

# Doing it the Hard Way: US Civil-Military Policies in Iraq and Afghanistan

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## ABSTRACT

No military operation in which the US military has been involved since Viet Nam has achieved the broad levels of discussion, analysis, debate, disagreement and vituperation as the war to eliminate Saddam Hussein and to install a democratic regime in Iraq. The war began in March 2003 with the swift overthrow of Saddam, but it continues to this day with fundamental military tactics and political strategies in a continuing state of redefinition and improvisation. The war was the central issue in the 2004 US national political campaign, and the debate produced much more heat than light while demonstrating that great confusion about the conflict remains within the US body politic. In this discussion of the war, we do not intend to re-examine the allegedly baser motives, errors, miscalculations and original visions of the main political actors that have been the object of dozens, if not hundreds, of books, papers, articles and treatises during the past 18 months. We plan to focus on certain strategic,

operational and tactical decisions that have greatly complicated the execution of the responsibilities of the coalition military forces and their civilian partners on the battlefield. In the course of the discussion, we will note certain other approaches that might have avoided turning Iraq into a failed state, requiring the ongoing heroic attempts to bring it to stability and legitimate governance.

*The Bush administration's strategies in Iraq are failing for many reasons. First, they are being made up as the administration goes along, without benefit of planning, adequate knowledge of the country, or the experience of comparable situations. Second, the administration has been unwilling to sustain a commitment to a particular strategy. But third, the strategies are all based on an idea of an Iraq that does not exist.*

Peter Galbraith, April 2004.

### **THE COLOSSAL STRATEGIC FAILURE TO PLAN**

All conflicts generate their own humanitarian emergencies. The US authors of the second war with Iraq ("Iraqi Freedom") point with pride to the fact that their successful offensive against Saddam Hussein was so swift and resolute ("shock and awe") that the massive internal displacement predicted by some prior to the conflict did not occur. Blessed as this may seem, Iraq was already in a complex humanitarian emergency prior to the arrival of the US-led coalition. According to most studies at the time (as an example, see United Nations, 10 December 2002), there were at least one million internally displaced persons in Iraq, products of Saddam's misrule; in addition there were hundreds of thousands of Iraqi refugees in the Middle East and elsewhere who would be expected to return once Saddam had been thrown out. Most of Iraq's population was living on a monthly ration provided by the government. Many, if not most, experts on regime change in general and Iraq in particular predicted a political vacuum and wide-scale disorder once Saddam disappeared. Prior to the war, although all the policy people were focused on non-existent "weapons of mass destruction" (WMD), no experts appeared to understand just how dilapidated the basic infrastructure of Iraq had become.

In fact, massive humanitarian issues were generated by the conflict, including the total breakdown of law and order, relentless looting and the loss of water, power and communications. Although Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld quipped that wars are "untidy" and assured everyone that "everything was going according to plan," the desperation of the people of Iraq caused by the chaotic period that followed the US intervention proved to be a rallying point for the Ba'athists and "freedom fighters" who wished to quickly erase the notion that the US had a benign purpose in coming to "liberate" the people of Iraq. Instead of a smooth turnover of governance to selected Iraqi exiles and compliant domestic Iraqi personalities, which appeared to be the original plan, the US-led coalition soon found itself in an insurgency fighting enraged Sunni followers of Saddam, religious fanatics of all stripes, nationalists offended by foreign occupation and miscellaneous imported anti-US "freedom fighters" who were pleased to confront US forces on what was essentially friendly Islamic soil. Although the US military has a remarkable war planning capability which usually includes a broad range of possible military outcomes, with many potential branches and sequels, both the battle plan and the political goals for the second Iraq war were driven by

ideologically-inspired political leadership. Despite the obvious inadequacies of its planning, the White House, famously reticent to admitting anything which might be a mistake, acknowledges only that it failed to anticipate “the war after the war” (See Michael Gordon 2004; Cordesman, 2004, *The War after the War*).

One of the most significant results of the early missteps in Iraq was that the country – already in distress from many years of misrule – was reduced to the status of a failed state through the inability of the occupying power to establish and maintain security. The five core state institutions: police, military, civil service, justice and political leadership were either destroyed or dissolved within weeks of the US-led invasion. (See Pauline Baker, Report #1, Executive Summary, *et seq.*). The 25 Iraqis appointed by the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) (see at <http://www.iraqcoalition.org>) to the Interim Governing Council were a majority of exiles who lacked credibility and were accorded little standing by most Iraqis. They were not particularly cohesive, as each pursued personal and family political objectives, and CPA records show that they were rarely consulted. The only indicator, out of the 12 used by Dr. Baker in her three semi-annual failed state summaries, that showed some improvement at the outset of the coalition occupation was in the area of human rights. This judgment, of course, was made prior to the later Abu Ghraib prison revelations. All other core indicators of successful governance point down because, without security, the state rehabilitation process appeared frozen in time (See United States Institute of Peace [USIP] April 2004: “Establishing public order in the aftermath of an international military intervention is ‘job one.’ The success of all other activities hinges on getting this job done...”).

How do the original misleading intelligence about “weapons of mass destruction” and the continuing assertions that the hostilities in Iraq are part of a worldwide anti-terrorist campaign affect the course of events? At the highest level, these claims damage the worldwide credibility of the action. Nearly all countries were shocked at the audacity and wanton cruelty of the destruction of the twin World Towers in New York City and the attack on the Pentagon on 11 September 2001. Their leaders, however, simply did not buy the notion that the secular dictator Saddam Hussein had struck some kind of nefarious cooperative arrangement with the Saudi Islam fundamentalist maniac, Osama bin Ladin. There is wide doubt in the military-driven scenario to bring Iraq to legitimate self-rule.

These original erroneous convictions continue to affect the military strategy in Iraq. As a political analyst, the author believes that the fundamental issue behind the current insurgency is the difficult readjustment from the political dynamics that prevailed during the past several decades in Iraq: those Iraqis who profess to Sunni Islam are a considerable minority (around 20%, excluding the Kurds) in the country; they contained the Shi’a majority, and the Kurds, through harsh rule and full control of the country’s ample oil resources. The answer to the religious-based imbalance of power in Iraq is not simply reversing history and putting the Shi’a in charge. To be true to the democratic implications of “regime change,” there must be instituted some form of checks and balances to ensure the continuity of whatever government is to be installed by the Iraqi Freedom coalition. It must be accepted that the governing formulae to be developed by the Iraqi people is going to look a lot different from those worked out by the forefathers of US democracy. Some very sensible cautions about the differing value systems of the Iraqi are outlined by such Middle East specialists as Amy Hawthorne (see bibliography).

No less confusing is the peculiarly ambiguous nomenclature selected by the US to describe the enemy in Iraq. The explanation that the invasion of Iraq was part of fighting “global terrorism” remains current at the highest levels of US government, often followed with the assertion that terrorists must be “exterminated.” These are words used by commanders in the second Falluja campaign. If we are to rebuild civil society in Iraq, we must make some provision to maintain channels for those people currently opposed to the US to join a post-war political system.

There is also the fact that military tactics used against “terrorists” are going to be different than those employed against “insurgents.” Domestic insurgents may use terrorist tactics, as is certainly true in Iraq, but one must always assume and hope that the insurgents are eventually going to join the political system that is being established. The lack of clarity about the long-term US goals in Iraq, along with the frequent changes of political strategy, is a hardship for the US forces in Iraq. American soldiers are not automatons; they need to know the cause they are risking their lives for. To require them to fight in a sea of strategic ambiguity is to do it the very hardest way.

### **UNCERTAINTY AND IMPROVISATION AT THE OPERATIONAL LEVEL**

The failure of the US Government to plan adequately for the post-war situation is now recognized by most observers. This paper is not intended to rake over those coals that provided so much heat during the recent election period. We will examine the major events which, in our view, could have been handled more wisely and might have avoided the prolonged insurgency that has cost us the lives and health of so many valiant warriors and mortgaged the economic futures of all American families and their children. It may be useful to review some of the decision points that marked the improvised process of recovery and rehabilitation in Iraq:

#### **FIRST FALTERING STEPS**

In the world of peacekeeping, the first 60-90 days of an operation are considered critical because first impressions count, and these impressions will cast the defining image of the ongoing operation. During that time, the intervening force is expected to carry out its responsibilities under the appropriate Security Council mandates and international law decisively and fairly. As already noted, key to these requirements is security; without security, the steps that follow the intervention, including the re-establishment of the core institutions above, will be extremely difficult, especially if the atmosphere turns negative, as it did very quickly in Iraq.

The coalition force was also bound by international humanitarian law and the Laws of Armed Conflict. Although the US Administration at first seemed beguiled by the idea that it could exempt itself from these obligations by declaring that it was a “liberating” rather than an “occupying” force, in the end it was obliged to accept the requirements of the four Geneva Conventions of 1949, to which Iraq, the U.S. and the UK have long been parties. Those conventions protect civilians from indiscriminate attacks and limits warfare in densely

populated areas. (For a good summary of these obligations, see Human Rights Watch, 2003, pp. 7-10). Human Rights Watch takes a very hard view of the use of cluster bomb munitions, noting that the coalition had used these indiscriminate weapons had been used on a number of occasions in urban situations.

After the major initial combats are completed, and a secure environment has been achieved, the critical priorities of the intervening force must include the development of initiatives to divert the energies of the defeated forces and their confused populations from the logic of armed resistance to the logics of community political development and economic recovery. In short, the invading force has to show quickly that there is much more to be gained by participation in the post-war political system than by stubborn and suicidal armed resistance. This message must be communicated by every means possible. Other papers presented at Cornwallis IX (Larry Wentz and Chris Holshek in separate papers) discuss the faulty coalition information policies in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

In Iraq, this should have led to the convocation of local and regional leaders in meetings to discuss the country's future. These meetings would have included Shi'ia, Sunni and Kurdish leaders talking and arguing together. The Afghan *Loya Jirga* was an available model. The technique of the national conference involving all potential political actors, or those people with political aspirations, properly protected and administered, has also seen many useful iterations in Africa and elsewhere. Such a meeting was discussed early in the coalition occupation, but interest dwindled because of the very difficult security situation. Timing is extremely important for convoking such meetings, because, in the wake of successful combat, the outside military forces are predominant, and they must act before local opposition can get organized. The US military certainly has the skilled information and civil affairs resources to carry out such a decisive political-military campaign, but it cannot do so without a plan. And those plans "must begin long before the first shot is fired." (Cancian, 2004, p.32). Already within short months of the occupation, it was clear that "today's generals are devising an exit strategy as they go." (Hoagland, 2003)

In the early weeks of the intervention, there was savage looting throughout Iraq, massive demonstrations against the coalition in Baghdad, and at least two serious incidents in which US forces fired on demonstrators, a sign that troopers were unprepared for their post-war tasks. On top of that, there was ambiguity about civilian-military leadership, with a bizarre change in the administration of the civilian side of the operation. Retired General Jay Garner, whose arrival in Baghdad on 21 April had been delayed for several days because of unsafe conditions in the city, assumed the role of civil administrator. Barely three weeks later, on 12 May, his replacement, L. Paul "Jerry" Bremer, arrived in Baghdad. Bremer's status as subservient to the military command was demonstrated when, on 11 May, the day before Bremer's arrival, General Tommy Franks, commander of the coalition force, announced the dissolution of the Ba'ath party, a political action of great consequence for later efforts to develop a new Iraqi administration. Judging by subsequent second thoughts about that decision and some recriminations, the military command had been unaware that joining the Ba'ath party had been a vital prerequisite for advancement in the Saddam Hussein Iraq.

Less than a week later, the US announced that it would abandon its plan to pass authority to an elected Iraqi interim administration. A new UN resolution was secured on 22 May 2003 which legitimized the coalition occupation of Iraq for those nations that believed that the original United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNHCR) 1141 was ambiguous about authorization to go to war. The new resolution provided for a development fund to replace

the oil-for-food program and provided many of the normal authorizations for a peace operation. The coalition was given the right to appoint its own interim government.

Tensions were growing between the major religious groups. Military commanders were concerned about former military leaders being selected at the local level, and on 28 June, 2003, local selection of leaders was halted. Ayatollah Sistani, the most revered and influential Shia prelate in Iraq, called for early national elections. The US military command, and the CPA under Jerry Bremer, effectively lost the battle for political supremacy before the end of the third month of the occupation. Lacking an overall plan for the first months of the occupation proved very costly. The inauguration of an interim governing council on 13 July 2003, more than three months after the arrival of coalition troops in Baghdad, appeared almost irrelevant to most observers; the main focus was the rising insurgency, which, during the two months after the President's declaration of the end of active hostilities on the USS Abraham Lincoln, had cost the lives of 32 American military personnel.

The bombing of UN Headquarters in Baghdad on 19 August 2003 killed 22 UN employees, including the Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG), Serge Viera de Mello. This highly-respected Brazilian diplomat and UN peacemaker had been considered by many to be the logical successor to UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan. The CPA and the Coalition command was again shown incapable of providing security to the international humanitarian operation. A much-diminished UN staff was again attacked, and on 30 October 2003, both the UN and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) ordered all non-Iraqi staff out of Baghdad. The "sullen mood" of the international humanity surrounding these events is discussed at some length by a legal scholar (Anderson, 2004), who finds an essential incompatibility between the humanitarian desire for total neutrality and its efforts to build a democratic political system. We will discuss this issue when we look at tactical cooperation issues below.

At the end of Ambassador Bremer's 14 months of political authority, when he turned over authority to the Iraqi Interim Government (IIG) early on the morning of 28 June, 2004, and immediately left the country, the CPA still ruled by edict. Bremer's near-stealth departure drew a lot of notice: "The secrecy and brevity of the ceremony were in keeping with the precarious future of the Iraq that Bremer built," (Chandrasekaran, 2004). In fact, as though he was clearing out his inbox, Bremer had issued 100 new regulations covering a wide range of law and governance issues (Otterman, 2004). The most notable ones immunized all foreign military personnel and contractors from Iraqi law. The new interim government under former exile, Ayad Allawi, was seemingly bound to the Bremer regulations until such time that an elected government decided to change. One of the most important regulations for the new Iraqi government pertained to martial law authority. Under this regulation, the Iraqi government could declare a state of emergency and impose curfews, monitor communications and freeze the assets of suspected insurgents (Otterman, *op seq*). However, with the creation of the IIG, the CPA went out of business. In the opinion of another legal scholar, who had worked for a while with the CPA, with the termination of the UN Security Council-sanctioned CPA, all laws and edicts issued by the CPA also expired. (Galbraith, September 2004, pp 3-4).

In the aftermath of the Bremer departure, some of the most harsh criticism of his performance came from military experts, including Anthony Cordesman, holder of the Arleigh A. Burke Chair in Strategy at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in Washington, D.C. Cordesman is incredulous at the facts that the US-led coalition at

first wanted “to restrict the development of Iraqi armed forces to a token force” and “failed to treat the Iraqis as partners in the counterinsurgency effort,” (Cordesman, 20 July 2004) during the first year of the occupation. (Cordesman, 20 July 2004). The US military did not begin to train Iraqi military and police forces until April 2004, at least nine months after the emergence of the armed insurgency.

There is little question that the continuing turf battles between the State Department (DoS) and the Department of Defense (DoD) were critical to the shape of the Iraqi Freedom operation. Ambassador Bremer was nominated and supported by DoD; the lack of relative progress during his long stay may be attributed to the lack of strategic political focus on the part of the Pentagon. The matter of US Government organization was only partially addressed by Secretary of State Powell, when he announced on 5 August 2004 the creation of a new office of Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS) to be the coordinating point for the U.S. Government “to prepare for, plan for, guide and support stabilization and reconstruction assistance...that require the response capabilities of multiple US agencies..” (US Department of State, 2004, worldwide circular message announcing the creation of the office, no date, for further information, go to <http://www.state.gov/s/crs/>) Although it may appear that State won some bureaucratic battle, it will not affect operations in either Iraq or Afghanistan, because these ongoing operations are specifically excluded from the purview of the new State Department office.

### **COMPLEX CRISES WITH THE HUMANITARIAN COMMUNITY**

It is regrettable that US leadership in both the Afghan and Iraqi campaigns has led to very poor relations with some of the most powerful and experienced members of the international humanitarian community.

Civil-military relations in Afghanistan were initially signaled by the widely-distributed photographs of US Special Operations Force (SOF) personnel distributing food and engaging in horse races while wearing Afghan clothing, sometimes interspersed with US military uniform parts. Although this publicity demonstrated the rugged versatility of SOF personnel, it also triggered a storm of criticism from the IO/NGO workers in Afghanistan. The humanitarian community believes that food distribution and medical assistance should be carried out by civilians whenever possible. The fact that the Special Ops personnel perceived that the use of local clothing gave them some added protection from potential enemies who would not notice the Americans out of uniform until they got close enough to be recognized by the Special Forces was irrelevant to non-military critics. In addition, working and playing with Afghans gave the forces familiarity with local customs and provided useful intelligence-gathering opportunities. For these very same reasons, the humanitarian community deduced that they were being brought into greater risk because they could be more easily mistaken for military intelligence collectors.

The strained relations between the US forces and the humanitarian community in Afghanistan became infinitely worse, when, in an interview with the AP news agency on 20 December 2003, General David Barno, the newly-arrived US commander of the 11,000-strong US force in Afghanistan said that the humanitarian community should change its position on being neutral. Predictably, the words kicked up a storm within the humanitarian

community. Action contre la faim (ACF), a French NGO complained about the possible confusion between military and humanitarian roles caused by General Barno's statement. The ICRC restated its historical position that it cannot operate under military protection, "We do not work under military protection, and if we do so, it could endanger our work today and in the future. The WFP public information officer in Baghdad, Maarten Roest, observed that "there are people in the world who do not respect that [neutrality] any more." He suggested that there be a discussion between the military and the IOs about "what kind of protection humanitarian assistance requires." The dilemmas inspired by civil-military competition on the battlefield inspired considerable soul-searching with the humanitarian community (see Hugo Slim 2004, Antonio Donini 2004 and John Tirman 2003/2004, etc).

As for General Barno, the Pentagon jumped in quickly to say that the General's words were "taken out of context." To put his comments into context, General Barno was neither calculating to remove all military protection from the activities of the humanitarian community, nor desirous to punish them for their independent nature. The US had decided to implement a significant switch in strategy to support Provincial Rehabilitation Teams (PRTs) to enable the host nation government, humanitarians and international organizations, under the protection of military forces, to enter territories in which the Taliban and certain other warlords were contesting. US troops planned to set up bases to provide security, reconstruction and aid in the southern and eastern provinces, which were plagued by Taliban attacks. Barno added the move would make those areas safer for aid workers and to pave the way for the June 2004 elections. The PRTs may bear a certain similarity to the ultimately unsuccessful strategic hamlet plan used in Viet Nam, but they have brought needed services into the hinterlands outside Kabul, and, of course, the 2004 presidential elections in Afghanistan were successful.

However, there are even stronger reasons for civil-military antagonism. Seemingly to avoid dealing directly with international agencies and NGOs, the military, in both Afghanistan and Iraq, has hired contractors to perform services that are normally handled by the humanitarian community, such as health, water, sanitation, shelter, women and child care, etc. (This information verified in discussions with a senior member of InterAction, a major US consortium of humanitarian agencies) The rationale in both cases is to alleviate pressures on USAID management services. This tendency, of course, has been increasing with the withdrawal of so many major IO/NGO agencies.

The issue, of course, is that commercial firms have little or no experience in the ways IOs and NGOs do business. The hapless contractors fulfill their contracts by hiring NGOs to perform the required services. Unfortunately, this gives the impression that US firms are profiting from the miseries of Iraqis, and that the war is being exploited for corporate gain. Many reputable US firms are engaged in rehabilitating Iraq; there is nothing underhanded about these contracts. The names, purpose and budgets of both prime and sub-contractors are published on the USAID Iraq operations website.

Nevertheless, Iraq is a very dangerous place to work, and it is certain that the "throughput" costs charged the US Government by each prime contractor are substantial. We can imagine that such arrangements look pretty good from the military perspective. For some contracting officers, hiring NGOs through third parties may seem the "easy way" out. There is no need to negotiate anything with the people actually doing the work. There are no linguistic issues which are left to the US prime contractor. But, in terms of long-term trust

and cooperation, hiring out NGO services is unquestionably the most expensive (and hardest) way of securing the services of experienced international NGOs.

### **CIVIL SOCIETY DEVELOPMENT IN IRAQ.**

“Civil society” is usually described in terms of groups such as civic associations, unions, professional associations, religious groups, local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), parent-teacher associations, and the like, that form independently of formal government support and usually play a constructive role in representing local concerns to the state. The Iraq of Saddam Hussein systematically prevented the formation of independent civil society, and it was generally perceived that this would be one of the first orders of business in developing a democratic Iraq. As of this writing, it remains to be seen whether the US and its coalition partners selected the most effective, or just the easiest, route to democratize the peoples of Iraq.

By mid-2004, there were a number of initiatives associated with the development of civil society involved in rebuilding Iraq (see USIP, July 2004). Among these groups were:

1. The Research Triangle Institute (RTI) was provided \$155 million by USAID to implement its local governance project (LGP). The RTI intended to work in all 18 Iraqi governates, seeking to empower local governments to provide “effective and efficient basic public services,” to encourage transparency for the public, and to enable civil society organizations (CSOs).
2. USAID Community Action Program (CAP). Provided with a \$150 million budget, the CAP focuses on intercommunal projects, infrastructural rehabilitation and women’s development.
3. The USAID/Civil Society initiative, run by a contractor to be selected in June 2004, is primarily intended to facilitate a “professional and independent media” in Iraq. It will also establish five “Civil Society Resource Centers.”
4. CPA/Governance and Partners provides support to many local Iraqi civil society organizations. The Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), which went out of business after the departure of Paul Bremer on 28 June, was responsible for developing indigenous CSOs and administering the Civil Society Resource Centers. We assume that the CPA role has been taken over by the US Embassy.
5. The USAID Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) has been the largest donor, with a two-year \$190 million budget. Designed to focus on small projects that might not be noticed by the big-budget organizations, it has established dozens of small grants and in-kind contributions.
6. Other US Government agencies involved in civil society development include the State Department Office of International Women’s Issues: Women’s Democracy Initiative (WDI); The National Endowment for Democracy

(NED), and The US Institute of Peace. The UK Department for International Development (DFID) was to establish a Political Participation Fund in early 2004.

7. A considerable number of international NGOs have worked in Iraq in operations that would nurture the establishment of civil society. To assist in the coordination of these groups, they established an NGO Coordination Committee in Iraq (NCCI), which is based in Baghdad.

Unfortunately, the many years of Saddam-inspired repression, the extensive looting that followed Saddam's downfall, the ravages of urban conflict, and continued security issues that have inhibited construction in wide areas add up to a general absence of civil society infrastructure. Most of the hundreds of millions of dollars that have been allocated to civil society development in Iraq have been used to build offices, purchase supplies, etc., with a comparatively small portion invested in the development of personnel to staff the civil societal institutions.

In an insightful survey of the divergent attitudes towards the role of civil society in the Islamic world (Hawthorne), questions are raised about the potential for the development of civil society in Iraq. The author notes the various positive points in the effort to transform Islamic regimes through the facilitation of civil society, but she suggests caution, asserting that "civil society is not the magic missing piece of the Arab democracy puzzle. (Hawthorne, pp. 4-5). In most of the Arab world, the primary objective of the plethora of groups, associations and movements – "the most active and widespread form of associative life," is "the upholding and propagation of the faith of Islam." The author notes the broad disparities in the Islamic world includes, on one side the states of Oman, Libya, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria and the United Arab Emirates which prohibit the establishment independent citizen organizations, whereas Kuwait, Bahrain, Tunisia, Egypt, Algeria, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco and the Palestinian territories which have a history of elected parliaments and opposition parties and with active, though limited, examples of non-governmental Islamic societies, professional societies, clubs, etc. (Hawthorne, p. 8).

Western military and civilian practitioners in Iraq are obliged to accept that much civil society development is going to have a very strong, if not predominant, Islamic religious character. We must accept the fact that this is going to look odd to many Americans and will worry some of our European and Israeli allies. This interface may, if fact, broaden the perspective of some Islamic groups and make them more amenable to our values. However, there will be some groups that not make that leap of imagination. In nation-building, there are no guarantees.

## **COMPREHENSIVE POLITICAL-MILITARY PLANNING**

*Operation Iraqi Freedom* has achieved many successes in its operations. Many of these successes are well-illustrated in the *Historic Overview* document referenced under the CPA in the bibliography. Despite the justifiable pride that the brave and intrepid members of the CPA may feel for their actions to alleviate the suffering of the Iraqi people, there is a certain accidental quality to those accomplishments. The work of regular and reserve military forces was largely dependent upon the individual skills and imagination of each service member.

Fortunately, the US-led coalition had highly-experienced civilian leaders such as Andrew Natsios, director of USAID, and other career and non-career officials from a wide number of other US government agencies to contribute their energies and resourcefulness to the many successes of the operation. Their efforts would have been much more efficient and easier had there been better overall direction.

In an effort to bring together the various elements of a successful plan, shown in Appendix A, there is a recent speech by Arthur “Gene” Dewey, Assistant Secretary of State for Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM). Dewey is one of the pioneers in comprehensive civil/military mission planning. His speech, delivered recently to a high-level seminar in Beijing, China, is entitled “Humanitarian/ Reconstruction Coordination in Peace Support Operations.” As someone who was deeply involved in humanitarian coordination during the current war in Iraq, his analysis warrants special attention.

He observes that “effective peace support and post-conflict stability operations require an incredible amount of cooperation and coordination,” but he cautions this normally breaks down in practice. He attributes the failures to very different cultures between the highly-disciplined military and the less disciplined and less integrated civilian components and to the very poor communications that frequently prevail between the two groups. Based on his experience, Dewey suggests that there are several major elements necessary for building successful coordination:

- Although both sides are good at campaign planning within their narrow areas of specialization, there are very few people with experience in planning across those fields. He suggests a simple five-point approach to developing a common civil-military approach.
- Dewey suggests that a wide-scale assessment be made of the desired impact of humanitarian actions on the battlefield. This will require solid judgments on the political issues involved in the disaster.
- The military and civilian actors must be prepared to compare notes prior to undertaking their various interventions. Dewey cites some positive examples of such discussions.
- The absolute need for frank and insightful reviews of collaboration experiences. “Lessons identified” must include work to signal what worked and what did not.

As the author noted in his essay “Iraq and the Shifting Sands of US Intervention Policy,” for Cornwallis XIII, (Clarke, 2004), Assistant Secretary Dewey attempted to facilitate such civil-military coordination and cooperation on the eve of Operation “Iraqi Freedom” by clarifying certain specific and implied tasks. Unfortunately, the various points seemingly agreed upon during his prewar pilgrimage between Cyprus, Kuwait, Doha and Geneva disappeared in the heat of the conflict. Instead, most military participants in the humanitarian side of the war operated pretty much in a vacuum, using their best judgments. This is personally satisfying, but it is not the most efficient way of running a war.

## CONCLUSION

We believe that it is imperative that the US Government, especially the integrated military services, design and implement an integrated planning format that will match military objectives with the resources required to handle the inevitable dislocations and deprivations that afflict non-combatants in all military conflicts.

## APPENDIX A

### **Humanitarian/Reconstruction Coordination in Peace Support Operations**

Arthur E. Dewey

Assistant Secretary for Population,  
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Presentation at the 15th International Challenges Seminar  
Beijing, China

November 4, 2004

(As Prepared)

I would like to thank the Peacekeeping Affairs Office of the Ministry of National Defense, and China Institute for International Strategic Studies, for hosting this important Seminar. I also salute the Challenges Project for its continued leadership in the field of peace support operations. I am pleased and honored to continue to be a participant in this landmark effort.

We all recognize that effective peace support and post-conflict stability operations require an incredible amount of cooperation and coordination. Yet in practice, both cooperation and coordination too often break down. Why does this occur? I believe there are two principal reasons:

First, there is a significant mismatch between the disciplined integration of the military forces on the one hand, and the less disciplined, less integrated civilian political/humanitarian/reconstruction component on the other hand.

Second, the linkages and communication between these highly asymmetrical military and civilian components too often are hostage to personalities and ad hoc coordination arrangements.

Drawing on the experience of a wide range of peace support, and transition support, operations world wide, I believe there are five major elements of successful collaboration.

First, we have to do better comprehensive campaign planning. The military is skilled at campaign planning, but neither the military professionals, nor civilian professionals, is very good at comprehensive campaign planning. Each can do planning within their own narrow lane; but exceedingly few in either camp can work across the lanes to do comprehensive civil-military planning.

Such planning means developing a common civil-military picture of:

The situation, both from the standpoint of a clear understanding of the threat, and familiarity with the total civilian and military assets needed to meet that threat;

The overall civil-military mission; (developing the outlines of what is achievable is vital here. Top-level civilian and military planners need to get together early to work through what would be a realistic mission, and what it would cost.)

The concept of operations needed to reach the desired civil-military end-state;

What the military component could be expected to do support the main civilian effort in helping that effort achieve its political, humanitarian and reconstruction objectives. This needs to be spelled out in a range of specified and implied tasks that military forces might be called upon to provide;

Description of how cooperation and coordination will be accomplished.

Getting two very different planning cultures together to draft a timely workable comprehensive campaign plan is the most difficult--but also the most important--element of a peace support operation. Getting this to happen in a multinational, multilateral UN peace support operation is a monumental undertaking, but one that must be attempted.

In the U.S. we have yet to succeed of producing such a functional plan in a timely manner. Getting the interagency team together at the top to do this has proved too difficult. I have some ideas on how both national, and United Nations, planners could work around this huge obstacle. I hope this Seminar will give us an opportunity to explore these ideas.

The second principle is the need to assess in advance the humanitarian impact; the unintended humanitarian consequences, of actions political leaders take, or fail to take, in complex contingencies such as peace support operations. In the Balkans during the 1990s, a series of acute humanitarian emergencies, including ethnic cleansing, arguably could have been avoided or mitigated, had such an assessment of humanitarian consequences been undertaken. The two classic tragedies where humanitarian impact was overlooked were the slowness to respond to genocide in Rwanda, and the very late response to the million-person march of Hutus from Rwanda to Eastern Zaire in mid-1994. With consideration of, and planning for, the humanitarian impact in each of these cases, tens of thousands of lives could have been saved.

The third principle is the need for the civilian and military planners to huddle together well before the launch of a civil-military operation. The purpose of this "huddling," or getting together in an interactive, participatory workshop, or conducting a "rock drill" as military planners like to call it, is to accomplish several absolutely essential tasks. These include identification of critical gaps in the plan; to point to those gaps that could be "show-stoppers"

if not fixed; to answer any lingering doubts and questions in the minds of the key participants; and to reduce to the extent possible, surprises and unintended consequences in the plan of operations.

The best, but unfortunately the only really good example of such a huddle, was the two-week long participatory workshop that United Nations Special Representative Martti Ahtisaari conducted for the UN Transition Assistance Group in Namibia in 1989. Ahtisaari attended every session of this pre-deployment workshop. He used it to establish communication, to generate teamwork and loyalty, and to instill an esprit de corps that afforded the best possible opportunity for this peace support operation to succeed. To this day, the UN Transition Assistance Group for Namibia is considered one of the finest hours of the United Nations. Ask Martti Ahtisaari how this happened, and he would point to this pre-deployment get-together as one of the major ingredients of success.

A sub-principle to the conduct of a pre-deployment “huddle” of the key operational players is to find a way to determine the key tasks where the civilian humanitarian and reconstruction players need the help of the military.

Then these requirements need to be coordinated with the military planners. The UN agency best placed to do this is the UN Office of Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. What is needed is a list from the key UN agencies and other international organizations involved in an operation, plus the NGOs, the range of specified and implied tasks that military forces might be called upon to provide in support of the main civilian humanitarian and reconstruction effort. Then OCHA should go over this list in detail with the military planners, both at DPKO, and with planners already deployed forward in the field. The purpose of this exercise is to determine which ones the military can, and will do; which ones the military hasn't planned for but can and will, and which ones the military acknowledges need to be done, but the military will not do them for a variety of reasons. (As an example, the most troubling gaps usually identified in such an exercise are the absence of any clearly identified responsibility for administration of justice, for civil policing, and for assuring the secure space in which the civilian humanitarian and reconstruction players can work.

Finally, the fourth principle of effective civil-military coordination and cooperation is to conduct a brutally honest after action review. It is too arrogant to call this a lessons-learned exercise, since the record of learning these lessons is not very impressive. But it is vitally important to identify what went right and wrong and why, how to fix what went wrong, and how to build on what went right.

Moving now from the theoretical to the practical, let me touch on how some of these ideas concerning cooperation played out in Afghanistan.

Good cooperation on many levels has been essential to success in post-conflict Afghanistan. The Program Secretariat and follow-on Consultative Groups really embody the large-scale cooperation we achieved between UN organizations, the U.S. and other donors, and the new Afghan government. This mechanism allowed for a smooth transfer of planning, programming, and budgeting of public services from international organizations to Afghan ministries.

The development of the Provincial Reconstruction Teams, PRTs, provided much-needed field coordination among foreign and Afghan civilian and military officials, diplomats, and humanitarian workers. A well-planned system of checks-and-balances ensures that the interests and roles of all these various groups are respected. For example, PRTs approve reconstruction projects only with the approval of provincial authorities. PRTs also assist in coordination between local authorities and the central government in Kabul, raising the profile of the central government throughout the country and ensuring that national and local officials are on the same page. At a higher organizational level, the PRTs represent international coordination, with the U.S., Germany, the U.K. and others sponsoring teams in key locations out in the countryside.

I believe that in Afghanistan the international community can point to a success story in terms of coordination and cooperation. Several key ingredients made this cooperation and coordination work. These included:

Posting of liaison persons from the key United Nations agencies involved in humanitarian and reconstruction work at the major military headquarters. (This kind of coordination was vital to instructing the military planners on the skills and competencies of these agencies. It also showed these planners and senior staff the ways the military could help these agencies while staying out of their way and letting them do their work.)

Putting UN agencies out front to provide for public services and perform many of the functions of governance while new and very weak national ministries were trying to get on their feet and do this job for themselves.

Insure coordination and cooperation between the UN agencies and their corresponding Afghan ministries through the ingenious Program Secretariat twinning model.

Establish sectoral task forces that include Civil Affairs military personnel.

These task forces formed around the sectors of Water, Food, Medical, Security, and Winterization. The military brought a useful discipline and organizational skills to these task forces. And the coordination and cooperation made possible by these task forces kept the civilian and military components of the operation informed of each others work, and help minimize (though not eliminate completely) the blurring of lines between military and civilian humanitarian actors.

In many ways the Afghan example demonstrated the future of a peace and transition support operation, and shows that it can work. It also showed the things that did not work. For example, it revealed the serious consequences of inadequate planning for public safety out in the countryside. It revealed the weaknesses of assigning responsibility for oversight of such key sectors as Justice, Police Training, and Poppy eradication to individual donor countries rather than equipping and funding international organizations to do these tasks. And finally, the weakest link was the lack of a Human Rights program to provide a Neighborhood Watch over the abuses of warlords, militia commanders, and the oppression of majorities over their minority neighbors throughout the country.

The lesson identified in Afghanistan and every other civil-military operation is that coordination and cooperation work best when the civilian component is tightly integrated as was possible through the twinning of UN agencies with Afghan ministries. The military

component need not, and normally should not, be integrated with the civilian component, but must provide the harmonious and interoperable support needed to make the civilian effort succeed. It is this interoperability that permits the substitution of the military's version of Command and Control with the civilian-friendly term of Cooperation and Coordination.

[End] Released on November 9, 2004.

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