

## Keynote Presentation: Policy and Strategies for International Intervention

Leonard R. Hawley

Former Deputy Assistant Secretary  
Department of State, Washington, D.C., U.S.A.  
email: lenhawley@earthlink.net

*Leonard R. Hawley served on the National 9/11 Commission investigating U.S. counterterrorism policy from 1998 through the attacks of September 11, 2001. As a Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, he directed U.S. engagement and political-military preparations for multilateral interventions to regional crises. Mr. Hawley has served at the White House on the National Security Council staff as Director for Multilateral Affairs where he coordinated U.S. political-military planning for multilateral complex contingencies. Prior to serving at the White House, Mr. Hawley acted as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Peacekeeping and Humanitarian Assistance within the Office of the Secretary of Defense. Mr. Hawley has worked on staff in both the U.S. Senate and the House of Representatives. Mr. Hawley co-edited a book about strategies for post-conflict interventions entitled *The Quest for Viable Peace: Strategies for International Intervention and Conflict Transformation*, published by the United States Institute of Peace, Washington, DC in May 2005.*

**Comment:** The ideas in this paper were presented on 2 April 2007 by the author as the Keynote Address to the Cornwallis XII Workshop at the Pearson Peacekeeping Center in Nova Scotia, Canada. The address and this paper draw from the author's contributions to the book, *The Quest for Viable Peace: International Intervention and Strategies for Conflict Transformation*, edited by Jock Covey, Michael J. Dziedzic and Leonard R. Hawley, and published by the U.S. Institute of Peace in May 2005.

### INTRODUCTION

This paper addresses the question: How can we do better with interventions in war-torn societies? Failing states such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Haiti, or Sudan have become the defining challenge of our era. International peace and security have been repeatedly disrupted since the end of the Cold War by the disintegration of troubled states. Securing our future depends on building responsible governance and peaceful societies within these states to contain regional disorder, international insecurity, transnational terrorism, and humanitarian calamity.

The success of an international intervention lies in implementing a comprehensive approach to transform conflict that involves four essential strategies for creating stability and peace in a post-conflict setting. The aim of this approach is to create a peace within the first three years that is capable of life – *a viable peace* – in the wake of violent conflict. This new concept has been conceived by practitioners experienced in the art of peace implementation in the Balkans, Africa, Central Asia, and the Caribbean. The strategies needed to build a

viable peace were designed to be transportable to future crises and implemented by other practitioners who work in various troubled corners of the globe.

## POLICY CONTEXT

Since the end of the Cold War in 1989, the foreign policy and national security environment has continued to place new demands on the international community. Globalization has brought far-away conflicts to the doorsteps of modern, first-world nations. As *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman suggested, “the lesson of 9-11 is that if we don’t visit bad neighborhoods around the world, they will surely visit us.” This is because local conflicts in distant places can have unwelcome consequences for the United States and its allies, friends and neighbors. The adverse consequences arising from distant conflicts in failed states may:

- Undermine regional stability and development progress.
- Weaken alliance collaboration and expansion.
- Incite fanaticism and export terrorism to homelands elsewhere.
- Reverse major power cooperation on security matters.
- Threaten citizens and facilities abroad.
- Radicalize a region and undermine friendly moderate governments.
- Jeopardize progress in democratization in a region.
- Empower corrupt governments and strengthen organized criminal syndicates.
- Displace whole population groups.
- Divert scarce economic resources and diminish economic growth.
- Promote illegal weapons sales and support mercenary operations.
- Perpetrate human rights abuses and atrocities.

These dangers have profound implications for nations that cherish international peace and security, such as the United States. One is that American leadership will be regularly tested as friendly nations look to the United States, often as a permanent member of the Security Council, for superpower direction in dealing with these dangers.

Furthermore, civilian and military response capabilities within the international community to mount an intervention have serious limitations. These limited capabilities will likely continue to diminish in the coming years despite the best efforts of the United Nations, among others. Policymakers and intervention planners are faced with an ever-decreasing reserve of political will, competent expeditionary military forces, reliable material and equipment, responsive deployable police forces, competent civilian experts and technicians, and adequate funding resources. The upshot of this reality of diminishing capacity is that

there is no slack in the system. Intervention planners are pressured to utilize limited national and multilateral capabilities for the greatest effect on the protagonists in a crisis in order to bring about peace and security.

### **THE BIG PICTURE**

When a crisis erupts on the international scene, the focus of urgent attention is on rapidly averting human suffering and stopping hostilities. A typical response usually demands a massive international intervention calling for thousands of troops, tons of needed relief supplies, hundreds of police officers, and a host of other “first responders.” Their activities have to be supported by hundreds of millions of dollars, allocated quickly in the first months alone.

Such a massive effort cannot be sustained indefinitely. The harsh reality is that the political will of international contributors will likely fade over time, and an expensive, interminable mission will soon lose support. Indeed, once military forces are deployed and stability is imposed, considerable talk soon emerges about exit strategies—which has the deleterious effect of undermining a fragile peace before it begins to take root locally. Because interventions are usually promoted as temporary, short-lived intrusions to end a crisis, participating governments usually want to exit soon after the compelling need dissipates.

This reality creates considerable pressure on an international mission to make progress early. The mission’s leaders, both civilian and military, must “manage down” the local conflict as rapidly as possible to a less-costly, more manageable level that is sustainable over time. Progress has to be achieved early, but time can run out. Getting to a peace that is viable in a war-torn society should be the ultimate near-term objective of an intervention so that it can be sustained by the international community in the future.

### **THE LOCAL PICTURE**

The local picture reveals a contrasting view—there are intense pressures to prolong conflict. War-torn societies have lost practices for dealing with their internal political confrontations by any means other than fighting. State institutions are failing, weak or ignored. Warring factions are prepared to continue fighting because their extreme wartime objectives are still in play—they will use the peace process to advance their war aims.

The upshot is that fighting will continue. The protagonists of this continuing conflict are often those whose entrenched power is threatened by the peace process. Rivals flourish within their supporting ethnic communities as they pursue their zero-sum war aims against other ethnic groups, despite the efforts of the international mission. Obstructionists oppose the peace process, and they rely on violence, intimidation, and illicit sources of revenue to sustain their power and influence.

Amidst this evolving state of civil war, the international military and civilian mission is expected to discharge unprecedented responsibilities for security, stability, relief, prosperity

and governance over the territory. This requires the simultaneous capacity to make peace, impose peace, and build peace. How can we think about prevailing in this ordeal?

### A USEFUL DISTINCTION

In searching for solutions, it is helpful first to understand the distinction between *transition* and *transformation*, two terms used much too loosely by many. *Transition* applies to what we do – in 2004, for example, the international military mission in Iraq transitioned from a “military occupation” to a “military assistance” mission. An international mission often makes phased evolutions, using a common formulation, in its peace operation from peace enforcement to peacekeeping to peace-building, usually downsizing to a less intrusive, less coercive role in settlement implementation as stability and local capacity grows. Phrases such as “hand-off to a follow-on mission” or “exit strategy” are applicable to *transition* activities.

On the other hand, *transformation* applies to what the locals do and achieve – the warring factions make progress (or not) from armed hostilities to peaceful debate and legitimate action when addressing their disputes. The peace process enables leading local figures to *transform* their war-torn society by adopting peaceful practices for managing their internal affairs. Phrases such as “social change” or “desired end state” are applicable to transformation activities.

This distinction leads to a central imperative – *transformation drives transition*. What the locals achieve in *transforming* conflict from war to peace drives whether the international mission can *transition* to the next phase of the peace implementation process. Simply put, achieving the desired interim end state sets the local conditions for a hand-off and foreshadows an eventual exit for the international peace implementation mission. Projections about benchmarks in the *transformation* process set the markers for making decisions about our *transition*.

### THE STRATEGY OF CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

Given that war-hardened power structures often obstruct and derail a peace process, successful peace implementation calls for changing local power structures that exercise ruthless political power, armed extortion and military coercion, lawless rule and corruption, and illegal economic predation and trafficking. Therefore, the comprehensive approach requires a transformation of hard-bitten power in war-torn societies to achieve a *viable peace* – a peace capable of life – in about three years time.

As shown below in the so-called “X – Chart” (Figure 1), once the declining strength of war-hardened power structures is balanced by the growing power of legitimate institutions, a viable peace can emerge. When peace implementation fails, the power of obstructionists is never brought down far enough, or at the same time, newly-formed legitimate institutions and processes are never built strong enough to prevail.

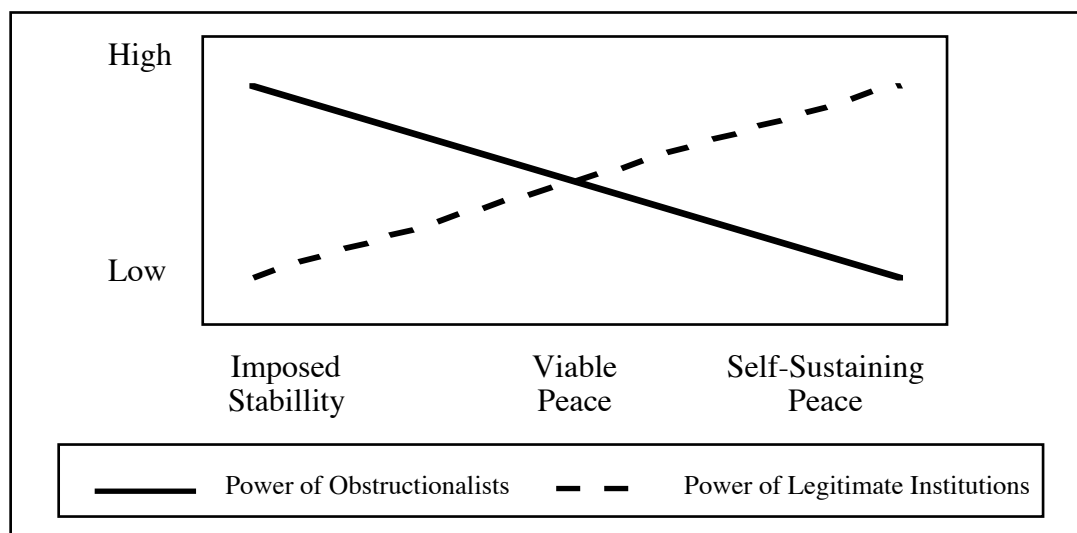


Figure 1: Viable Peace: A Decisive Turning Point.

The strategic aim of an international mission in the first years has to be viable peace. A new idea in peace implementation, viable peace is defined as the decisive turning point where the power of forces seeking to obstruct the peace process has been marginalized and brought under control of the legitimate capacity of domestic institutions to sustain that process.

Understanding the desired conditions conducive for viable peace is essential to good strategy-making. Politically, viable peace emerges when the parties accept that the competition for power should be channeled into participatory processes where confrontations are addressed peacefully. On the security side, militant extremists have lost popular support and are in defeat. For rule of law to begin to emerge, the continuum of the intelligence-to-incarceration continuum has to reside with responsible, legitimate local officials. And finally on the economic front, when the local political economy is predominately market-based where revenue from illicit sources does not determine who governs and how, viable peace can flourish.

A key lesson of recent peace implementation efforts is that the unified direction of the international mission is central to achieving progress in peace implementation. When the civilian and military leaders of an international mission work together to establish *the primacy of the peace process*, and employ *four interlocking strategies* to transform local power in ways that leads to a desirable interim end state in the local area, a viable peace can emerge.

Viable peace is not an end unto itself. In the near term with the growth of legitimate institutions led by moderate, respectable leaders, viable peace also implies a reasonable assurance that over time a self-sustaining peace will eventually emerge with continued international oversight. Once the transformation of power is moving ahead, the international community can make a transition to a less intrusive posture, but continuing a long-term, but less costly form of international management. This sensible approach, rather than one of abandonment and exit, is required for viable peace to eventually become self-sustaining.

Summing up, these following points capture what it takes to achieve a transformation of power in post-war situations leading to viable peace. As a blueprint, these points serve as the logical foundation for strategy-making:

1. Achieving a viable peace in about three years time is all about transformation of conflict in a divided society.
2. Real transformation alters the existing war-hardened power structures (otherwise it's not transformation). The goal is to bring along local leaders willing to compromise through a peace process.
3. The primacy of the peace process guides and focuses a comprehensive civilian and military approach to transform power.
4. Four strategies, crafted as part of the peace process, really do matter in transforming power in war-torn societies:
  - Political: moderate disputes by channeling the competition for power into acceptable, non-violent legitimate means as part of the peace process;
  - Security: establish a secure environment by neutralizing militant extremists who use violence to oppose and derail the peace process;
  - Rule-of-Law: instill a prevailing respect for the rule of law by developing institutional capacity and safeguards for the rule of law and justice; and
  - Political-Economic: displace the existing criminalized political economy with a gainful, legitimate and formal political economy.
5. These four strategies are interconnected, and unless they are interwoven, the peace process will likely not be successful in achieving a viable peace.
6. The top civilian and military leaders of the mission, as custodians of the peace process, are the decisive actors in empowering the mission in implementing these four strategies as a unified civilian and military effort.

### **A GENUINE PARTNERSHIP**

An international intervention is always an ad hoc expeditionary formation. Various participants need to be brought together from afar into a formidable construct before the intervention deploys into the country ravaged by war. Intervention planners need to design a capable international mission to lead this diverse group of international actors.

The overarching design issue at the outset is deciding upon international sponsorship for the intervention—both civilian and military. Given the very difficult conditions typical of war-torn societies as well as the dangers to a transformation effort, primary consideration

should be given to a model that brings together a civilian “UN Interim Authority” coupled with a green-helmet military “MNF” authorized under an *empowering UN Security Council mandate* to achieve viable peace.

Assuming that a UN-MNF lash-up is the planned configuration for an intervention to guide a transformation of power, there are three critical issues in designing a capable international mission to implement a peace process. They are:

1. A Genuine Partnership: The fundamental design principle is to create a *genuine partnership* between the UN Interim Authority and the MNF military command. This tight partnership has to be embraced by a consensus international policy, the attitude of UN officials and MNF commanders, the mission’s public posture, and daily collaboration on activities within the civilian and military operation.
2. Unified Political Direction: The highest international civilian official in the country, the Special Representative of the Secretary General, and head of the international civilian mission must be the single *political director giving unified political direction* to both the military and civilian components of the intervention. Unified direction ensures the primacy of the peace process governs all aspects of mission. Although the MNF commander should continue to receive military commands from higher military authority, political direction regarding the implementation of the peace process must come from the civilian SRSG who serves as custodian of the peace process.
3. Joint Civil-Military Planning Structure: Because intrusive military security operations can have a dramatic impact on other civilian transformation efforts within the intervention, a *joint planning structure* that merges military and civilian planners should be established to work closely on sensitive planning for forthcoming activities across all lines of effort. This special planning structure brings together planners of the military commander and the civilian director of operations to ensure effective civil-military integration in preparing multi-dimensional campaign plans.

## MOBILIZING THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

A major planning requirement is to develop a strategy to mobilize the capabilities of the international community to conduct the intervention with an expected duration of some three to five years. This is a very hard problem because many governments are unwilling or unable to make such a long, comprehensive commitment. Diplomatic engagement by the leaders of the intervention is key to winning concrete commitments to participate.

The reality today is that the pool of available civilian and military response capabilities to mount an intervention is seriously limited. Worse still, these limited capabilities will likely to continue to diminish in the coming years. Intervention planners are faced with the reality is that there is no idle capacity waiting to be deployed, and they are pressured to utilize limited national and multilateral capabilities for the greatest effect in the war-torn society in order to achieve viable peace.

*An international intervention requires several coalitions.* Some of these are largely multinational in composition, while others are mostly multilateral. A military coalition, for example, is usually an ad hoc multinational organization. Other coalitions of an intervention are considerably different. In planning for Kosovo, for example, the following coalitions were needed to achieve viable peace:

- A political coalition, the Contact Group (led by France).
- A military coalition, KFOR (led by the UK in NATO).
- A relief coalition (led by UNHCR).
- A rule-of-law coalition (led by the UN DPKO).
- A democratization and institution-building coalition (led by the OSCE).
- A reconstruction and development coalition (led by the EU).
- A human rights coalition (led by the War Crimes Tribunal).
- A donor coalition (led by the G8).

The political and structural foundations of each one of these different coalitions have to be set in place during the planning process in order for the intervention to succeed. Each coalition needs its own structure, organizational leadership, group of participants, and operating parameters.

## CONCLUSION

The argument presented in this paper has many implications for intervention planners and practitioners working in international missions. Getting to viable peace in about three years time requires:

- An “empowering UNSC mandate” backed by key Member States.
- Influential mission leaders to give focused political direction to maintain the “primacy of the peace process” as obstructionists seek to derail progress.
- A “genuine partnership” among the top civilian and military leaders to craft and implement a “comprehensive mission approach” through a “joint planning structure.”
- Early implementation of all “four interlocking strategies” – political, security, rule-of-law, and political-economic – to jumpstart “conflict transformation” at the outset.
- Several “ad hoc coalitions” to get the job done in all lines for effort.

Finally, it should not be overlooked that in addition to these policy and strategy initiatives, mission success requires a lot of hard work and persistence.