage. However, nation states are built of people and groups of people who may possess different and competing views of their own self-interest. Many of the world's states, even nominal democracies, are controlled in practice by groups of elites. Egypt, for example, is largely run by a number of military officers with a disproportionate hold on the nation's economic assets. This group has successfully resisted all attempts to implement greatly needed economic reforms, even using its influence to prevent an IMF loan package in 2011. Egypt has instead turned primarily to handouts by members of the Gulf Cooperation Council, whose interests lie in suppressing both the Muslim Brotherhood and the fledgling democratic movement spawned by the Arab Spring, a self-serving marriage of convenience among Middle Eastern power brokers. Even in more representative societies such as the U.S., citizens are loath to suffer short-term pain such as taxation for the benefit of long-term necessities like a healthy environment or robust infrastructure. It is therefore dangerous to assume that governments will arrive at decisions that truly reflect the greater good of their populations. Even if a universal law were to ensure the balance of power in every region of the world, the balance that results may not be favorable for U.S. national security interests.

A further assumption supporting Posen's work is that states currently enjoying the benefits of U.S.-provided security will ultimately rise to the occasion if the U.S. steps back from the picture. An alternative possibility is that many governments will simply find a new patron. Vali Nasr argues in his book, *Dispensable Nation: American Foreign Policy in Retreat*, that reducing American engagement in the Middle East, for instance, would merely pave the way for increasing Chinese influence in this area of the world. While America's track record for abiding by its own liberal ideals is decidedly mixed in this region, he believes that the Chinese version would be far more extractive and far less benign. However, as demonstrated throughout the era of colonialism, ruling elites are often quick to settle for a bad deal that benefits them directly. Perhaps this trend would prove self-limiting in the long run, but the short-term cost could be a power shift away from the U.S.

Posen's vision for "command of the commons" means that the U.S. would dominate the air, sea, and space. His treatment of space is brief and largely sound, but he underestimates the contested nature of this arena. The air forces are treated as essential but could be right-sized to coincide with a reduction of ground forces. The thrust of Posen's argument

is that the U.S. should support its grand strategy of Restraint through a maritime-focused force, significantly reducing the size and priority of ground forces. In his view, the balance of power and nuclear deterrence will reduce the likelihood of great power war, and a reluctance to engage in smaller-scale regional conflicts will eliminate the need for massive counterinsurgency operations and render the current force structure irrelevant. Oddly, Posen even argues for a reduction in naval forces as well, going so far as to assess the number of aircraft carriers in the fleet. The U.S., he believes, has the economic might to reconstitute the reduced forces if necessary, but should save its money in the meantime.

Many prominent strategists would dispute Posen's argument about the primacy of naval forces in establishing national military power. For brevity, this review will draw upon some key points made by John J. Mearsheimer, author of the The Tragedy of Great Power Politics. Mearsheimer quotes British naval strategist Julian Corbett: "Since men live upon the land and not upon the sea, great issues between nations have always been decided – except in the rarest cases, by what your army can do against your enemy's territory and national life, or else by the fear of what the fleet makes it possible for your army to do." Only armies can conquer and control land, and they serve as the primary instrument of military power. Navies can project this power through amphibious assault (against a contested shore), amphibious landing (against a minimally contested shore), or through troop transport (using a friendly port). Amphibious operations are a dicey prospect. The best historical examples of success primarily occurred during World War II, and overwhelming air power was the decisive factor in every case. In addition, navies can bombard a coastline or launch missiles but, without boots on the ground, the effect is limited. Lastly, navies can regulate commerce, even to the point of conducting a full blockade of littoral regions. However, blockades have an unimpressive history of providing a decisive advantage, especially during great power conflicts. Blockades, and even maritime interdiction, would be considered very controversial actions in the modern world. Therefore, a grand strategy that is founded upon a means of power projection instead of the source of power itself is fundamentally flawed.

Posen's argument that the U.S. GDP would allow it to reconstitute its military forces in short order if required might hold some truth for machines, but it seriously discounts the time that it takes to train and develop professional and technically proficient soldiers capable of operating effectively on the modern battlefield. It also ignores the possibility that the U.S. might be required to engage in two or more conflicts at once. Potential adversaries or regional antagonists might see increased opportunities for aggression once the U.S. commits its diminished ground forces to a particular mission.

Regardless of the reader's views on the grand strategy of Restraint, this book has value. Posen outlines the benefits of having a clearly articulated grand strategy and demonstrates the pitfalls that the U.S. has faced in navigating national security policy without this level of clarity. His case against becoming embroiled in conflicts that require counterinsurgency operations is strong. The grand strategy he proposes is problematic for a variety of reasons, largely for the optimism of its assumptions and its required alignment of forces. However, this work provides a starting point for debate

and a structure from which various alternatives might be built and assessed. Posen is right that something needs to be done differently. In the words of Stephen Walt, "Democracy, freedom, and apple pie aren't a foreign policy." They are not a grand strategy either. <span>PRISM</span>

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