Winning the Peace:
Principles for Post-Conflict Operations

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The U.S. military has conducted an operation related to peacekeeping, peacemaking, or post-conflict occupation roughly every two years since the end of the Cold War. Ironically, despite these frequent post-conflict operations, there is no doctrine to guide the President and his Cabinet in planning for and conducting military interventions and post-conflict operations.

To meet these security challenges, Congress should require the executive branch to draft an interagency strategy for addressing the challenges of stabilizing countries after a conflict. The strategy should reflect the practical imperatives of occupying a defeated or failed state, establishing a legitimate government, securing U.S. vital national interests, and building up a civil society in the occupied state. Based on that doctrine, Congress should provide the legislative framework and resources to implement the strategic concept.

This approach recognizes the reality that, at times, military action is the only way to secure vital American interests. Therefore, this paper suggests principles that Congress should apply when drafting the legislation requiring creation of such a doctrine.

Peacekeeping and Post-Conflict Operations

The military's role in warfighting is unquestioned, but its responsibilities in peace operations are both controversial and poorly understood. Although there are no universally accepted definitions, military peace operations can be divided into three types of actions: peacemaking, peacekeeping, and post-conflict or occupation activities.

Talking Points

- In Iraq and Afghanistan, the United States has relearned painful lessons on how to win the peace. Institutionalizing these lessons requires establishing a common national strategic concept for post-conflict operations.

- Post-conflict operations are among the most difficult to plan and execute, even under the best of circumstances. Expectations that post-conflict activities will be smooth, uncomplicated, frictionless, and nonviolent are unrealistic, as is the assumption that grievous policy errors or strategic misjudgments cause all difficulties.

- The Administration and Congress must adopt policies that ensure effective interagency operations and unity of effort.

- Successful post-conflict operations cannot be planned effectively in Foggy Bottom or the Pentagon. Planning and implementation must be done in theater, in concert with the military combatant commands.

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Peacemaking involves the use or threat of violence to compel compliance with resolutions or sanctions designed to end conflict. It is also the most problematic of all peace operations. Maintaining neutrality is extremely difficult, particularly for the United States, a global power with interests in virtually every corner of the world. It is difficult to conceive of many conflicts in which America would be seen as a neutral power. Peacemaking should not be a routine mission for U.S. forces.[1]

Peacekeeping operations are undertaken with the consent of all major warring parties and are designed simply to implement a peace agreement. The need to conduct these operations is a matter of strategic judgment. The United States is engaged in a global war on terrorism, which may take many years and require extensive use of U.S. troops. The armed forces are already straining to meet the demands of global conflict. America needs to pace itself and reserve its military instruments for advancing vital national interests.

The United States should refrain from taking on major roles in peace enforcement operations. These activities offer substantially fewer risks than peacemaking, which means that many nations with only a modicum of military capability and some outside support can also perform them. The United States should reserve its forces for the great-power missions that require the preponderance of military power that only the United States can provide.[2]

Post-conflict operations include those minimum military activities that are required in the wake of war. After any campaign, the United States will have moral and legal obligations to restore order, provide a safe and secure environment for the population, and prevent a humanitarian crisis by ensuring that people are fed and preventing the spread of infectious disease. In short, the military's task is to provide a secure atmosphere for the reestablishment of civilian government, as well as domestic security and public safety regimes. In addition, maintaining a safe and secure environment in the post-conflict phase is vital for securing the national interest that precipitated U.S. involvement, whether that task is disarming and demobilizing an enemy force, hunting down the remnants of a deposed regime, or restoring a legitimate border.

Of these three types of operations, post-conflict missions (as opposed to nation-building) are arguably the only essential and appropriate task for U.S. military forces. Post-conflict activities are an integral part of any military campaign in which U.S. forces seize territory, either to free an occupied country, as with Kuwait in 1991, or to dispose of an enemy regime, as during the postwar occupations of Germany and Japan. Such missions are not "optional" operations; they are an integral part of any military campaign.

Post-conflict operations are *not* the same as an "exit strategy," which implies that exiting the country is the focus of operations. Instead, achieving American national objectives must retain primacy during planning. Getting American troops out of the country may be an objective, but American troops are still stationed in Europe and Japan for reasons completely unrelated to the original objectives of World War II, the war that brought them there 60 years ago.

Despite the frequency of military intervention and the inevitable follow-on operations, there has been scant success in developing a sound doctrine to guide the planning. This is unacceptable. The United States should be just as efficient in fighting for peace as in fighting battles. Winning the peace is part of winning wars. As in preparing for combat, sound planning for peace requires the right organizations, training, and preparation. These have to be built on the lifeline of a guiding idea—a doctrine that shapes how organizations plan and prepare.

Why We Get It Wrong

Successful post-conflict operations will starve the seeds of future conflict. The United States has a long history of conducting post-conflict, stabiliza-

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1. See James Jay Carafano, Ph.D., "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*.

2. *Ibid.*

tion, and occupation operations. These are almost always approached in the same manner, with aspirations that at the end of the occupation the United States will leave behind a free-market, liberal state committed to the rule of law, a strong civil society, and peaceful intentions.

The goal is essentially the right one, but U.S. occupations have not always achieved it. In some cases, such as the Dominican Republic (1965), America largely failed. In others, like the occupation of Germany, Italy, and Japan after World War II, it succeeded, but only after numerous missteps and mistakes. In South Korea, the march to a full democracy and free-market economy took almost 50 years.

Many U.S. post-conflict planning efforts start with the "clean slate" solution: completely eliminating the existing government and all of its institutions. The clean slate method usually involves abolishing all vestiges of the previous regime including the military, police, and civil service bureaucracy. Denazification in postwar Germany and debaathification in Iraq are reflections of this tendency. Efforts usually go beyond just the government and include all institutions of civil society, from schools to currency exchange to industrial policy.

The clean slate solution is never satisfying, and results never meet expectations for two reasons.

Reason #1: The Fog of Peace

Post-conflict operations are among the most difficult to plan and execute, even under the best of circumstances. Expectations that post-conflict activities will be smooth, uncomplicated, frictionless, and nonviolent are unrealistic, as is the assumption that grievous policy errors or strategic misjudgments cause all difficulties. After all, the former enemy gets a vote, and how indigenous opposition forces or outside agitators choose to defy the occupation partially determines the course of events. For example, in postwar Germany, the poor organization and subsequent collapse of planned Nazi opposition made the Allies' task of reinstituting civil order significantly easier. The Office of Strategic Services estimated that the Allies would face a guerrilla army of about 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 the "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.[3]

Postwar conditions in Europe offer a case in point. They were far from sanguine. For example, the displaced populations in postwar Europe (numbering 14 million people by some counts) combined with food shortages, housing shortages, ethnic and racial tensions, and scarcity of domestic police forces to create significant public safety and physical security concerns.[4]

Prewar assumptions are also a poor yardstick for measuring post-conflict performance. The current debate over planning for the number of forces needed to support the occupation of Iraq misses the point. As one prewar analysis conducted by the U.S. Army War College pointed out, criticizing prewar projections is unrealistic. The report concluded that any forecasts of actual troop numbers made before the actual postwar situation develops are "highly speculative."[5] Indeed, claims that force structure estimates were based on historical precedents from previous occupations are dubious. Given the diverse conditions and requirements for different operations, drawing useful comparisons appears unrealistic.

In fact, given that Iraq is the size of California, has porous borders, is awash with arms, and has a diverse population of about 25 million (with at least 10 million in eight major cities), it is amazing that any reputable defense analyst would confi-

3. Manfred K. Rotermund, *The Fog of Peace: Finding the End-State of Hostilities* (Carlisle, Pa.: Strategic Studies Institute, November 1999), pp. 47–52.

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

5. 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, 2003), p. 33.

dently argue that numbers alone might have made a difference. Considering the scope of the security challenge, 300,000 troops probably would have had just as much difficulty as 100,000. More troops would have helped, but numbers by themselves are not a silver-bullet solution. Iraq is in large part a reminder that difficulties and unexpected turns are the rule, not the exception.

Reason #2: The Rhythm of Habits

The inevitable difficulties of an occupation are exacerbated by the remarkable consistency in how the United States conducts occupations. Among the traditions, experiences, preconceptions, and practices that determine how America conducts an occupation, a "tradition of forgetting" is the most powerful force shaping its thinking. The armed forces concentrate on warfighting and eschew the challenges of dealing with the battlefield after the battle.

The U.S. 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."[6] 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.

As the United States prepared to enter World War II, the military discovered that it had virtually no capacity to manage the areas that it would likely need 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 a 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 that 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 Franklin D. Roosevelt wanted to free 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 postwar period, the Joint Chiefs argued, "is to end the war quickly."[7] U.S. military forces remained reluctant occupiers throughout the postwar period.

After World War II, the Pentagon largely forgot about the problem and continued to reinvent solutions for each 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 War world. Yet it is not clear that the military has internalized the requirements for post-conflict operations. For example, Lieutenant General John Yeosock, who was initially given responsibility for overseeing operations in Kuwait in 1991, recalled that he received virtually no assets or planning assistance for the task and had been handed a "dripping bag of manure" that no one else wanted.[8]

Operations in Iraq today appear different only in scale and duration. Initial assessments of U.S. mil-

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6. 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.

7. U.S. Department of State, *Conferences at Malta and Yalta, 1945*, in *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers* (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.

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itary operations in Iraq suggest that the military failed either to follow its own doctrine or to learn from past experiences. Halting efforts to rebuild Iraqi security forces and control arms in the country are just two examples.

Other aspects of the military's traditional approach appear to have detrimental effects as well. When American forces undertake peace missions, they try to make them mirror traditional military activities as much as possible. 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 similar to the combat planning process, encouraging leaders to use similar techniques and procedures.

An approach to post-conflict activities that mirrors combat can result in 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 occupation duties. They lacked appropriate equipment, such as non-lethal weapons to conduct crowd control. The infantry had few vehicles and lacked significant protection against booby traps and small-arms fire. Armored units had much fewer personnel, and their heavy tracked vehicles were unsuited to patrolling urban areas. Most troops lacked training in many critical security tasks such as conducting investigations, arrest, detention, search and seizure, interrogation, negotiation, and crowd control. Not until months after the occupation began did the Army begin to field constabulary units that were better suited to conduct a range of security tasks.[9] The U.S. constabulary forces served successfully but were soon disbanded.

Another persistent rhythm of habit is the armed forces' penchant for largely eschewing integrated interagency operations (activities involving more than one federal agency) and ignoring the role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The result is that most peace operations lack cohesion, flexibility, and responsiveness. During World War II, the military closely followed its tradition of divesting itself of non-combat tasks. Traditionally, the services preferred to establish a "firewall" between civilian and soldier activities to prevent civilian tasks from draining military resources.[10] As a result, there was scant cooperation between the Pentagon and other federal agencies or NGOs.[11] Operations in Iraq and Afghanistan do not seem to have begun any more auspiciously.

The "Disease and Unrest" Formula

The United States can learn from the past that it has consistently ignored. Lessons from the postwar occupations of Japan, Germany, and Austria suggest why the United States succeeded despite troubled occupations. In each case, after a period of over three years, the United States got the fundamentals of occupation right.

World War II planners called this the "disease and unrest" formula. They concluded that an occupation force must perform three tasks before reconstruction or nation building could begin:

- **Avert a humanitarian crisis.** The occupying forces must ensure that the population does not die *en masse* from disease, starvation, or exposure.

8. Steven Weingartner, ed., *In the Wake of the Storm: Gulf War Commanders Discuss Desert Storm* (Wheaton, Ill.: Cantigny First Division Foundation, 2000), p. 25.

9. Major James M. Snyder, "The Establishment and the Operations of the United States Constabulary 3 Oct. 1945–30 June 1947," Historical Subsection G3, U.S. Constabulary, in Halley G. Maddox Papers, Military History Institute, 1947.

10. 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*, Vol. 31, No. 1 (March 1999), pp. 28–49.

11. James Jay Carafano, Ph.D., *Waltzing into the Cold War* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2002), pp. 19–20. For a narrative of the debates on postwar 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*.

- **Establish a legitimate government.** The occupiers need to create a political leadership that people widely perceive as credible to lead the long-term reconstruction effort.

- **Provide domestic security forces to support the government.** It is not essential that the nation is free of violence, but the occupiers need to ensure that the new leadership has adequate forces at its disposal to begin to establish a functioning civil society.

Once these tasks have been completed, post-conflict operations are essentially finished. The struggle for safety, growth, security, and liberty is not over, but the nation's fate is largely in the hands of its new leadership. In fact, one of the misnomers of "nation building" is that nations build nations. In virtually every case of successful reconstruction following an occupation, nations rebuilt themselves.

Postwar reconstruction in Europe is a case in point. Serious reconstruction did not begin until 1949. By that time, the mandate of the disease and unrest formula, despite the missteps of the occupation, had been achieved. U.S. reconstruction funds under the famous Marshall Plan did not begin flowing until 1949, and the use of Marshall funds was planned for and managed by the indigenous governments, not the United States. In addition, these funds were a small part of the investment that reconstructed Europe. Most of the resources for European "nation-building" came from the Europeans.[12]

There are already signs that a similar pattern is emerging in Iraq. As the conditions of the disease and unrest formula are being met, domestic leaders are taking control. In the near future, they will likely spearhead the rebuilding of their nation, albeit with continued support from the United States and other allies. In the end, implementing the disease and unrest formula is the prerequisite for building an enduring peace.[13]

Principles of Post-Conflict Operations

Applying the lessons of the past would require establishing a doctrine that breaks the rhythm of habits, the penchant to start over and make every occupation an *ad hoc* affair. It would require the military to provide the right forces, practices, and leadership for post-conflict missions. It would demand effective integrated interagency operations at the outset, establish modest goals for the occupation based on the disease and unrest formula rather than the clean slate solution, and preach patience and warn against operational overreach. It would caution that democracy, economic growth, and building civil society take time and that they are efforts that must be led by properly empowered and supported domestic leadership.

A set of sound principles for post-conflict operations would begin by defining the essential tasks that must be accomplished and describing how to organize assets to produce concrete results.

Principle #1: The President should determine clear, concise national objectives and stick to them.

Before deciding to engage in military operations, the President must articulate specific, clear, credible national interests and objectives. In some instances, this may involve regime changes, such as in Iraq and Afghanistan. During the post-conflict operation, the transition authority should continue to measure its actions against those objectives. This is essential both for the efficient allocation of resources and to sustain public support.[14]

Throughout a military intervention, operations will necessarily change from destroying the old

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12. Gunter Bischof and James Jay Carafano, Ph.D., "Marshall Plan Won't Work in Iraq," Heritage Foundation *Commentary*, October 13, 2003, at *www.heritage.org/Press/Commentary/ed102303f.cfm*.

13. As Brian Crozier notes in a study on the history of post-conflict periods, winning the war and implementing the disease and unrest formula are necessary but insufficient for securing long-term peace. Long-term peace requires policies that lead to the development of strong civil societies and liberal, democratic, and free-market economies. Brian Crozier, *Political Victory: The Elusive Prize of Military Wars* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 2005).

14. William M. Darley "War Policy, Public Support, and the Media," *Parameters*, Vol. 35, No. 2 (Summer 2005), pp. 131–133, at *carlisle-www.army.mil/usawc/Parameters/05summer/darley.pdf* (June 2, 2005).

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regime's ability to rebuilding and defending the ability of the new coalition-imposed regime to exercise its authority in accordance with the disease and unrest formula.

Measuring success will change as well. During a military campaign, success is measured by military objectives, such as destruction of the enemy armed forces. In post-conflict operations, it is political, economic, and social metrics that measure success. Both of these contending operations must accomplish the original national objectives. A post-conflict doctrine will develop metrics for evaluating success in post-conflict operations.

Principle #2: Eliminating the regime while preserving the government is essential.

Success depends on identifying which parts of the enemy government constitute the regime and separating (and incapacitating) them from the formal bureaucracy and institutions that form the government of the country.

The United States must eliminate the previous regime's undesirable influences without affecting the efficiency of government functions. The formal government institutions provide government services to the civilian population, such as water, power, waste management, and public safety—all of which must be preserved, when possible, during the military campaign or, if destroyed, be quickly restored during the post-conflict operations.

In authoritarian political systems, regime elements may be more deeply embedded in the government than they are in democratic regimes. In some cases, the previous regime may have embedded laws and practices in the government that must be suspended or changed to accomplish U.S. objectives. Furthermore, bureaucratic managers, entire levels of bureaucracy, and even whole institutions may need to be replaced. For example, at the end of World War II, many Allied leaders felt that the Nazi Party was as much to blame for the war and Germany's crimes as Adolph Hitler and thus included the National Socialist Party in the regime purge.

On the other hand, changing too much of the government will negatively affect post-conflict operations. For example, Saddam Hussein had been head of the Iraqi government for 30 years, and it

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Definitions

- **Regime.** A regime is a coherent but not wholly formal combination of individuals, groups, and institutions that exercise power over a national government.

- **Government.** A government is the formal combination of institutions that exercise legal authority over a country. The government is distinct from the regime because of the formal and relatively permanent nature of the institutions.

—Definition provided by Dr. Donald Emmerson, Stanford University.

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would be difficult to find an element of the government that he did not substantially influence. Nevertheless, before the Iraq War, the Iraqi army participated in a number of anti-Saddam coups. In fact, the Iraqi dictator created additional military institutions, such as the Republican Guard, to protect himself from the army. Nevertheless, the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) dissolved the entire Iraqi army with considerable negative impact on the security situation for the coalition forces in Iraq.

The doctrine for post-conflict strategies should provide guidelines for identifying elements of the regime that hinder American and coalition objectives but preserve as much of the government as possible to serve post-conflict objectives.

Principle #3: Formulate a vision of the end state and develop a plan that will accomplish it.

Once a decision is made to use military force against a sovereign state, a new government may need to be established after the conflict. The new government and the civil society over which it will preside represent the end state. The form of the end-state regime must conform to the original U.S. national objectives for changing the regime and must be considered in the earliest operational planning.

This is not to say that U.S. support must commit to building a new regime in every instance, but policymakers must be fully aware of the consequences

of not doing so. A decision to leave the country without placing it on a path to becoming a stable, free, and productive state should be a conscious decision based on American national interests rather than the consequence of poor planning. As a report by the International Development Centre rightly points out:

> Too often in the past the responsibility to rebuild has been insufficiently recognized, the exit of the interveners has been poorly managed, the commitment to help with reconstruction has been inadequate, and countries have found themselves at the end of the day still wrestling with the underlying problems that produced the original intervention action.[15]

For example, the American intervention in Haiti in 1995 is an example of a good end-state vision that lacked the necessary follow-through. The announced end state was a democratic Haiti. President Bill Clinton ordered diplomatic and military operations that replaced the military junta with the popularly elected President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. However, once the appearance of democracy was restored, American forces were pulled out before Haiti completed its democratic transition.[16] Consequently, Haiti is not a democracy today.

The NATO intervention in Kosovo is an example of an operation without an end-state objective. America and its NATO allies forced Serbia to evacuate Kosovo without ever defining what would replace the sovereign government. As a consequence, NATO soldiers still occupy the region, and Kosovo's status is still unresolved seven years later.

Likewise, the plan to reach the end state should define an appropriate role for the military. It should contain a clear vision for shifting from military to civilian control *after* the disease and unrest formula has been accomplished.

Principle #4: Post-conflict operations should be multilateral if possible, including other countries without compromising U.S. national objectives.

For regime change to be permanent, the old regime must lose international credibility and the new regime must gain international recognition. The best way to win that support is to build an international coalition before intervening. To be successful, a multi-country coalition does not need all of the world's countries, or even most countries, to participate. Furthermore, participating in military operations is desired but not required for coalition membership. The overriding imperative is that members of the coalition have clear and complementary objectives.

Since World War II, every American intervention that resulted in regime change was done in a multilateral environment. Even in the apparently rapid decision to invade Grenada, President Ronald Reagan cobbled together an international coalition from the region.

On the other hand, coalition building for the sake of coalition building contributes little to the success of, and may in fact be detrimental to, post-conflict efforts. Countries should be allowed to participate only if their membership does not impede implementation of the disease and unrest formula.

Principle #5: Post-conflict operations should involve many different U.S. agencies and thus require interagency coordination.

Post-conflict operations require more than Department of Defense participation. They will require that multiple U.S. agencies coordinate their activities, especially in the post-conflict phase of the regime change.

Issues will include restoring basic public services such as water, power, waste management, and public safety. Transportation and power generation infrastructure damaged by military operations will need to be rebuilt. Refugees will need to be

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15. International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, "The Responsibility to Protect," International Development Research Centre, December 2001, at *web.idrc.ca/en/ev-9436-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html* (June 2, 2005).

16. James Dobbins, John G. McGinn, Keith Crane, Seth G. Jones, Rollie Lal, Andrew Rathmell, Rachel Swanger, and Anga Timilsina, *America's Role in Nation Building: From Germany to Iraq* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 2003), p. 84, at *www.rand.org/publications/MR/MR1753* (June 2, 2005).

returned to their homes, prisoners of war repatriated, and members of the old regime tried for their crimes when necessary. For the new regime to become self-sufficient, the economy must be restarted and the country put back to work. All of these tasks will require some degree of coalition participation and interagency coordination.

Principle #6: Unity of effort is essential.

By its nature, regime change is a multi-agency operation and usually involves a coalition of other countries as well. Despite the multiplicity of actors, a single agency or headquarters must command the operations. Splitting authority for operations in Iraq between military commanders and a civilian administrator was a mistake and complicated the problems of implementing the disease and unrest formula. In contrast, the post–World War II operations remained under a single command authority, and this decision contributed to their success. Unity of command allowed the occupying forces to learn more quickly from their mistakes and to adapt better to unforeseen circumstances.

In future U.S. operations, the military should remain in charge until the disease and unrest formula has been accomplished. The decision to make the transfer to civilian authority should be made by the President.

Principle #7: Lessons learned need to be documented and implemented.

A sound doctrine requires a review based on experience. The United States has participated in numerous regime changes, but there is no mechanism to compile, analyze, and apply those experiences. Documenting lessons learned and using them to refine organizations and practices is an essential part of building and maintaining adequate capabilities for post-conflict activities.

Documenting lessons learned is important for ongoing operations as well as future missions. Post-conflict operations are inherently unpredictable. Occupying forces must be learning organizations that quickly discover their shortfalls and adapt.

Implementing a Post-Conflict Security Concept

In addition to getting the principles right, the United States needs the right kind of organizations to implement them. The United States simply lacked an adequate organizational structure for the initial occupation of Iraq.

Currently, the Department of State is setting up an Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance to create a core planning capability and a cadre of planners for post-conflict duties. The office will conduct initial planning for operations and then deploy its planners to serve in the field. However, the State Department's initiative, while well intentioned, is inadequate.

Successful post-conflict operations cannot be planned effectively in Foggy Bottom or the Pentagon. Planning and implementation must be done in theater, in concert with the military combatant commands, where planners can gain a first-hand appreciation of the challenges. The current U.S. embassy system provides each ambassador with an interagency "country team," but the ambassador's authority extends only to the borders of the country to which he or she is accredited.

Instead of building another bureaucracy in Washington, the Administration should be building interagency regional teams.[17] Specifically, four changes are needed:

- The skills needed to conduct effective post-conflict tasks must be brought together under regional teams. These skills are available across the American government and include the ability to manage hard and soft power—such as the capacity to destroy the old regime and then restore security, avert or alleviate a humanitarian crisis, and reestablish a legitimate government. To perform all of these functions, the regional teams must be able to work in a joint interagency and multinational environment.

- The armed services need specifically to teach the operational concepts and practices relevant

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17. For one recommendation, see James Jay Carafano, Ph.D., "Missions, Responsibilities, and Geography: Rethinking How the Pentagon Commands the World," Heritage Foundation *Backgrounder* No. 1792, August 26, 2004, at *www.heritage.org/Research/NationalSecurity/bg1792.cfm*.

to post-conflict missions. The services already have advanced schools that instruct in the operational arts at their staff colleges, such as the Marine Corps' School for Advanced War-fighting. The curriculum in these schools should be expanded to include post-conflict missions.

- The combatant commands[18] should be included in the interagency staffs that are responsible for developing post-conflict con-tingency plans.[19] In the event of war, a post-conflict interagency group could 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 planning group and assume command of the occupation force after the conflict.

- The Department of Defense should retain force training and force structure packages appropri-ate to post-conflict tasks. There are three ways to do this: (1) by training and equipping allies to perform these duties, (2) by retraining and reorganizing U.S. combat troops for the task, and (3) by maintaining special U.S. post-con-flict forces. Special post-conflict units could be assembled from existing National Guard and Reserve units, including security, medical, engi-neer, and public affairs commands. Since many responsibilities involved in postwar duties are similar to homeland security missions, these forces could perform double duty.[20]

Conclusion

In Iraq and Afghanistan, the United States has relearned painful lessons on how to win the peace. Institutionalizing these lessons requires establishing a common national strategic concept for occupation operations, one that eschews the clean slate solution in favor of the disease and unrest formula.

The 21st century has not seen the last of war. Regardless of the outcome of the current operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, the United States will no doubt be called upon again to conduct post-con-flict tasks.

Current experiences clearly demonstrate that occupation operations are complex and difficult. If the United States wishes to meet future challenges more effectively, it must address the impediments to providing the right combination of hard and soft power. Innovations in doctrinal concepts, educa-tion, operational practices, and organization could provide the impetus for developing an appropriate post-conflict force for the next war.

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18. The combatant commands are established under the unified command plan, a document that describes the geographic boundaries and functions of the combatant commands charged with conducting U.S. military operations worldwide.

19. For one proposal, see John R. Boullé II, "Operational Planning and Conflict Termination," *Joint Force Quarterly*, Autumn/Winter 2001–2002, pp. 99–102, at *www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/jfq_pubs/1929.pdf* (June 2, 2005).

20. James Jay Carafano, "Shaping the Future of Northern Command," Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments *Back-grounder*, April 29, 2003, p. 12, at *www.csbaonline.org/4Publications/Archive/B.20030429.NORTHCOM/B.20030429.NORTHCOM.pdf* (June 2, 2005).