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## Post-Conflict Operations From Europe to Iraq

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The difficulties that the U.S. military and other coalition forces have experienced in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the consternation expressed in the Western press and public opinion should come as no surprise—in part because both press and people have scant appreciation for the difficulties of post-war occupation. Yet there is legitimate cause for complaint. The U.S. military and its allies were poorly prepared to undertake post-conflict operations. This shortfall exacerbated the “fog of peace”—the chaos, uncertainty, violence, and privation that typically occur during the initial post-conflict period. Operations were not as efficient and effective as they could have been.

This paper argues that weaknesses in how the United States and its allies approached the challenges of post-conflict operations run deeper than the debate over policies, the justification for the war, the number of troops committed to the occupation, and the resources available.<sup>1</sup> Lack of historical memory has played a significant role. Unrealistic expectations are one reflection of this dynamic. Perhaps even more important, the trials of Iraq reflect long-standing flaws in how U.S. forces prepare for the fight for peace—weaknesses that exacerbated strategic mistakes made while planning for the occupation.

Today, I would like to first briefly discuss the “problem of forgetting.” Then, I will describe the long-standing traditions and routine practices that influence the conduct of U.S. post-conflict operations; examine some of the strategic missteps made by the coalition leadership; and finally, suggest some

### Talking Points

- The U.S. military and its allies were poorly prepared to undertake post-conflict operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. As a result, operations were not as efficient or as effective as they could have been.
- Part of the problem, both historical and current, in conducting post-conflict operations is a lack of historical memory, which can lead to unrealistic expectations on the part of the military and the public.
- If the U.S. and its allies wish to meet future challenges more effectively, they will have to provide innovations in education, operational practices, acquisition, and organization. Combined, these could provide the impetus for developing an appropriate post-conflict force for future occupations.

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reforms that could institutionalize better military practices in the future.

### The Problem of Perception

Although occupation is an inevitable task in any successful military conflict, it is one that arguably receives little attention from the public, policymakers, or the military itself. One has only to compare the scope of scholarship on the battles of World War II with the post-war occupation period.<sup>2</sup> There appear to be signs that lack of historical memory plays a role in the public perception of operations. In both the Iraq and Afghanistan operations there are abundant signs that public expectations have been far from realistic—despite warning before the wars that the operations would likely be protracted and difficult.<sup>3</sup>

In part, such warnings may have carried less weight because the prospects for these operations are so unpredictable that any assessments—no matter how optimistic or gloomy—are always suspect.<sup>4</sup> Before the battle, everyone wants clear answers on what lies ahead, but there are few military activities more difficult than predicting the end state of a conflict.<sup>5</sup> Prior to the onset of post-conflict operations, it is unlikely that the military can provide firm assessments about the cost, character, or duration of an occupation.

Once operations are underway, expectations that post-conflict activities will be smooth, uncomplacat-

ed, frictionless, and non-violent are equally unrealistic, as are assumptions that because difficulties do emerge they can only be the result of grievous policy errors or strategic misjudgments. After all, the enemy gets a vote, and how indigenous opposition forces or outside agitators choose to defy the occupation authorities will, in part, determine the course of events. In post-war Germany, for example, the poor organization and subsequent collapse of planned Nazi opposition made the Allies' task of reinstating civil order significantly easier. The Office of Strategic Services, for example, estimated that the Allies would face a guerrilla army of upwards of 40,000—an assessment that proved wildly inaccurate.

Additionally, it is often forgotten that there is a “fog of peace” that is equally as infamous as Clausewitz's “fog of war”—which rejects the notion that outcomes can be precisely predicted or that there is a prescribed rulebook for success that any military can follow.<sup>6</sup>

Yet as conditions in occupied Iraq worsened and Bush Administration officials tried to draw parallels to the difficulties of the post-war occupation of Europe to illustrate the difficulties often faced after the battle, they were excoriated for being unhistorical.<sup>7</sup> In fact, post-war conditions in Europe were far from sanguine. For example, the displaced populations in post-war Europe (upwards of 14 million by some counts) in conjunction with shortages of food,

1. For an alternate view, see James Fallows, “Blind into Baghdad,” *The Atlantic Monthly*, January/February, 2004, pp. 53–74.
2. For example, the U.S. Army official history of World War II and its aftermath (often called the “green books”) consisted of over 80 volumes. Only one was related to post-war occupation operations and was little more than a compilation of official documents. For a discussion of the genesis of the green books see the essay by Edward Drea in Jeffrey Grey, ed., *The Last Word?: Essays on Official History in the United States and British Commonwealth* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2003). The Army's Center of Military History later produced a single-volume history of the occupation of Germany and short pamphlets on the occupation of Korea and the Ryukyu Islands.
3. See Phyllis Bennis, testimony before the Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate, July 31, 2002, at <http://www.ips-dc.org/comment/Bennis/iraqtestimony.htm> (May 30, 2004).
4. See, for example, the criticism that U.S. leaders had overly optimistic expectations for the occupation based on the promises by Iraqi expatriate Ahmed Chalabi—the exiled leader of the Iraqi National Congress. Fallows, “Blind into Baghdad,” p. 53.
5. For an example of the problems of determining likely conditions in Austria after World War II, see James Jay Carafano, *Waltzing into the Cold War: The Struggle for Occupied Austria* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2002), pp. 333–335.
6. Manfred K. Rotermund, *The Fog of Peace: Finding the End-State of Hostilities* (Carlisle, Pa.: Strategic Studies Institute, November 1999), pp. 47–52.
7. Daniel Benjamin, “Sorry, Dr. Rice, Postwar Germany Was Nothing Like Iraq,” *Slate*, August 29, 2003, at [www.slate.msn.com/id/2087768](http://www.slate.msn.com/id/2087768) (June 2, 2004); James Jay Carafano, “A Phony, Phony History,” *National Review*, September 18, 2003, at [www.national-review.com/comment/comment-carafano091803.asp](http://www.national-review.com/comment/comment-carafano091803.asp) (June 2, 2004).

lack of suitable housing, ethnic and racial tensions, and scarcity of domestic police forces created significant public safety and physical security concerns.<sup>8</sup>

Pre-war assumptions are a poor yardstick for measuring post-conflict performance. The current debate over planning for the number of forces to support the occupation in Iraq offers a case in point. Initial projections for occupation troops were between 75,000 and 100,000.<sup>9</sup> Some skeptics, including the U.S. Army Chief of Staff, suggested that several hundred thousand would be needed for the occupation.<sup>10</sup> The actual troop levels during the occupation have ranged from about 125,000 to 160,000. Critics have pointed to these lower force levels as a significant contributing factor in the outbreak of violence. Yet as one pre-war analysis conducted by the U.S. Army War College pointed out, criticizing pre-war projections is unrealistic. Any forecasts of actual troop numbers made before the actual post-war situation develops—the report concluded—are “highly speculative.”<sup>11</sup> Indeed, claims that force structure estimates were based on historical precedents<sup>12</sup> from previous occupations are dubious. Given the diverse conditions and requirements for different operations, drawing useful comparisons appears unrealistic.

Likewise, recognizing that Iraq is a country the size of California with porous borders awash with arms, and a population of about 25 million (with at least 10 million in eight major cities), it is unclear how numbers alone might have made a difference. Considering the scope of the security challenge, 300,000 troops would likely have had just as much difficulty as 100,000. Clearly, more troops would have helped, but numbers by themselves are not a silver bullet solution.

The American public is not alone in lacking a frame of reference for judging progress. The armed forces' appreciation is not much better than that of the public at large. According to Antulio Echevarria, a well-respected Army historian and national security analyst, the American way of war rarely extends “beyond the winning of battles and campaigns to the gritty work of turning military victory into strategic success.”<sup>13</sup> As a result, while civilian expectations and assumptions are usually wrong, the problems of public misperception are often aggravated by inadequate military preparations. Operations in Afghanistan and Iraq may merely offer the most recent cases in point.

### Rhythm of Habits

Among the traditions, experiences, preconceptions, and routine practices that determine how the military wages the fight for peace, the most powerful force shaping its thinking is a “tradition of forgetting.” The services—particularly the Army—have a long record of conducting various kinds of peace missions. Traditionally, however, the armed forces concentrate on warfighting and eschew the challenges of dealing with the battlefield after the battle.

The Army's experience and knowledge about peace operations have never been incorporated into mainstream military thinking in any major, systematic way. For example, the official report on the U.S. participation in the occupation of the Rhineland after World War I noted that “despite the precedents of military governments in Mexico, California, the Southern States, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Panama, China, the Philippines, and elsewhere, the lesson seemingly has not been learned.”<sup>14</sup>

8. Mark Wyman, *DPs: Europe's Displaced Persons, 1945–1951* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), pp. 15–27.

9. See Scott Feil, testimony before the Committee on Foreign Relations Committee, U.S. Senate, August 1, 2002, at <http://www.iraqwatch.org/government/US/HearingsPreparedstatements/feil-sfrc-080102.htm> (May 30, 2004).

10. Vernon Loeb and Thomas E. Rick, “For Army, Fear of Postwar Iraq,” *The Washington Post*, March 11, 2003, p. A1.

11. Conrad C. Crane and W. Andrew Terrill, *Reconstructing Iraq: Insights, Challenges, and Missions for Military Forces in a Post-Conflict Scenario* (Carlisle, Pa.: Strategic Studies Institute, February 2003), p. 33.

12. *Ibid.*

13. Antulio J. Echevarria II, *Toward an American Way of War* (Carlisle, Pa.: Strategic Studies Institute, March 2004), p. v.

14. U. S. Army, *American Military Government of Occupied Germany, 1918–1920: Report of the Officer in Charge of Civil Affairs, Third Army and American Forces in Germany* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1943) p. 64.

After World War I, the tradition of forgetting continued. The Army's Field Service Regulations of 1923 (doctrinal guidance crafted to capture the lessons of World War I) made no mention of the occupation of the Rhineland or that there might be a need to conduct similar operations in the future. The manual simply affirmed that "the ultimate objective of all military operations is the destruction of the enemy's armed forces in battle."<sup>15</sup> FM 100-5, the Army's capstone field manual for the conduct of operations during World War II, did not mention the conduct of occupation duties.

As the United States prepared to enter World War II, the military discovered it had virtually no capacity to manage the areas it would likely have to occupy. In fact, one of the planners' first acts was to root out the report on lessons learned from the Rhineland occupation. The Army did not even have a field manual on occupation management before 1940. A senior general was not appointed to plan overseas occupation operations until 1942—the same year the Army created staff officer positions for division (and higher) units to advise commanders about civil affairs and established its first military government school. Even then, the military undertook its occupation duties only reluctantly. When President Roosevelt wanted to free up more shipping to ferry civil affairs personnel to Europe for occupation duties, the Pentagon complained about diverting resources from its warfighting tasks. The best way to prepare for the post-war period, the

Joint Chiefs argued, "is to end the war quickly."<sup>16</sup> U.S. military forces remained reluctant occupiers throughout the post-war period.

After World War II, the Pentagon largely forgot about the problem and continued to reinvent solutions each time it faced a new peace operation: Fighting the battles of the Cold War remained the military's overwhelming preoccupation.

Arguably, America's military after the Cold War has a better appreciation for its post-conflict responsibilities. It could not forget these missions entirely because they had become a fact of life in the post-Cold World disorder. On average, the U.S. military has conducted an operation related to peacekeeping, peacemaking, or post-conflict occupation every two years since the end of the Cold War. With the Soviet menace gone, there was greater pressure to employ U.S. forces for a range of operations, which the Pentagon termed "military operations other than war".

Yet it is not clear that the military internalized the requirements for post-conflict operations. In 1995, the Pentagon produced its first joint doctrine for military operations other than war.<sup>17</sup> The U.S. Army established a Peacekeeping Institute at its Army War College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. These initiatives left much to be desired. They paid scant specific attention to post-conflict operations—arguably the most difficult and strategically important of all the peace activities that military forces might be called on to undertake.<sup>18</sup> Even the term "operations other than war" was problematic, implying a range of military

15. U.S. Army, *Field Service Regulations, 1923* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1924), p. 77.

16. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers: Conferences at Malta and Yalta, 1945* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1955), p. 536. For other examples, see Harry L. Coles and Albert K. Weinberg, *Civil Affairs: Soldiers Become Governors* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, 1992), p. 153; and Daniel Fahey, Jr., "Findings, Conclusions, Recommendations and Analysis Concerning U.S. Civil Affairs/Military Government Operations," February 1951.

17. This doctrine included a general discussion on various kinds of peace actions. The categories included the following: *Peace Building*—post-conflict actions (predominately diplomatic and economic), which strengthen and rebuild governmental infrastructure and institutions in order to avoid a relapse into conflict; *Peace Enforcement*—the application of military force, or the threat of its use (normally pursuant to international authorization) to compel compliance with resolutions or sanctions designed to maintain or restore peace and order; *Peacekeeping*—military operations undertaken with the consent of all major parties to a dispute (designed to monitor and facilitate implementation of an agreement such as a ceasefire, truce, or other such agreement, and to support diplomatic efforts to reach a long-term political settlement); and *Peacemaking*—the process of diplomacy, mediation, negotiation, or other forms of peaceful settlements that arrange an end to disputes and resolve issues that led to them. Department of Defense, *Joint Doctrine for Military Operations Other Than War*, Joint Pub. 3-07 (June 16, 1995), III-12 to III-13.

18. For a discussion on the nature of various peace operations, see James Jay Carafano, "The U.S. Role in Peace Operations: Past, Perspective, and Prescriptions for the Future," Heritage Foundation *Lecture No. 795*, August 14, 2003, at [www.heritage.org/Research/NationalSecurity/hl795.cfm#pgfId-1046205](http://www.heritage.org/Research/NationalSecurity/hl795.cfm#pgfId-1046205).



tasks less strategically important than warfighting and grouping post-conflict operations (essentially an extension of the warfighting mission) in with a plethora of tasks that included everything from peacekeeping to helping out after hurricanes.<sup>19</sup>

There was also little special recognition that the military's two most recent major post-war operations in Panama (after Operation Just Cause) and Kuwait (after the first Iraq War) were both deeply flawed.<sup>20</sup> For example, Lieutenant General John Yeosock, who was given initial responsibility for overseeing operations in Kuwait in 1991, recalled that he received virtually no assets or planning assistance for the task. Yeosock recalled he had been handed a "dripping bag of manure" that no one else wanted.<sup>21</sup> Operations in Iraq today appear different only in scale and duration. Initial assessments of U.S. military operations in Iraq suggest that the military failed to follow its own doctrine or learn from past experiences: Halting efforts in rebuilding Iraqi security forces and controlling arms in the country offer two examples of this.<sup>22</sup>

The military's reluctance to think deeply about the place of peace operations in military affairs derived from a rich tradition of Western military theory, typified by the 19th century Prussian thinker Carl von Clausewitz, who emphasized the primacy of winning battles and destroying the enemy's conventional troops.<sup>23</sup> Clausewitz, a veteran of the

Napoleonic Wars, could perhaps be forgiven for not even mentioning peace operations in his classic treatise *On War*. After all, peacekeeping operations were something new and novel in his time, first conducted by allied forces dismantling Napoleon's empire in 1815.<sup>24</sup> The U.S. military, which could look back on almost two centuries of these operations by modern states, had less of an excuse.

Other aspects of the military's traditional approach appear to have detrimental effects as well. When American forces do undertake peace missions, they try, as much as possible, to make them mirror traditional military activities. For example, during World War II, the military staff planning process for military government operations was virtually identical to the procedures for planning battles. Today, the staff process for planning operations other than war remains very similar to the combat planning process, encouraging leaders to use very similar techniques and procedures.

An approach to post-conflict activities that mirrors combat can result in the misapplication of resources, inappropriate tasks and goals, and ineffective operations. In Europe after World War II, Army tank battalions and artillery brigades were ill-suited to the conduct of occupation duties. They lacked appropriate equipment, such as non-lethal weapons to conduct crowd control. Mobility was another challenge. The infantry had few vehicles

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19. Joint doctrine for operations other than war also included military support to civil authorities. These tasks include providing support in the wake of natural and technological (man-made) disasters and terrorist acts. Department of Defense, *Joint Doctrine for Military Operations Other Than War*, p. I-1.
  20. See John T. Fishel, *The Fog of Peace: Planning and Executing the Restoration of Panama* (Carlisle, Pa.: Strategic Studies Institute, April 1992); and John T. Fishel, *Liberation, Occupation, and Rescue: War Termination and Desert Storm* (Carlisle, Pa.: Strategic Studies Institute, August 1992).
  21. *In the Wake of the Storm: Gulf War Commanders Discuss Desert Storm* (Wheaton, Ill.: Cantigny First Division Foundation, 2000), p. 25.
  22. Joseph McMillan, "Building an Iraqi Defense Force" Strategic Forum No. 198, June 2003, at [www.ndu.edu/inss/strforum/SF198/sf198.htm](http://www.ndu.edu/inss/strforum/SF198/sf198.htm) (May 10, 2004); James Jay Carafano, "Swords into Plowshares: Postconflict Arms Management," *Military Review* 77 (November/December 1977), pp. 22-29. Likewise, difficulties were experienced in Iraq until the United States revised its methods of operations. See United States Institute of Peace, "Establishing the Rule of Law in Afghanistan," Special Report No. 117, March 2004, p. 4.
  23. For the influence of Clausewitz on Western militaries, see Christopher Bassford, *Clausewitz in English: The Reception of Clausewitz in Britain and America, 1815-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).
  24. Erwin A. Schmidl, "The Evolution of Peace Operations from the Nineteenth Century," in *Peace Operations: Between War and Peace*, Erwin A. Schmidl, ed. (London: Frank Cass, 2000), p. 7. For a detailed history of the occupation of France by the Allies, see Thomas Veve, *Duke of Wellington and the British Army of Occupation in France, 1815-1818* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1992).

and lacked significant protection against improvised booby-traps and small arms fire. Armored units had much fewer personnel and their heavy tracked vehicles were unsuited to patrolling urban areas.

Training was another problem. Most troops lacked training in many critical security tasks such as conducting investigations, arrest, detention, search and seizure, interrogation, negotiation, and crowd control. It was not until months after the occupation that the Army began to field constabulary units that were better designed to conduct a range of security tasks.<sup>25</sup>

The U.S. constabulary forces served successfully but were soon disbanded, replaced by conventional military units more appropriate to the tasks of fighting Cold War battles.<sup>26</sup>

Today, United States combat units are still structured in much the same manner as they were during World War II. The United States has no forces specifically organized and equipped for post-conflict missions. Although the U.S. military has developed training programs and tactics for post-war duties, these were mainly provided for follow-on forces. Much as during World War II, the initial occupation troops were the same forces that conducted the combat campaign and who had to learn the skills of occupation on the job.

The result of the rhythm of habits is, in Iraq as after previous campaigns, that the United States has been served by military forces that are adequately designed, equipped, and trained to fight wars, but are far less well-prepared for engaging in the fight for peace. Perhaps not surprisingly, one of the most effective and survivable Army units in Iraq has

proved to be its Stryker Brigades, a controversial initiative of former Army Chief of Staff General Eric Shinseki. These are new units that—while not specifically designed for post-conflict operations—have equipment and organizations closer to meeting the requirements of these kinds of missions.

Another, persistent rhythm of habit is the armed forces' penchant for largely eschewing integrated interagency operations (activities involving more than one federal agency), as well as ignoring the role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The result is that most operations lack cohesion, flexibility, and responsiveness. During World War II, the military closely followed its tradition (as much as possible) of divesting itself of non-combat tasks. Traditionally, the services preferred to establish a "fire-wall" between civilian and soldier activities to prevent civilian tasks from becoming an overwhelming drain on military resources.<sup>27</sup> As a result, there was scant cooperation between the Pentagon and other federal agencies or NGOs.<sup>28</sup>

Post-Cold War operations also reflected chronic difficulties in coordinating military activities with outside agencies.<sup>29</sup> Prospects for better performances in Iraq did not bode well. As a result of U.N. sanctions, NGOs had little presence in the country, no accurate assessments of needs, and no logistical or support base. Lacking good intelligence on internal conditions in the country, the CIA, the State Department, and the Department of Defense were at odds about how to best deal with political and humanitarian concerns. Without a coordinated, integrated planning effort, miscues, mistakes, and disputes seemed inevitable.

25. Historical Subsection, G3, U.S. Constabulary, "The Establishment and the Operations of the United States Constabulary 3 Oct. 1945–30 June 1947" (1947), Halley G. Maddox Papers, Military History Institute.

26. Carafano, *Waltzing into the Cold War*, p. 119.

27. This notion dovetailed well with contemporaneous administrative theory, which envisioned a clear delineation between the civilian and military functions of government. James Stever, "The Glass Firewall Between Military and Civil Administration," *Administration and Society* No. 31 (March 1999), pp. 28–49.

28. Carafano, *Waltzing into the Cold War*, pp. 19–20. For a narrative of the debates on post-war policy between the Department of Defense and the Departments of State and Treasury, see Michael R. Beschloss, *The Conquerors: Roosevelt, Truman and the Destruction of Hitler's Germany, 1941–1945* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2002), *passim*.

29. See, for example, Larry Wentz, ed., *Lessons from Bosnia: The IFOR Experience* (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University, 1998), pp. 119–138; and George A. Joulwan and Christopher C. Shoemaker, *Civilian-Military Cooperation in the Prevention of Deadly Conflict: Implementing Agreements in Bosnia and Beyond* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1998), pp. 26–48.

Official U.S. accounts of cooperation in Iraq and Afghanistan give little indication of the chronic tensions that have marred American operations in the past. It is not clear how candid these assessments might be.<sup>30</sup> It is perhaps too early to pass judgment on these operations, but persistent reports of disagreements between the Departments of State and Defense and complaints by the Red Cross that military authorities were unresponsive to the organization's findings on treatment of Iraqi prisoners are signs that offer cause for concern.

### Strategic Missteps

I suspect that the determination of forces trying to undermine the U.S. efforts, American misperceptions, and the rhythms of habit alone do not explain the difficulties that the United States has experienced during the conduct of the occupation. An authoritative history of the occupation will likely find that errors in policy and strategy also played an important part. Several key decisions in particular will bear close scrutiny.

First, it is not at all clear that coalition forces dedicated sufficient time or resources to planning for the occupation. The Allies planned for three years to occupy Germany. Serious planning for the occupation of Iraq was done in a matter of a few months. While the bulk of the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) planners and experts in Washington focused on planning for the war, far less resources went into preparing for the peace.

Recognizing its dearth of post-conflict planning expertise, CENTCOM requested that the Army War College evaluate its efforts and offer recommendations. In October 2002, the War College's Strategic Studies Institute undertook a study that produced a detailed assessment of political conditions, tasks to be accomplished, and recommendations.<sup>31</sup> The

study was well received by the CENTCOM staff, but soon after it was delivered responsibility for planning was shifted to the newly established Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Affairs (ORHA) under retired Army General Jay Garner. ORHA, which was not established until January 20, 2003, showed little interest in the War College assessment; therefore, planning was effectively begun from scratch.<sup>32</sup> Garner's office focused on humanitarian relief, reconstruction, civil administration, and communications, logistics, and budgetary support. An analysis of post-war planning before the conflict noted a number of significant shortfalls—concerns that proved justified during the course of the occupation.<sup>33</sup>

A second significant problem will likely prove to be the decision to bifurcate operations between the military and a lead civilian agency; first ORHA, and later the Coalition Provisional Authority. As Nadia Schadlow rightly points out in her article "War and the Art of Governance," cleaving responsibilities between agencies during the initial conduct of an occupation is a mistake. Physical security underlies all efforts to conduct the three vital tasks of occupation—averting humanitarian crises, fielding domestic security forces, and establishing a legitimate government. These tasks are a prerequisite to reconstruction. Splitting responsibilities hindered the effort to address these tasks efficiently.<sup>34</sup> The military, Schadlow correctly concludes, should remain responsible for all three critical mission areas until a reasonable level of physical security and public safety has been achieved.

The third, and perhaps most troubling, shortfall in U.S. efforts has been the inability to rapidly field domestic security forces. In part, this effort has lagged because of lack of an adequate plan, dividing responsibility for fielding police, civil defense, and

30. See Richard L. Greene, testimony before the Subcommittee on National Security, Emerging Threats, and International Relations, Government Reform Committee, U.S. House of Representatives, May 31, 2003, at <http://reform.house.gov/UploadedFiles/051303%20RG%20ts.pdf> (May 10, 2004).

31. Crane and Terrill, *Reconstructing Iraq*, *passim*.

32. Carlos L. Yordan, "Failing to Meet Expectations in Iraq: A Review of the Original U.S. Post-War Strategy," *MERIA: Middle East Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (March 2004), at [www.meria.idc.ac.il/journal/2004/issue1/jv8n1a5.html](http://www.meria.idc.ac.il/journal/2004/issue1/jv8n1a5.html) (June 2, 2004).

33. Center for Strategic and International Studies, *Post-War Iraq: Are We Ready?* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2003) at [www.wwics.si.edu/events/docs/scorecard.pdf](http://www.wwics.si.edu/events/docs/scorecard.pdf) (June 2, 2004).

34. Nadia Schadlow, "War and the Art of Governance," *Parameters*, Autumn 2003 p. 89.

military forces, lack of equipment, inability to rapidly disburse funds, and difficulties in vetting and training senior leadership. Interestingly, the coalition forces have faced similar difficulties in ramping up domestic security forces in Afghanistan.<sup>35</sup>

The Administration and senior defense officials in the Pentagon must bear the responsibility for these shortfalls. If the occupation had been short and bloodless, these mistakes would not likely have seemed as grave, but the persistent opposition to coalition efforts has made these misjudgments much more significant.

### **New Military Capabilities and Competencies**

The efficiency of the operations and the quality of senior-level decisions might have fared differently if they had been built on more solid operational capabilities—but they were not. If we agree that the military is poorly prepared to conduct post-conflict missions—and that these are important tasks to get right—how can we ensure that armed forces are more ready to conduct these operations in the future?

Putting aside the question of what would be the optimum organization, training, and doctrine for post-conflict forces, I would like to address the greater strategic question of where these forces come from.

Suitable post-conflict forces can come from three places. First, a nation can have allies with suitable units to conduct the mission for them. Second, they can reorganize and retrain traditional combat forces as units better prepared to conduct occupation duties. Third, they can maintain forces specifically designed to spearhead an occupation.

I would argue, in the case of the United States, that a great power should do all three, using its abundance of resources to gain maximum flexibility in how it approaches post-conflict operations and tailoring the best force for the mission. Thus, the United States should do more to build up the capacity of its allies. It should also do a much better job converting forces for post-conflict duties and learning the lessons of current operations. Finally, it should build organizations and supporting programs specifically designed to conduct post-conflict duties.

Meeting the third requirement is undoubtedly the most difficult. Creating the right set of capabilities will require a set of initiatives that cut across the armed forces education processes, career professional development patterns, acquisition programs, and organizations. These innovations might include the following.

The skills needed to conduct effective post-conflict tasks requires the right combination of “hard power” (the means to provide security) and “soft power” (the capacity to not only understand other nations and cultures, but also the ability to work in a joint, interagency, and multinational environment). These are sophisticated leader and staff proficiencies, required at many levels of command.

In the present military education system, however, much of the edification relevant to building these attributes is provided—if at all—at the war colleges to a relatively elite group being groomed for senior leader and joint duty positions. This model is wrong on two counts.

First, I think these skills are needed by most leaders and staffs in both the active and reserve components, not just an elite group within the profession.

Second, in the United States this education comes too late in an officer's career. Virtually every other career field provides “graduate level” education to members in their mid-20s to 30s. Only the military delays advanced education until its leaders are in their mid-40s.

### **Recommendations**

The armed services also need special schools specifically designed to teach the operational concepts and practices relevant to post-conflict missions. The services already have advanced schools (such as the Marine Corps' School for Advanced Warfighting) for instruction in the operational arts at their staff colleges. These courses train the military's finest planners. The curriculum in these courses should be expanded to include post-conflict missions.

The combatant commands should be reorganized to include interagency staffs with specific responsibility for developing post-conflict contingency plans in the same manner as current operational staffs

35. United States Institute of Peace, “Establishing the Rule of Law in Afghanistan,” *passim*.



plan for warfighting contingencies. In the event of war, the post-conflict interagency group can be attached to the operation's joint force commander to provide the nucleus of an occupation staff.

In addition, the joint force command should include a general-officer deputy commander who would oversee the work of the planning group and assume command of the occupation force after the conflict. These staffs and command positions could provide a series of operational assignments for the career development of a cadre of officers especially skilled in post-conflict duties.

Special post-conflict units could be assembled from existing National Guard and Reserve units including security, medical, engineer, and public affairs commands. Since many of the responsibilities involved in post-war duties are similar in many ways to missions that might be required of homeland security units, these forces could perform double duty, having utility both overseas and at home.

The military also needs a more robust and integrated acquisition program—a “system of systems” approach to post-conflict missions that includes more aggressive development of non-lethal technologies, capacities to rapidly equip and interface with domestic security forces, and support for the reconstruction

and protection of governance and other critical infrastructure. Indeed, the military might consider establishing a “future security system” acquisition program under a lead-system integrator responsible for developing a range of technologies applicable to post-conflict and domestic support missions.

### **The Consequences of Change**

The 21st century has not seen the last of war. Regardless of the outcome of the current operations in Iraq, the great nations of the world will no doubt again be called upon to conduct post-conflict tasks in the future.

There is at least one clear lesson from the current experience, a powerful reminder that these operations are complex and difficult: If the United States and its allies wish to meet future challenges more effectively, they will have to address the cultural impediments to providing the right kind of military capabilities. Innovations in education, operational practices, acquisition, and organization could provide the impetus for developing an appropriate post-conflict force for the next occupation.

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