

**IMPLEMENTING U.S. SECURITY STRATEGY IN THE 21ST CENTURY:
A THREE-PART EXAMINATION OF THE EVOLVING ROLE OF THE MILITARY
IN AMERICAN FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICY**

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ABSTRACT

ARTHUR GIBB, III: Implementing U.S. Security Strategy in the 21st Century:
A Three-Part Examination of the Evolving Role of the Military in American Foreign and
Security Policy
(Under the direction of Mark Crescenzi)

This study is a three-part examination of the evolving role of the military and related civilian foreign policy instruments in U.S. foreign policy since 1990.

The first article is a quantitative analysis of the effectiveness of U.S. security assistance at improving the security of recipient nations. I argue that security is a function of the capacity of government security institutions and the legitimacy of the government in the eyes of its citizens, and that U.S. security assistance programs are designed to enhance one or both of these dimensions of security. My results demonstrate that U.S. security assistance is effective at increasing not only military capacity, but also stability and regime legitimacy. However, they also raise the possibility that improved coercive capacity may be used heavily-handedly or cause opposition groups to perceive their relative power as diminishing, causing an increase in small-scale opposition violence.

The second article attempts to answer the charge that U.S. foreign policy has become “militarized” over the last 20 years, and particularly since 2001. I argue that the increasingly central role played by the military represents not a militarization of U.S. policy but a failure of existing policy institutions to meet the demands of a rapidly changing security environment. The civilian instruments of U.S. foreign policy were inadequate to the state-building tasks that emerged in the 1990s and completely overwhelmed by reconstruction

efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq. As a result, policy makers have increasingly turned to the military to undertake these large-scale stabilization and reconstruction operations.

Finally, I present a case study of the use of Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) in Afghanistan to lead the American and coalition stabilization effort. Examining the evolution of the PRTs in Afghanistan reveals that they failed to achieve their three-fold mission of improving security, governance, and development for three principle reasons. I analyze each of the three mission areas with respect to how they were affected by these three factors, and how the PRTs in some cases overcame them. I close with a number of proposed initiatives that will help to address these factors, in anticipation of future stabilization operations.

Dedication

Today and every day, on every continent across the globe, the men and women of the U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps carry out the policies of the United States, in the service of the American people. They do so in war and peace, at home and afar, and often times at extreme risk to their own life and liberty. This dissertation is dedicated to them, and to their families, who love and support them, and who miss them in their absence.

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List of Abbreviations

ADT	Agribusiness Development Team
ANA	Afghan National Army
ANDS	Afghan National Development Strategy
ANP	Afghan National Police
ANSF	Afghan National Security Forces
AOR	Area of Responsibility
BPC	Building Partner Capacity
CAS	Close Air Support
CAT	Civil Affairs Team
CCIF	Combatant Commander Initiative Fund
CCO	Complex Contingency Operations
CERP	Commanders' Emergency Relief Fund
CORDS	Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support
CRC	Civilian response Corps
CSI	Civilian Stabilization Initiative
COIN	Counterinsurgency
CSO	Conflict and Stabilization Operations (Bureau of)
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration
DOD	Department of Defense
ESF	Economic Support Fund
FAA61	Foreign Affairs Act of 1961
FAR	Federal Acquisition Manual
FMF	Foreign Military Finance
FMR	Financial Management Regulations
FY	Fiscal year
HIG	Hezb-e-Islami Gulbuddin

ICAF	Interagency Conflict Assessment Framework
IDLG	Independent Directorate of Local Governance
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
IMET	International Military Education and Training
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
LDC	Less Developed Country
MEPV	Major Episodes of Political Violence
MOI	Ministry of the Interior
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDAA	National defense Authorization Act
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NSC	National Security Council
NSPD	National Security Policy Directive
NSS	National Security Strategy
OCO	Overseas Contingency Operations
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OHDACA	Overseas Humanitarian Disaster and Civic Aid
OLS	Ordinary Least Squares
PCC	Policy Coordination Committee
PDC	Provincial Development Committee
PDD	Presidential Decision Directive
PDP	Provincial Development Plan
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team
PSSI	Prague Security Studies Institute
QDDR	Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review
QDR	Quadrennial Defense Review
QIP	Quick Impact Program

S&R	Stabilization and Reconstruction
S/CRS	State Department, Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization
SOF	Special Operations Forces
SFRC	Senate Foreign Relations Committee
SSR	Security Sector Reform
SSTR	Stability, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction
TAC	Tribal Analysis Center
TSCS	Time Series Cross Sectional
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission – Afghanistan
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
USDA	U.S. Department of Agriculture
USIP	U.S. Institute for Peace

Stability Through Security: U.S. Security Assistance to the Developing World

Throughout the 1990s, the United States spent about \$18 billion a year on foreign aid to friendly countries around the world. That figure has more than doubled since 2002, to around \$50 billion, in support of a national security strategy that envisions development as a central pillar of U.S. national security, equal to diplomacy and defense. The realization that prevention of terrorism by addressing the root causes that breed radicalism and discontent will be far less costly than trying to combat a transnational threat capable of striking U.S. interests anywhere in the world produced a strong commitment to promoting economic growth and good governance in weak and unstable countries in the developing world. However, over half of U.S. foreign aid comes in the form of security assistance, as opposed to development aid. While most security assistance programs include among their objectives the development of economic and political institutions, the primary goal of these funds is to improve the security capacities of the recipient governments, in particular their militaries and security-related institutions. Many in the development community argue that stability and security will be better served by a greater emphasis on economic development, but U.S. policy makers believe that economic and political development will only be possible in an environment in which the government, the people, and international investors are confident in their security. Given the billions of dollars from the U.S. alone devoted each year to foreign aid, the relative efficacy of development aid as opposed to security assistance is a question worthy of study and debate. However, while there is ample research on the impact

of development aid, quantitative evidence of the impact of security assistance is scarce. In order to debate whether U.S. foreign aid is better devoted to development or security assistance, we must first know whether or not investments in developing nations' security capacities and institutions actually improve security conditions in those states. This study attempts to answer that question, in order to inform the broader debate over how the U.S. allocates its foreign aid.

Security assistance in the 21st century

Security assistance has played a central role in U.S. security strategy and foreign aid policy since World War II. While most people generally think of foreign aid in terms of three broad categories – development aid, humanitarian aid, and military aid – over 60% of U.S. foreign aid is classified as *security assistance*.¹ Military aid, which is tightly controlled by the State Department, makes up about half of security assistance. The remainder is an assortment of economic assistance programs controlled mostly by State, the Defense Department (DOD), and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) that address antiterrorism, counter-narcotics, law enforcement, non-proliferation, destruction of Soviet-era stockpiles, humanitarian and disaster relief, provision of essential health care, and development assistance. Some are fairly open-ended in their authorized use, while others are narrowly restricted to a geographic region or a particular state. Security assistance serves an array of U.S. strategic objectives, including improving foreign militaries' capacities to provide for their own and regional defense, strengthening foreign economies, advancing and

¹ All data on U.S. foreign aid and security assistance is taken from USAID, *U.S. Overseas Loans and Grants: Obligations and Loan Authorizations, July 1, 1945-September 30, 2009*, available online at <http://gbk.eads.usaidallnet.gov/>.

protecting U.S. economic interests, promoting regional stability and U.S. alliances, gaining access to overseas military bases, increasing U.S. influence with recipient governments, promoting human rights, and building goodwill and understanding of American values and policies (Clarke et al. 1997). The dedication of security assistance to activities ranging training and arming militaries to humanitarian and development assistance reflects the complex nature of security.

Beginning with the Marshall Plan, security assistance programs during the Cold War were an integral part of the strategy of Containment, intended to strengthen allies and friendly nations in Europe, Asia, Africa, and Latin America against the spread of Communism and Soviet influence. Since 1952, a disproportionately large percentage of security assistance has been devoted toward maintaining peace and stability in the Middle East, with Israel and, since 1978, Egypt receiving the lion's share. In the 1990s, the emphasis of security assistance shifted away from the developing world and toward central and eastern Europe in order to stabilize the countries emerging Communist rule and Moscow's dominance. Security assistance programs sought not only to train and equip the militaries of former Eastern Bloc countries and improve their interoperability with North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) forces, but also to stabilize their economies and build democratic institutions.

Security assistance programs until 2001 reflected the two central themes of U.S. national security – stability in the Middle East and the relationship with Moscow. As a result, very little security assistance was allocated to less developed countries (LDCs), particularly in Africa and Asia. At worst, these countries were perceived to pose only an indirect security challenge, in the form of regional and civil conflict and humanitarian crises that placed

demands on U.S. troops and foreign aid. The attacks on the U.S. on September 11, 2001 caused a paradigmatic shift in how the U.S. defined its national security. Instability in the LDCs now represented a direct and multi-faceted threat to U.S. national security. The poverty, poor governance, and corruption that characterize weak states breed anger, disaffection, and hopelessness, making them a fertile recruiting ground for extremists. Ungoverned spaces provide safe havens for terrorists, criminals, and insurgents, and facilitate the trafficking of weapons, narcotics, and money (Smith 2004, Clinton 2010). With the release of the 2002 National Security Strategy by the Bush administration, stabilizing weak and failing states in the developing world and encouraging their transition to democracy became a central pillar of U.S. foreign and security policy. Existing security assistance programs were refocused on LDCs in Africa, the Middle East, and across central and Southeast Asia, and new programs were created specifically to improve anti-terrorism and counter-narcotics capabilities, and to facilitate institution-building and post-conflict reconstruction. Many of these programs are, in principle, tied to liberal political reforms, but the emphasis is clearly on stabilizing LDCs by first improving their ability to reduce ungoverned spaces and exercise sovereign control over their territory.

The challenge in many LDCs is that they are still in the earliest phases of state-making, what Rokkan referred to as standardization and penetration (Rokkan 1975). A major aspect of such early state-making is the “primitive accumulation of centralized state power (Cohen, Brown, and Organiski 1981, 902).” This means that much of U.S. security assistance, even that related to economic, political, and institutional development, is devoted to the military and other security-related institutions. This is not necessarily surprising, given the political importance of the military to regimes trying to consolidate power and build a

national consensus in an unstable environment (Ayoob 1994). Many leaders and their generals consider stability and security as fundamental to establishing their legitimacy, and even well-intentioned leaders who hope to pave the way to democracy often first prioritize security within their borders. As important as growth and development are, they may be perceived by such leaders as destabilizing, and thus take a back seat to establishing sovereign control over the country. Many civilian elites, in contrast, see political and economic development as the keys to their legitimacy and security. For them, heavy-handed efforts to establish security inhibit economic growth and undermine political legitimacy (Ayoob 1994, Crone 1994). Development proponents also advocate for more money to be directed toward poverty alleviation and economic development, and through local and international NGOs rather than through governments and militaries that are often seen as corrupt and repressive (Brainard 2007).

The logic behind U.S. policy, inferred from both statements and action, is clearly that a secure political environment must precede political and economic development. Presumably the mechanism by which it does so is by creating stability, which allows for the opening of political space, on the one hand, and encourages domestic and international investment, on both the macro and micro scale. Security assistance, both economic and military, from the U.S. to partners in the developing world is intended to increase the capacity of partner regimes to establish and enforce security in order to create a more stable environment. Yet, little has been done to verify that the more than \$20 billion devoted annually to security assistance is actually effective at increasing security and stability. The following quantitative analysis seeks to answer whether it has been successful and effective at doing so.

Security, development, and democracy

The academic literature on the complex relationships between security, development, and democracy unfortunately does not offer much in the way of consensus to guide policy makers. Modernization theory posits that democracy arises as a function of economic development: modernization creates and empowers the middle class, deepens civil society, and capitalist economies demand the freedoms, protection, and compromise that come with democracy (Lipset 1959, Przeworski and Wallerstein 1982, Rueshemeyer, Stephens, and Stephens 1992, Tang 2006). Economic growth and development also decrease levels of inequality over time, making political concessions by ruling elites less costly and preferable to violent conflict (Dahl 1971, Boix 2003, Boix and Stokes 2003, Acemoglu and Robinson 2006). Empirically, there is a strong correlation between high levels of economic development and democratic consolidation, but some scholars have argued that it is a spurious one, while others have found no significant relationship at all (Przeworski et al 2001, Feng 2003, Acemoglu et al 2005). The true relationship may have more to do with the increased rate of survival and endurance of democracy in more developed countries (Przeworski and Limongi 1997, Przeworski, et al 2000, Przeworski 2003).

Alternatively, if the direction of the causal relationship runs from democracy to development, the relationship may unfortunately be a negative one. Dictatorships, which are more insulated from public demands and can more easily overcome coordination problems, may actually have some advantages when it comes to enacting long-term, pro-growth economic strategies (Huntington and Nelson 1976, Przeworski 1991, Collier 2006). Election cycles and fickle publics work against economic reformers (witness the current turmoil in

Greece), and constraints on taxation and spending in democracies reduce their level of investment relative to that of more authoritarian forms of government (Tavares and Wacziarg 2001). However, dictatorships with a reputation for excessive corruption or unpredictability may deter both domestic and international investors out of concern over long-term property rights, depressing growth rates (Collier 2006). In ethnically diverse countries, the tendency for dictators to reward kin and clan at the expense of the general population results in lower growth rates, so, particularly in the LDCs of Africa, democracies might produce relatively higher growth rates through a more efficient allocation of national resources (Collier 2000, 2001, Alesina and La Ferrara 2004). Additionally, some institutional aspects of democracy, such as an open press and independent judiciary, help to expose corruption and hold governments accountable, resulting in improved growth rates and development (Sen 1999).

More relevant to current U.S. objectives is the relationship between security and either development or democracy. Very little research has been done on security per se, but work on conflict, terrorism, and regime duration offers some pertinent indications of how security might be related to development and regime type. Security in this context has two components: coercive capacity and legitimacy. Insecurity results from substantial deficiencies in both legitimacy and coercive power that result in widespread instability which threatens the viability of the state or regime. Governments gain legitimacy through good governance and through positive economic growth, but neither is possible in an environment where weak coercive capacities allow insurgent, criminal, or terrorist groups to challenge the government, either directly in an attempt to wrest power from the regime, or indirectly by flaunting government authority in territory outside the regime's control (Cheatham 1994). As such, coercive capacity, particularly in the early stages of state-making or post-conflict

reconstruction, is a prerequisite for political and economic development, and, when used appropriately, for legitimacy. Taiwan and South Korea are examples of U.S.-supported undemocratic regimes with robust military and security capacities that evolved over decades into strong and economically prosperous democracies. In both cases, physical security preceded and enabled economic development, and democratic reform came only after each country was politically and economically stable.

A fairly strong consensus exists in conflict literature that advanced industrial democracies (U.S., Western Europe, Japan), entrenched autocracies (North Korea, China, Saudi Arabia), and countries with a strong military (Brazil, Egypt, India, Pakistan, Turkey) are least likely to suffer from civil war (Sambanis 2000, Hegre and Sambanis 2006, Dixon 2009). Security in the advanced industrial democracies certainly benefits from the strong legitimacy these governments enjoy, but all three types of states possess a strong coercive capacity to ensure their physical security. Strong, centralized dictatorships and other forms of authoritarian government are less constrained than democratic governments in their use of coercion or repression to control their population, resulting in greater security and stability, even in the absence of political legitimacy (Rosendorf and Sandler 2005). Likewise, regimes with a strong military or central security apparatus are able to effectively suppress violent opposition before it becomes widespread. More importantly, military prowess greatly increases the costs to opposition groups of a violent challenge. Such asymmetric distributions of power reduce the likelihood of the opposition forcing a negotiated settlement, and effectively deter challengers by reducing any uncertainty regarding the possible outcome of an insurgency (Mason and Fett 1996, Zartman 2000, Humphreys 2005, Human Security Report Project 2011).

Good governance, defined here as the responsible and restrained use of power to benefit society as a whole, can be an important balm to the frustrations of marginalized members of society, but democracy per se is not inherently any more stable or secure than more authoritarian forms of government. Entrenched and institutionalized democracies have a very low incidence of domestic conflict, but so do entrenched autocracies (Dixon 2009). Weak democratic governments often lack the coercive and administrative capacity to extract resources from society, control territory, and suppress violence, leading to high levels of unrest and domestic violence (Benson and Kugler 1998). The freedoms and liberal reforms that accompany democratization in developing countries can be exploited by terrorists to spread their message, recruit more openly, operate more freely, and export violence internationally, and the risk of civil war rises as autocracies transition to democracy (Wilkinson 2001, Li 2005, Rosendorf and Sandler 2005, Dixon 2009). Democratization cannot simply mean competitive elections, but must be accompanied by the development of the institutional capacity needed to gain legitimacy in the eyes of the public. The inability of the government to deter or repress domestic violence undermines that legitimacy, making those institutions related to security among the most important to further political and economic reforms.

A high level of economic development is one of the few causal factors that is consistently and positively correlated with improved security. Prosperity and high levels of economic growth significantly decrease the likelihood of civil war, as do several other proxies for development, including investment and levels of primary and secondary education (Hegre 2003, Collier and Hoeffler 2004, Hegre and Sambanis 2006, Dixon 2009). Unfortunately, at low levels of economic development, the causal relationship between

economic growth and security may well run in the opposite and negative direction. High levels of violence, political instability, and civil war deters foreign investment, damages infrastructure, and forces governments to prioritize spending on the military and security apparatus over investment in key drivers of growth, such as education, health care, agricultural reform, and infrastructure (Russet 1969, Nigh 1985, Enders and Sandler 1996, Li 2006). Particularly in developing countries, such trade-offs significantly hinder economic growth and development (Weber 1968; Benoit 1973; Inkeles and D. Smith 1974; Eide 1977; Ball 1983; McKinlay and Mughan 1984; Berthélemy, McNamara, and Sen 1994; Weede 1986; Dumas 1988; Kick, Davis, Kiefer, and Burns 1998). So many LDCs find themselves in an unfortunate paradox in which they need to invest in security in order to create an environment conducive to investment and growth, but doing so comes at the expense of growth-inducing investments they could otherwise be making.

Where the U.S. has had to choose between the three, security generally trumps development and democracy. Regardless of the political rhetoric, the execution of U.S. security policy indicates a clear presumption that security is a prerequisite for both democracy and economic development and growth. However, unlike more targeted forms of development assistance, security assistance advances security and stability by simultaneously addressing security and political and economic development. Security assistance programs focus principally on the institutions of state security, including the military, the police, the judiciary, the criminal justice system, and the ministries that oversee them. However, they often extend to include institutions that govern issues tangentially related to security, such as energy, natural resources, fisheries, critical infrastructure, disease prevention, and migration. Security assistance improves security directly by improving the capacity of these institutions

to provide for the safety and well-being of the citizens they serve. This includes the coercive capacity to counter and deter violent opposition and crime, as well as the administrative capacity to establish and enforce effective regulations. Concurrently, the improved professionalism and effectiveness of security institutions indirectly improve security by reducing grievances that drive conflict and increasing the legitimacy of the government. Proponents of security assistance also argue that, given the influence of security institutions in many developing world governments, continual contact with American security personnel and training that emphasizes democratic values has a liberalizing effect on these institutions that can spread throughout the government. These direct and indirect mechanisms by which security assistance operates lead, then, to the following hypotheses:

H1: Security assistance to developing nations reduces levels of political and criminal violence, by increasing the coercive capacity of security institutions.

H2: Security assistance to developing nations increases the legitimacy of recipient governments, by improving the effectiveness and responsiveness of security institutions.

The model

In order to test these hypotheses, I examined data on U.S. security assistance from 1989 to 2009. Since the focus of the study is on the effects of security assistance to developing countries, I omitted those countries who were members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) before 1989. Nine of the ten countries admitted since 1989 (Mexico, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, South Korea, Slovakia,

Chile, Slovenia, and Estonia) were retained in the dataset. These nine states have all experienced significant political and/or economic transition since the early 1990s and most of them have received some level of U.S. security assistance. The tenth new member of the OECD, Israel, was omitted, as was Egypt, because of the disproportionate amounts these states receive in U.S. security assistance. They each received more than 50 times the security assistance allocated to the average recipient, an exponential difference that could skew the overall results. Iraq and Afghanistan were also omitted, because the effect of U.S. security assistance programs cannot be disaggregated from the effect of the large number of American and international combat troops in each of these countries during the last decade.² The remaining data covers 182 countries for a period of 20 years, forming a Time Series Cross Sectional (TSCS) data set with 3,997 country-year observations.

Pooled cross-sectional data such as this is prone to several violations of the basic assumptions of Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) estimation, including autocorrelation and heteroskedasticity in the error terms. The popular method espoused by Beck and Katz (1995) of using a lagged dependent variable and panel-corrected standard errors is effective at addressing these concerns, but it ignores a much more serious problem. Due to the inherently nonrandom selection of units – states, in this case – and the systematic differences across units as a result of the independent history of each state, pooling cross-sectional data can result in a misspecification of the model and omitted variable bias. The bias in the coefficients introduced by unit effects poses a much more serious problem for statistical inference than do the second-order concerns addressed by Beck and Katz (Wilson and Butler

² In the 20 years between 1989-2009, Israel and Egypt received total U.S. foreign aid in excess of \$80 billion and \$50 billion respectively. These amounts dwarfed those going to the next tier of top recipients Russia (\$18B), Pakistan (\$11B), Colombia (\$10B), and Jordan (\$10B). The average 20-year total received by all other countries was \$1 billion, with 54 countries receiving a total of less than \$100 million. Between 2001 and 2009, Iraq and Afghanistan received \$57 billion and \$35 billion, respectively.

2004). In consideration of this, I elect to use a fixed-effects model, which better addresses the misspecification problem, particularly since I am most interested in the changes across time within units as opposed to across them. The fixed effects model results in coefficients that are unbiased and consistent, even if they are not maximally efficient. I regress measures of security on the security assistance data using the following basic model:

$$\text{SECURITY}_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{SECASSIST}_{it} + \beta_2 \text{GDPPERCAP}_{it} + \beta_3 \text{POLITY2}_{it} + \beta_4 \text{MILFORCE}_{it} + \beta_5 \text{MILEXPEND}_{it} + \mu_{it}$$

Security is a rather complex concept, and difficult to quantify using a single proxy variable. In the context of this study, I am interested primarily in internal security, as opposed to external defense, but even that has numerous components related to coercive capacity and legitimacy. Rather than relying on a single proxy for security, I run multiple regressions using an array of proxies for the dependent variable, each of which captures a different dimension of security. I rely on six variables related to conflict and violence in order to capture the coercive aspects of security. Five other variables are more directly related to legitimacy, although both coercive capacity and legitimacy are implicitly incorporated into all of the dependent variables. While no individual result will provide conclusive evidence regarding the effect of security assistance on security, a finding of positive results across a number of different dimensions of security will allow us to draw logical inferences about the effect on security more generally.

The presence of widespread violence is an obvious indicator of inadequate security. Such violence can be ethnically or politically based, or it can be predominantly criminal. The

drivers of each type of violence can be quite different, and some are related to legitimacy, but systemic violence of any kind represents the inability of the government to establish a monopoly over the legitimate use of force. I draw on two different databases for measures of systemic violence. The Major Episodes of Political Violence (MEPV) database (Marshall 2008) codes annual levels of intrastate political and ethnic violence on a cumulative 11-point scale (0-10). The scale increases from “sporadic or expressive political violence” to “extermination and annihilation.” Although Marshall notes that “the necessary military technologies are not present in most contemporary warfare locations” for any individual event to warrant more than a 7, the effects are additive, so scores are aggregated for each country-year. The variables *CIVVIOL*, *CIVWAR*, *ETHVIOL*, and *ETHWAR* are taken directly from the MEPV database and cover the years 1989-2008. If security assistance is effective at increasing the capacity of security institutions, it should be negatively correlated with these measures of violence.

An alternative measure of systemic violence comes from the International Country Risk Guide (ICRG), produced by the PRS Group. The ICRG computes a 12-point score for the risk associated with political violence and internal conflict (*INTCNFLCT*). The *INTCNFLCT* variable is more comprehensive than the variables from the MEPV, in that it is based on an assessment of the aggregate threat from civil war or coups, terrorism and political violence, and civil disorder. It also considers violence both by armed opposition and by the government against its citizens, and while these cannot be disaggregated from each other, the inclusion of government-instigated violence captures a breakdown in both security and legitimacy. The ICRG score is structured with higher numbers being given for increased

security and the relative absence of violence, so security assistance should be positively correlated with this variable.

Violence need not be systemic in order to represent a breakdown in security. Terrorist attacks against the government or innocent civilians are only possible when the security institutions fail to detect and deter politically or ideologically motivated extremists. Even the most capable states can fail in this respect, as the 9/11 attacks proved, but terrorist attacks are much less likely to succeed against a capable security apparatus. The variable *ATTACKS* is a count of the number of successful terrorist attacks conducted against a country in a given year. Because this variable tracks successful attacks, and not attempts, it more closely captures the coercive dimension of security, although the absence of terrorist attacks also partially captures a dimension of legitimacy. The data comes from the Global Terrorism Database, compiled by the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism at the University of Maryland. Incidents are considered to be a terrorist attack if they are an intentional use or threat of violence by a sub-national actor. U.S. security assistance should be negatively correlated with *ATTACKS*.

Legitimacy is both a function of the government's ability to provide a secure environment for its people and a component of security itself, since lack of legitimacy is an important driver of violent opposition. Governments gain legitimacy in part by representing and providing for the interests of the population, and legitimate governments are more likely to have greater popular support and staying power. While a strong police capacity is important to maintaining order, a fair, impartial, and effective legal system is an essential component of a government's legitimacy, especially when it comes to exercising its policing functions. I use five different variables as proxies for the legitimacy components of security.

More democratic and pluralistic regimes are considered more legitimate, both domestically and internationally. Although U.S. security assistance is not generally thought of as being used for democracy promotion, in fact most security assistance programs actively promote democratic reform, either through training and personal interaction or through restrictions that tie aid to democratic reforms. If security assistance programs are effective at achieving democratic objectives, we would expect a positive correlation between the amount of security assistance and measures of democracy. The most widely-used measure of democratic government comes from the POLITY IV dataset (Marshall and Gurr 2010). POLITY IV measures institutionalized democracy or autocracy based on the competitiveness and openness of executive recruitment, constraints on the chief executive, and the competitiveness of political participation. Since the focus of security assistance is on institutional development, POLITY IV's measure of institutional democracy is more relevant to this study than alternative measures, such as Freedom House's survey of political rights and civil liberties. The *POLITY2* variable, a composite of the democracy and autocracy ratings, scores regimes on a 21-point scale, from -10 for most autocratic, to 10 for most democratic. If security assistance is effective at encouraging institutional reform, it will correlate positively with *POLITY2*.

Like *POLITY2*, the ICRG variable "government stability" (*GOVSTAB*) is based on an assessment of institutional capacity, although it is less concerned on the democratic nature of the institutions it rates than on their bureaucratic capacity. Like all of ICRG's ratings, *GOVSTAB* rates political risk, in this case based on the unity of the government, the strength of the legislature, and the level of popular support. *GOVSTAB* is a 12-point risk rating, where higher numbers equate to lower risk, or higher stability. The ICRG also rates countries

on a 6-point scale for the strength and effectiveness of their legal systems, represented by the variable *LAWORDER*. Low ratings reflect widespread crime and lawlessness, while higher ratings indicate an effective coercive capacity and an institutionalized respect for the law. Security assistance's emphasis on institutional development and capacity-building should theoretically improve all the factors captured by these two variables, and so should be correlated with both of them.

More legitimate governments face fewer internal challenges to their authority, and so tend to last longer. A regime's durability, then, is a reflection, at least in part, of its legitimacy. Of course, a regime's durability is also related to its ability to both provide security for the state and secure the regime against challengers, so it arguably represents a good, if imperfect, proxy for both dimensions of security. One obvious problem with using duration as a proxy for security is that a regime may be stable and secure for a period of time, but then lose power suddenly as a result of an abrupt shift in political climate, as seen in Egypt during the Arab Spring. Still, if U.S. security assistance is correlated with long regime durability, it is an indicator that such assistance at a minimum helps to bolster the regime's coercive capacity. The variable *DURABLE* is taken from the POLITY IV dataset and represents the number of years since the most recent regime change or the end of a regime transition. If U.S. security assistance is having the desired effect, it will positively affect *DURABLE*.

Lastly, a fundamental tenet of U.S. military training and assistance programs is the subordination of the military to civilian authority. This concept is integrated into all training conducted by U.S. forces and embodied in the conduct of U.S. forces and their subordination to the U.S. Ambassador in any foreign country. The education of mid-grade and senior

officers in U.S. war colleges and the recurring contact between U.S. and foreign forces though training and exercises funded by security assistance is intended to instill and reinforce the importance of civil-military relations and encourage military leaders to separate themselves and their institutions from politics. The ICRG considers the influence or participation of the military in government to increase potential risk because of the likelihood of corruption and armed opposition. It rates countries on a 6-point scale with the variable *MILPOL*, with higher numbers indicating a low level of military involvement in politics and lower level of risk. The variable *MILPOL* should be positively correlated with U.S. security assistance.

The variable of interest is the amount of security assistance money given by the U.S. to developing nations around the world. This data is derived from USAID's annual publication *U.S. Overseas Loans and Grants: Obligations and Loan Authorizations*, commonly referred to as the "Greenbook." The Greenbook details all U.S. foreign aid annually by program to recipient countries. The independent variable is the total amount of security assistance allocated in a given year to a recipient country. This total includes all military aid and economic assistance accounts which are classified as security assistance.³ I take the natural log of this figure in order to smooth out the dramatic differences in aid received by a few recipients, particularly Pakistan, Colombia, Jordan, Sudan, and Turkey.

³ Military aid programs include Foreign Military Finance, International Military Education and Training, Military Assistance Program (discontinued after 2007), Peacekeeping Operations, Transfers from Excess Stock, certain allocations of Operation and Maintenance (O&M) funds from each service, Former Soviet Union (FSU) Threat Reduction, and several programs specific to Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. Economic security assistance includes the Economic Support Fund (ESF), International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement, the Andean Counterdrug Initiative (formerly Plan Colombia), and Non-Proliferation, Anti-terrorism, Demining, and Related Programs. Additionally, several DOD accounts are considered economic security assistance, rather than military aid. These include the Defense Health Program, Drug Interdiction and Counter-Drug Activities, and O&M and FSU Threat Reduction funds specifically earmarked for development activities.

Finally, because security institutions and capacities are not built overnight, I calculate a moving three-year average of this figure (*LOGSECASSIST3YRAVG*).

Table 1.1: Predicted effect of security assistance on dependent variables

Variable	Source	Predicted effect
<i>Coercive capacity</i>		
Civil violence (CIVVIOL)	MEPV	Neg
Civil war (CIVWAR)	MEPV	Neg
Ethnic violence (ETHVIOL)	MEPV	Neg
Ethnic war (ETHWAR)	MEPV	Neg
Internal conflict (INTCNFLCT)	ICRG	Pos
Terrorist attacks (ATTACKS)	GTD	Neg
<i>Legitimacy</i>		
Democracy (POLITY2)	POLITY IV	Pos
Government stability (GOVSTAB)	ICRG	Pos
Law and order (LAWORDER)	ICRG	Pos
Regime duration (DURABILITY)	POLITY IV	Pos
Military influence (MILPOL)	ICRG	Pos

I include several control variables in the model to account for alternative explanations for the level of security. As discussed above, the level of development is one of the strongest predictors improved security. More developed countries possessing more robust institutions and stronger economies provide greater political and economic stability for their citizens, giving fewer reasons for grievance against the government. They also have stronger and better institutionalized security institutions, so they have a greater capacity to deter or defeat political and criminal violence, and their exercise of coercive force is more likely to be seen as legitimate by their citizens. I follow the standard practice in economic literature of using per capita gross domestic product (*GDP**PERCAP*) proxy for development (Ahlquist 2006, Feng 1997, Martin and Swank 2008). Per capita GDP is a somewhat imperfect proxy for

development in LDCs, as it does not account for black market transactions or say anything about income distribution, but it functions well as a single measure of development that captures wealth and industrialization. I use per capita GDP figures from the World Bank World Development Indicators and, again following standard practice, take the natural log of GDP per capita in order to smooth out the results.

Regime type should matter for most of the dependent variables used as proxies for security in the model, although, as discussed above, there is some debate as to whether democracies or non-democracies will be more secure. I use the POLITY2 variable described above as a control variable for regime type. Scores at the extremes of the POLITY2 scale should correlate with greater security, but scores in the middle, representing unconsolidated democracies or regimes in transition, should correlate with less security and more violence.

Lastly, I control for the level of militarization in the recipient country, since a strong military should be better able to deter and overcome violent opposition, and should improve a regime's security and stability. Two different measures are used to proxy for military strength. *MILEXPEND* is the percent of GDP a country devotes to military expenditures. *MILFORCE* is the number of armed forces personnel, as a percentage of a country's total labor force. Both variables come from the World Bank's World Development Indicators, and should correlate with greater levels of security.

Results and analysis

Conflict variables and Hypothesis 1

The regression results provide qualified support for Hypothesis 1, but raise some intriguing questions in the process. Security assistance does appear to increase governments' capacity to deter or defeat the worst instances of violence, but it is less effective at improving their ability to counter lower level violence (Table 1.2). The coefficients on the variables for civil and ethnic war are both in the expected negative direction and statistically significant, indicating that as governments receive more security assistance, they are less likely to face a large-scale insurgency. The coefficient on the civil violence variable, however, is in the opposite direction, although substantively and statistically less significant. Interestingly, the coefficient on the ethnic violence variable is exactly the same as that of CIVVIOL, but it fails to reach accepted levels of statistical significance. For some reason, increasing security assistance not only fails to improve the government's ability to respond to low-intensity violence, it actually results in a slight increase in the incidence of violence.

These conflicting results pose at least two interesting possibilities regarding the increase in coercive capacity that results from security assistance. One is that, as the military and other security forces improve their capabilities above a certain level, the probability of defeating them decreases to a point that opposition groups are deterred from attempting a force-on-force engagement. The decreased expectations for success may also hurt recruitment and fundraising for opposition groups. As a result, they resort to more asymmetrical forms of violence, attacking weak targets in small numbers in an effort to destabilize or discredit the government. It could also indicate that opposition groups increase their use of violence in anticipation of increased government capabilities, hoping to extract as

Table 1.2: Effect of security assistance on coercive capacity dimension of security

	attacks	civviol	civwar	ethviol	ethwar	intcnflct
Security assistance	0.065 <i>0.512</i>	0.003 * <i>0.001</i>	-0.014 *** <i>0.004</i>	0.003 <i>0.002</i>	-0.010 ** <i>0.004</i>	-0.003 <i>0.013</i>
GDP per capita	-0.010 ** <i>0.004</i>	0.000 <i>0.000</i>	0.000 <i>0.000</i>	0.000 <i>0.000</i>	0.000 <i>0.000</i>	0.000 *
Democracy (Polity2)	-0.685 <i>0.655</i>	-0.006 *** <i>0.002</i>	-0.034 *** <i>0.005</i>	0.005 <i>0.004</i>	-0.021 *** <i>0.006</i>	0.106 *** <i>0.018</i>
Military force	-2.319 <i>3.254</i>	0.000 <i>0.006</i>	0.002 <i>0.018</i>	-0.003 <i>0.012</i>	0.016 <i>0.020</i>	0.093 <i>0.061</i>
Military expenditure	1.454 <i>1.507</i>	-0.004 <i>0.004</i>	0.037 *** <i>0.010</i>	0.004 <i>0.007</i>	0.022 * <i>0.011</i>	-0.045 <i>0.037</i>
Intercept	46.712 <i>13.754</i>	0.073 <i>0.027</i>	0.300 <i>0.075</i>	0.072 <i>0.049</i>	0.457 <i>0.083</i>	9.042 <i>0.269</i>
n	845	1688	1688	1688	1688	1347
r-squared	0.423	0.811	0.653	0.499	0.756	0.596
adj. r-squared	0.331	0.796	0.625	0.459	0.736	0.563

NOTE: *significant at 10%; **significant at 5%; ***significant at 1%

many concessions as possible from the government while they can still challenge the security apparatus. Alternatively, the corresponding increase in civil and ethnic violence could be tapping into the legitimacy dimension of security, indicating that governments are using their improved capabilities to repress non-violent opposition, pushing previously peaceful opposition groups to resort to violence. This would support charges by human rights groups that U.S. military aid and training is often going to repressive regimes, and undermine official policy positions that security assistance is an effective means for improving respect for human rights and liberal values.

The effect of security assistance on ATTACKS and INTCNFLCT was in the opposite direction from what my hypothesis predicted, but neither coefficient came anywhere close to statistical significance. In the case of terrorist attacks, this could be partially

attributable to the rarity of terrorist attacks within developing nations, particularly under the narrow criteria used in the Global Terrorism Database to define a terrorist attack. In addition to being an intentional use or threat of violence by a sub-national actor, an act of violence must meet two of three additional criteria: it must be aimed at attaining a political, economic, religious, or social goal; there must be evidence that the attack was intended to coerce or intimidate a larger audience; and the attack must target civilians or non-combatants, or in some other way be considered outside internationally-accepted standards of lawful combat. As such, violent attacks that might be called terrorism by a government may be classified by the authors of this database as insurgent activity, internecine conflict, mass murder, or purely criminal, and excluded from the database.

Legitimacy variables and Hypothesis 2

Perhaps surprisingly, the regression results provide much stronger support for the hypothesis that institutional capacity-building efforts under security assistance programs have a positive effect on the legitimacy of the recipient government (Table 1.3). Security assistance had a positive and highly statistically significant effect on each of the variables POLITY2, DURABLE, and GOVSTAB. These results provide fairly strong support for the contention that security assistance's combination of economic and political development aid and military training and assistance is effective at encouraging political reform and helping governments improve their capacities across the boards to provide greater stability and security for their citizens. The correlation between security assistance and longer regime duration also lends support to Hypothesis 1, as durability is likely to also be a function of coercive capacity. Although one could argue that this correlation could be solely attributable

to increased coercive capacity and say nothing about legitimacy, this seems unlikely in the context of the results on the democracy and government stability variables.

Unfortunately, the significant but negative effect of security assistance on LAWORDER conflicts with the results of the other three models, and is more difficult to explain. Given the restrictions on U.S. military forces training police and non-military security personnel and the extremely high crime rates in many of the least developed countries, it would not have been surprising to return a relationship that was not statistically significant. That the relationship between U.S. security assistance and law and order in the recipient states is both negative and statistically significant begs further research, but it suggests greater attention needs to be paid to the development of legal and judiciary institutions and training of police and constabulary forces. Lastly, there was no significant relationship between security assistance and indicators of military influence and involvement in politics. This is an unfortunate finding, because the subordination of the military to civil authority and the functional separation of military and civil institutions is a touchstone of U.S. military training, as well as security assistance programs that emphasize institutional development and good governance. The contention that these programs promote American values and have a liberalizing effect on foreign militaries is often used to justify funding these programs, but these results call that contention into question. The implication that these programs are apparently ineffective at achieving these important objectives warrants further research and policy attention.

Table 1.3: Effects of security assistance on legitimacy dimensions of security

	polity2		durable		govstab		laworder		milpol	
Security assistance	0.060	***	0.212	***	0.048	***	-0.022	***	0.003	
	<i>0.017</i>		<i>0.034</i>		<i>0.015</i>		<i>0.005</i>		<i>0.006</i>	
GDP per capita	0.000	**	0.002	***	0.000	**	0.000	***	0.000	
	<i>0.000</i>		<i>0.000</i>		<i>0.000</i>		<i>0.000</i>		<i>0.000</i>	
Democracy (Polity2)			-0.524	***	0.118	***	-0.002		0.064	***
			<i>0.049</i>		<i>0.021</i>		<i>0.008</i>		<i>0.008</i>	
Military force	-0.321	***	-0.467	***	0.143	**	0.077	***	-0.083	***
	<i>0.083</i>		<i>0.162</i>		<i>0.072</i>		<i>0.026</i>		<i>0.027</i>	
Military expenditure	-0.079	*	-0.243	***	-0.179	***	-0.005		-0.021	
	<i>0.047</i>		<i>0.092</i>		<i>0.043</i>		<i>0.016</i>		<i>0.016</i>	
Intercept	1.939		7.559		7.126		3.933		3.630	
	<i>0.342</i>		<i>0.671</i>		<i>0.316</i>		<i>0.114</i>		<i>0.118</i>	
n	1702		1702		1347		1347		1347	
r-squared	0.860		0.902		0.312		0.767		0.863	
adj. r-squared	0.849		0.894		0.255		0.747		0.852	

NOTE: *significant at 10%; **significant at 5%; ***significant at 1%

Per capita GDP had surprisingly little effect on most of the measures of security in the model. The effect of GDPPERCAP on measures of civil and ethnic violence and war was both substantively and statistically insignificant, as was its effect on the influence of the military in politics. Although its effect on the other security proxies was statistically significant and in the predicted direction, for all but regime durability and terrorist attacks the substantive effect was so small as to be considered negligible. These findings are unexpected given that so much research has established a relationship between higher levels of development and lower levels of violence and conflict, as well as with more stable and democratic governments (Collier and Sambanis 2002, Collier and Hoeffler 2002, 2004, Fearon and Laitin 2003).

As expected, democracy (POLITY2) was correlated significantly with lower levels of violence and higher levels of stability and legitimacy in almost all models, although it failed to reach accepted levels of statistical significance in relation to terrorist attacks, ethnic violence, or law and order. However, the level of democracy had a significant but reverse effect on regime durability. The negative effect on regime durability may reflect the difficult challenges associated with consolidating democratic regimes in LDCs in transition from autocracy. However, since the POLITY2 variable changes very little across time for most of the countries in the study, its effects cannot really be determined in the fixed effects model used. Readers should be careful inferring anything substantive from these results.

Table 1.4: Means and standard deviations

	Mean	Std. Err.	[95% Conf. Interval]	
logsecassi~g	12.89488	0.208299	12.4859	13.30386
attacks	28.47222	2.514817	23.53452	33.40992
civviol	0.163743	0.025829	0.11303	0.214456
civwar	0.327485	0.045488	0.238173	0.416798
ethviol	0.226608	0.025251	0.177029	0.276187
ethwar	0.545322	0.056125	0.435124	0.65552
intcnflet	8.454737	0.090508	8.277029	8.632445
polity2	2.824561	0.228438	2.376036	3.273087
durable	14.14766	0.630587	12.90954	15.38578
milpol	3.191959	0.062963	3.068334	3.315584
gdppercap	2435.965	125.0566	2190.424	2681.507
laworder	3.415614	0.046999	3.323335	3.507893
milforce	1.641974	0.066615	1.511179	1.772769
milexpend	2.61538	0.08381	2.450823	2.779937

Although not the focus of this study, one of the more interesting findings from the models is the correlation of the militarization variables (MILEXPEND, MILFORCE) with higher levels of conflict and lower levels of regime stability and duration. The level of military expenditure correlated significantly with higher levels of civil and ethnic war and

with internal conflict more generally. It also correlated significantly and negatively with measures of democracy, regime durability, government stability, law and order, and military influence in politics, as did the size of the military. The only exception was a significant and positive relationship between the size of the military and law and order. These results undermine the contention that a strong and sizable military is critical to state security and stability. Instead, they support research that finds military regimes more prone to violence and repression and more unstable in the long run, particularly in LDCs. They also could indicate the effect that trade-offs between military spending and development and social welfare spending may have on citizens' attitude toward their regime. However, the positive and significant effect of the size of the military force on law and order could indicate that there is a cumulative positive effect of U.S. military training on the capability of militaries to enforce the law in some countries.

Robustness checks

One possible challenge to these findings is that the levels of security assistance are actually a function of existing levels of legitimacy or conflict. It would be reasonable to expect that the U.S. gives more security assistance to more stable or democratic regimes. Since such regimes also tend to face less violent opposition, this could also explain the relationship between security assistance and the conflict variables. To address this possibility, I ran Granger causality tests on those models in which the relationship between security assistance and the dependent variable was statistically significant.⁴ For these tests, I used the natural log of current year security assistance (rather than the three-year moving

⁴ Granger causality testing tests the hypothesis that past values of x cause current values of y , when controlling for past values of y . See Gujarati, D. 2003. *Basic Econometrics*, 4th ed. New York: McGraw Hill, 696-701.

average used above) as the dependent variable and lagged values of the legitimacy and conflict variables as the independent variable, over the time period from 1989-2009. In all but one model, the Granger tests supported my results. The CIVWAR, CIVVIOL, and POLITY2 variables do not Granger-cause levels of security assistance. Granger causality did exist between the variables DURABLE, GOVSTAB, and LAWORDER, and levels of security assistance, but it did so in both directions, indicating that, despite some endogeneity, security assistance had some independent effect on regime durability, stability, and respect for law and order. Only in the case of the ethnic war variable did levels of violence Granger-cause levels of security assistance. This indicates that further study is required to more fully understand the relationship between U.S. security assistance and large-scale ethnic warfare.

Conclusions

This paper has attempted to assess the importance and effectiveness of U.S. security assistance with regard to achieving American foreign policy objectives related to improving security in the developing world. Security in LDCs is believed to be directly related to U.S. national security in an age where terrorism and radicalism are transnational and cannot be contained within state borders. U.S. security assistance, including military aid and economic aid for developing economic and political institutions, is intended to help stabilize regimes, build military and security capacity, promote economic development, and improve governance. The results here indicate that U.S. security assistance may in fact be contributing to recipient governments' ability to combat large-scale insurgency, as well as to their legitimacy and stability. However, as has often been the case with U.S. foreign policy, stability may come at the cost of ignoring government repression and denial of civil liberties,

behavior that many Americans believe should be a determining factor in deciding where American tax dollars are directed. However, the ultimate objective of U.S. security assistance policy – increasing U.S. national security by increasing the number of friendly, stable, and responsibly-governed states in the developing world – is a long-term one that will take several decades to achieve, if it is even possible. The emphasis placed by U.S. policy makers on security and stability as a prerequisite for economic and political development, and the implied trade-off in the short-term of democratic reforms, is apparent in both the allocation of U.S. security assistance dollars and the effect they appear to be having. That the increases in security assistance funding since 2001 have had such an effect is encouraging in some respects, given the expectation that political reforms will follow improved physical security and stability. However, the immediate costs associated with supporting repressive and undemocratic regimes has a real impact on the lives of their citizens, and will be difficult to justify if the long-term reforms fail to evolve as predicted.

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*Going to War With the Institutions You Have:
The (De) Militarization of U.S. Foreign and Security Policy*

Abstract

The lead role played by the military in reconstruction, humanitarian assistance, and development efforts, not just in Iraq and Afghanistan, but also in weak or fragile developing nations in Latin America, Africa, Eastern Europe, and Asia, has elicited charges of a militarization of U.S. foreign policy. The events of the last 20 years, however, do not reflect a deliberate, long-term effort to increase either the influence of the military on foreign policy or the nature of the military's involvement in its execution. Rather, the lead role being taken by the military is a function of a changing strategic environment in the wake of the Cold War, a foreign policy that failed to adapt to those changes in a timely manner, and the stress placed on the institutions of U.S. foreign policy by two overseas wars and the identification of a long-term, global threat to U.S. national security. As an awakened U.S. foreign policy establishment finally responds to the new strategic environment and the lessons learned from the last 20 years, the military will continue to play a critical role in stabilization and reconstruction efforts in both post-conflict and non-conflict environments, but it will do so in a way that reinforces the long tradition of subordination of the military to civilian authority.

Introduction

Since the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington D.C. on September 11, 2001, the increasing expansion of the military into non-traditional mission areas has raised widespread

concern about the militarization of U.S. foreign policy. The active role being played by the military in economic and political development is often at odds with the democratic values espoused by the U.S., particularly civilian control of the military, and invites charges of hypocrisy (Serafino 2008; Bouchat 2010). It undermines the State Department's leadership role in foreign policy, and when State and Department of Defense (DOD) policies are not tightly aligned, it can create confusion abroad about what U.S. policy actually is, as well as providing fodder for anti-American propaganda by creating sharp differences between pronouncements and actions (Center for Strategic and International Studies 2008; U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations 2006 (hereafter SFRC)). The military commander's focus on short-term mission objectives related to security, often at odds with State's broader long-term foreign policy goals for the host nation or the region, can negatively impact State's ability to control the nature and direction of U.S. policy and diplomacy (American Academy of Diplomacy 2008; Loftus 2007).

Institutionally, the increased role of the military and the increased autonomy granted by recent legislation undermines not only State's leadership role, but the oversight of foreign assistance by both State and Congress. State has traditionally controlled almost all of the military aid programs, providing an important check on how they are executed by the military. Similarly, Congress has instituted a number of reporting, sanctions, and earmark requirements on military and security assistance, many related to the protection of human rights. Legislation over the last decade has loosened the reins on both counts in response to the demand from military and non-military leaders alike for more flexible funding authorities. The increased flexibility was needed in order to respond to the rapidly changing environments of Iraq and Afghanistan reconstruction and emerging security threats elsewhere

(Serafino 2011a; U.S. Department of State 2007 (hereafter State); Tarnoff and Nowels 2005). The State Department approval process for traditional security assistance programs can run two years or more, delays which proved unworkable in Iraq and Afghanistan, but also inhibited capacity-building efforts in support of the war on terror in many less-developed countries (LDCs). Recent legislation created several new, more flexible funding authorities for DOD, delegating approval in some cases to the tactical level, shortening other approval processes to 6-12 months, and giving the military the autonomy to divert funds more quickly in response to new threats or intelligence (Serafino 2011a). These new funding authorities reserve a veto for State, but the relative lack of transparency and oversight has raised concerns in Congress about using them to end-run some restrictions on existing security assistance accounts (SFRC 2006).

Despite these issues, concerns over the militarization of U.S. foreign policy are overblown. Rather, the expanded role the military has played has been a function of shifting priorities in U.S. foreign and security policy in response to a changing post-Cold War security environment, and the inability of the existing foreign policy architecture to adapt to those priorities and effectively meet foreign policy objectives without relying heavily on the military. Much like the end of World War II, when the military led reconstruction and development efforts in Germany and Japan, the military has taken the lead over the last 20 years largely because it was the only institution capable of doing so. Concerns like those raised above, however, have forced military and civilian leaders and policy makers to address the deficiencies in the existing foreign policy architecture, and at all levels of policy, significant institutional changes have been implemented in order to reestablish the lead role

of civilian agencies in foreign policy and create new capacities for meeting the challenges of a new security environment.

Institutional and organizational change

The foreign policy architecture of the U.S. could be considered to constitute what organizational theory literature calls an *organizational field* (DiMaggio and Powell 1991). Organizational fields are institutionally defined by four characteristics: the extent of interaction among organizations in the field; sharply defined interorganizational structures of domination and patterns of coalition; a large information load with which all must contend; and a mutual awareness that member organizations are involved in a common enterprise (DiMaggio and Powell 1991, 65). Because these characteristics are mutually reinforcing and shared by all organizations in a field, over time they give rise to a set of entrenched and institutionalized norms, standards, and processes that theoretically are most efficient given the existing circumstances and environment in which the field operates. Even when the circumstances to which they are best suited are altered, such institutions are extremely difficult to change, due to entrenched interests, transaction costs, and uncertainty over alternative outcomes (Shepsle 1989). The bureaucratic norms that guide the behavior of the organizations in this particular field – primarily the Departments of State and Defense, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the National Security Council (NSC) and staff, Congress, and the Presidency – became especially entrenched during the Cold War years. Unfortunately, this hindered the ability of these institutions to respond effectively to the rapidly changing international environment that followed the end of the Cold War (Government Accountability Office (hereafter GAO) 1994; 9/11 Commission Report 2012).

Changing such institutionalized norms usually happens as a result of pressure from one of three types of sources: functional, political, or social (Oliver 1992). With respect to the U.S. foreign policy establishment, political pressures tend to be weakened by ideological divisions, while social pressures are more concentrated on domestic issues. Functional pressures, which “arise from perceived problems in performance levels or the perceived utility associated with institutionalized practices (Dacin et al. 2002, 46),” can be considerable when existing policy fails dramatically, as it did in 2001 and for several years thereafter. Pressure for change is only part of the equation however. Drawing again on organizational and behavioral theory, Gleicher’s Formula explains how pressure for change must combine with an articulation of what change will look like and a clear path to achieve that change in order to overcome organizational resistance. Specifically, it says that change will only happen when the product of the level of dissatisfaction (D), the vision (V) for the future, and the first steps (F) needed to reach the future vision exceeds the resistance (R) to change, or

$$D \times V \times F > R.$$

If any single component of the change formula is low or missing, organizational change will not happen (Dannemiller and Jacobs 1992). In the case of the institutions of U.S. foreign and security policy, resistance to change was significant to say the least, and came from within both the executive and legislative branches: from a State Department culture to which change was an anathema; from one administration intent on reducing overseas commitments and a second that rejected nation-building; and from a Congress that preferred to spend money on domestic issues more important to their constituents. During the 1990s, numerous studies by government and private sector think tanks and commissions, and even a Presidential Policy Directive, called for significant changes to, and overhaul of, the

institutions and instruments of U.S. foreign policy, but the dissatisfaction, vision, and identification of the path to reform were insufficient to overcome bureaucratic resistance.⁵ It took an increase in functional pressure resulting from the attacks on 9/11 to raise the level of dissatisfaction and inspire a new vision for the future, and several painful years of trying to execute that vision with existing policy instruments to identify the steps needed to effect the institutional change needed to achieve that vision.

Once the impetus for change overcomes the resistance to change, organizations must decide *how* to change in such a way as to best respond to the demands of the new vision. Ironically, organizations seeking change often converge on existing structural and functional models rather than create something radically new and different, a process called *institutional isomorphism*. Such institutional convergence can happen as a result of: a) coercive pressure from other organizations to which the changing organization is subordinate or on which it is dependent; b) efforts to mimic more successful organizations within the same organizational field; or c) through normative pressures resulting from professionalization (DiMaggio and Powell 1991, 67). After 9/11 and the initial successes – and failures – of U.S. foreign policy instruments in Iraq and Afghanistan, the existing imbalance between State and DOD, in terms of both resources and responsibilities, gave rise to substantial isomorphic changes at the agency and interagency levels, reflecting both coercive and mimetic processes. As we will see later in this paper, those organizations that were least effective, particularly the State Department, began to mimic aspects of the one organization that was having any success, the

⁵ Among others, see: Commission on Roles and Missions of the Armed Forces (1995) *Directions for Defense: Report of the Commission on Roles and Missions*; Overseas Presence Advisory Panel (1999) *America's Overseas Presence in the 21st Century*; U.S. Commission on National Security/21st Century (1999) *New World Coming: American Security in the 21st Century*; Report of the National Defense Panel (1997) *Transforming Defense: National Security in the 21st Century*. The GAO also produced numerous, more narrow reports on areas in need of reform at State and DOD; see www.gao.gov/products.

Department of Defense. Additionally, where mechanisms for better coordination across agencies were lacking, new ones were created that modeled existing coordination mechanisms in other policy areas and within particular organizations.

U.S. foreign policy architecture has been resistant to change for decades, shaped and reinforced by the dynamics of the Cold War. Only when the events of 9/11 and the subsequent wars and reconstruction efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan revealed the disparity between policy objectives and policy instruments did the forces of change gain sufficient momentum to overcome the institutional resistance. The vision for change came in the form of a national security strategy that combined tenets of liberal internationalism with a belief in a muscular leadership role for the United States. Several years of costly failures in Iraq and Afghanistan revealed the glaring weaknesses of the existing institutions, and so provided both the roadmap for accomplishing that change and the public and institutional dissatisfaction necessary to overcome the entrenched interests. The gaps between policy and the institutional tools to carry it out demanded more flexible resourcing for operations in dynamic environments, a much more robust civilian capacity, and better civil-military coordination. Conveniently, the military provided a proven institutional model with solutions to many of the failings of the civilian interagency – a rapid response capability, more flexible lines of accounting, more responsive budgeting techniques, and proven strategic planning and operational coordination processes. The intense national and international dissatisfaction that coalesced around America’s foreign policy failings created a unity of effort among congressional, civilian, and military leaders to establish the institutional capacity needed to provide for the nation’s security, ease the burden on the military, and empower the civilian agencies to lead future stabilization efforts.

Changing security environment and reactive policy

The overarching goals of post-Cold War U.S. foreign policy emerged early in the 1990s, punctuated by the overwhelming military response to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, and arguably have not changed significantly since then: maintain American security and military primacy; ensure American economic health and growth; promote the growth of market economies and democratic institutions and values throughout the world (The White House 1995; 1998; 2002; 2006; 2010a). This latter goal is pursued in part out of an altruistic and ideological belief in a set of universal rights to which all mankind is entitled, and in part as a practical means of supporting the other two goals. What have changed significantly over the last two decades are the perceived and actual threats to achieving those goals, and the strategies designed to counter those threats.

Much like George H. W. Bush's administration, Clinton's national security team focused principally on the potential threat of a resurgent Russia, and on the possibility that second-tier powers – primarily Iraq, Iran, and North Korea – would try to extend their regional influence and pose a challenge to U.S. interests in those regions. The military aspects of U.S. national security strategy, therefore, were geared towards maintaining American primacy with respect to other major powers and deterring any expansionist inclinations among second-tier powers, including efforts to attain or proliferate weapons of mass destruction (Department of Defense (hereafter DOD) 1992). More broadly, however, U.S. strategy was strongly influenced by a liberal internationalism that had increasingly characterized the preceding three administrations (Smith 2007, Suri 2009). Given the apparent failure of Communism as a viable political and economic ideology, the inevitable spread of liberal democracy and market economies was taken largely for granted. Liberal

political and economic reform would require only encouragement and support from the U.S., and was envisioned to be the solution to most of the remaining challenges to international stability and security, including most human rights issues and civil and ethnic conflicts (White House 1995).

The 1995 National Security Strategy (NSS) of Engagement and Enlargement reflected the notion that political and economic assistance should target “primary U.S. strategic and economic interests (Brinkley 1997, 116),” meaning those countries industrially, socially, and institutionally advanced enough to develop a strong middle class as the engine of both economic and political development. U.S. foreign policy seemed predicated on the belief that peace and prosperity would follow from the expansion of “consumer-oriented middle classes with the desired appetites for American products (117).” The U.S. would facilitate change through its political, economic, and cultural influence, rather than by military force (Suri 2009). Economically-driven democratic transition in Central and Eastern Europe and in economic comers like Mexico and South Korea was assumed to include the adoption of Western ideals of inclusiveness and cooperation with the West on transnational security threats.

Implicitly, the 1995 NSS meant that while the U.S. would stay actively engaged in areas of strategic importance, the rest of the world was to be left largely to its own devices or to the responsibility of other major powers and multinational organizations. Clinton’s National Security Advisor, Anthony Lake, made this explicit in a 1993 speech in which he introduced the new strategy:

“This is not a democratic crusade; it is a pragmatic commitment to see freedom take hold where that will help us most. Thus, we must target our

efforts to assist states that affect our strategic interests, such as those with large economies, critical locations, nuclear weapons, or the potential to generate refugee flows into our own nation or into key friends and allies (Lake 1993, 73).”

Countries like Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Hungary not only fit this description, but actively sought assistance from the U.S. and Western Europe in transitioning to democracy. Compared to the challenges of democratic transition in most of the developing world today, these countries had a solid foundation for successful reform – pre-World War II democratic legacies, established and functioning institutions with educated bureaucrats, industrial economies, and professional militaries. The U.S. and Western European governments provided moderate levels of economic, technical, and military assistance, but doing so was easily supported by the existing foreign assistance programs and foreign aid bureaucracy.

Outside of Central and Eastern Europe, very few nations needing assistance fit Lake’s criteria for affecting U.S. strategic interests. Unfortunately, the economic and democratizing emphasis of Enlargement, and the narrow military focus on defense of the U.S. homeland and overseas interests against major state actors, made no provision for the kinds of regional or intrastate crises that arose during the 1990s in Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, Rwanda, and Kosovo. More importantly, the absence of superpower tensions that had imposed a level of caution and restraint on U.S. policymakers with regard to humanitarian intervention in the past created something of a moral imperative for American action. This was not unique to the U.S. – increasingly throughout the 1990s, public sentiment worldwide began to question the tradition of sovereign immunity and demand international intervention into intrastate humanitarian crises (International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty 2001).

But in both the developed and the developing world, people and governments looked to the U.S., the self-proclaimed leader of the free world, to take the lead.

The U.S., along with NATO allies in the Balkans and UN peacekeeping forces in Somalia and Haiti, responded to each of these contingencies first with military force. Only a military response could restore a level of peace and security that would enable resolution of the political conflict and restoration of normal economic activity (The White House 1997). This was not traditional peacekeeping, however, in which neutral international forces provided a solution to the Prisoners' Dilemma for parties interested in reaching a peaceful settlement and disarming their forces. Peacekeeping in the 1990s could more aptly be called *peacemaking*, because it involved imposing a ceasefire and peaceful settlement dispute process on parties (or at least one party) that preferred to continue to improve their position by use of force. But a militarily-imposed peace did nothing to resolve the underlying ethnic and economic grievances that had caused these conflicts. According to the prevailing western commitment to liberal internationalism, that required liberal political and economic reform. Unlike the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, however, these countries lacked the industrial and institutional foundation required for such reforms to even be implemented. Somalia and Haiti were failed states, with ineffective or corrupt bureaucracies and low levels of economic development. Bosnia was so decimated by war that it required major reconstruction of most of its institutions and industry.

Development efforts were critical to stabilizing these countries and getting them on the road to peace and prosperity. Unfortunately, these efforts, led by USAID, and other national agencies and international and non-governmental organizations, were hampered by the lack of physical security. Yet their efforts remained largely uncoordinated with the

military efforts, and their monetary and personnel resources were trivial compared to what the military could devote to the problem. Existing U.S. humanitarian relief and assistance authorities were intended to respond to natural disasters, not to support long-term development in a post-conflict environment. Nor were the relevant State Department desks or embassies staffed to support and coordinate such efforts in these countries. So what began as peacekeeping operations for the military evolved into something much more complex, involving political and economic reconstruction and institution-building. The nature of these crises converged with the rising influence of liberal internationalist thinking, and each of these missions took on a mandate for political and economic reform, if not full democratization. As a result, the military mission was both extended and expanded, as the security situation remained unstable and the military became involved in reconstruction efforts. In fact, the objectives of the military missions grew increasingly more ambitious with each of the operations in the 1990s, and would later expand exponentially for the reconstruction of Iraq and Afghanistan (Murdock et al. 2005). First in the Balkans and Haiti, and later in Afghanistan and Iraq, military peacekeepers were thrust into the role of reconstructing essential infrastructure in order to get the economies moving again, providing medical care, and getting essential public services up and running because they were already in place and had the resources to do so. Although not specifically trained for these kinds of missions, the operational and logistical capacities and forward-leaning culture of the military offered the most expedient and cost-effective solution to a problem for which the U.S. bureaucracy was unprepared.

A crisis of competence

The inability of civilian agencies to meet the increasing foreign policy demands resulted from deficiencies in both capability and capacity. The former was a function of an entrenched Cold War culture within State which was not prepared for the dynamic security environment of the post-Cold War era (Halberstam 2001, 30; Murdock et al 2005, 63). Institutionally, State was organized to manage state-to-state relationships, reflecting the realpolitik that characterized U.S. international relations after World War II (Gates 2010). Its regional bureaus were stovepiped and parochial, and its promotion system provided no incentives to work across bureaus or outside the agency, or even to spend extensive time in overseas tours (Mowbray 2003, 100; Murdock et al. 2004; GAO 2006). For decades, resources had been distributed disproportionately to those bureaus that had been in the forefront of managing Cold War policy, so as the focus of U.S. foreign policy shifted in the 1990s to a few hotspots in the developing world, and then, after 9/11, to LDCs in Africa, the Middle East, and Central and Eastern Asia, State Department and other civilian agency personnel lacked the knowledge, expertise, and experience needed to deal with the economic and political development needs of post-conflict and weak and failing states in culturally and ethnically diverse regions of the world.

Even where civilian agencies had relevant expertise, the capacity to apply it to emerging security challenges was severely limited by insufficient personnel and numerous legislative restrictions. State-building and development had never been priorities for the State Department, so the few Foreign Service Officers who had relevant experience were insufficient to cover the increasing demand. Unlike the military, agencies lacked the legal authority to deploy civil servants to crisis regions without their consent, and State had not

directed Foreign Service Officers to take posts involuntarily since Vietnam (Murdock et al. 2004, 62; 2005, 63; Van Buren 2011, 11). The foreign aid accounts overseen by State took years to approve and new expenditures were hampered by numerous congressional earmarks and restrictions (Livingston 2011). Perhaps most importantly for the challenges that emerged after 2001 was the lack of any strategic planning process or expertise (U.S. Commission on National Security 2001). In the military, officers are exposed to strategic planning from early on in their careers, and all of the regional Combatant Commands and their subordinate Component Commands have dedicated planning staffs with hundreds of personnel.⁶ Nothing comparable exists within the civilian agencies, nor do the cultures of those agencies lend themselves to strategic planning (Murdock et al 2005, 45-49). This resulted in ad hoc responses to crises as they arose, often spearheaded by an undermanned and overworked embassy staff, with only limited support from Washington (GAO 2006). Compounding the lack of planning and coordination within agencies was the fact that there are no standardized procedures for such planning across government agencies, and no capacity at the National Security Council level to integrate strategies and plans in order to create a synchronized and coordinated U.S. government response (Murdock et al. 2004, 61).

USAID was perhaps better prepared than State for the challenges presented by the new emphasis on stabilization and reconstruction (S&R), at least with regards to the experience of its personnel with the economic development that was critical to these efforts. Unfortunately, USAID's capacity to handle either the number or scope of the crises that emerged in the 1990s – to say nothing of Afghanistan and Iraq – was only a fraction of what was required. USAID's manpower had fallen precipitously after the end of the Vietnam War,

⁶ The regional Combatant Commands are NORTHCOM, PACOM, SOUTHCOM, CENTCOM, EUCOM, and AFRICOM, each of which has a subordinate Component Command from each of the four services – Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines.

when it had boasted around 15,000 people to support its missions around the world. After 1970, that number dropped to below 5,000, and after 1990 continued to fall, losing 1200 people and 21 overseas missions between 1989 and 1995 (Clarke et al. 1997). By 2000, USAID had only 2500 staff members, and most of its operations were being overseen by a single officer in each embassy and run by contractors (U.S. Census Bureau 1980; 1992; 2012). This meant that many of USAID's personnel in Washington lacked significant field experience, and that its representatives in the field, who were hired to oversee specific development projects, had little understanding of the agency's mission, processes, or capabilities (Murdock et al. 2005, 64). This became a major hindrance to interagency coordination in the Balkans and later in Afghanistan and Iraq, when the U.S. military, tasked with leading reconstruction efforts with which they had little to no expertise, were often unable to find USAID representatives with either the knowledge to speak to USAID's capacity or the authority to commit resources (State Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (hereafter CRS) 2006).

The first real effort to address the institutional deficiencies revealed by the events of the 1990s was the Clinton administration's Presidential Decision Directive (PDD) 56, "Managing Complex Contingency Operations." Released in 1997, this document recognized the difficulties posed by the kinds of crisis to which the U.S. had been responding, and directed future operations be better coordinated between the military and civilian agencies. It called for formalized interagency planning and coordination of all complex contingency operations (CCOs), which it defined as peacekeeping/enforcement operations, humanitarian interventions, and humanitarian assistance/disaster relief operations. It also called for integration of civilian and military components of such operations at the operational and

tactical levels, and significantly, for the proper resourcing of civilian agencies in order to facilitate this (The White House 1997). Unfortunately, little action was taken to comply with the intent of PDD-56.

While PDD-56 outlined the first steps toward achieving an improved capacity for dealing with emerging security threats, Clinton's foreign policy team failed to clearly articulate a vision for the future, and the level of dissatisfaction among stakeholders in the bureaucracy was insufficient to overcome the resistance of entrenched bureaucratic interests across the interagency. State remained primarily focused on diplomatic relations with the developed nations of the world. USAID continued to suffer from budget cuts in an era when Congress was facing domestic pressure for the U.S. to withdraw somewhat from its role as world leader and let others, primarily Europe, carry some of the burden. The military, for its part, was not particularly enamored of the new roles it was playing, roles so varied and non-traditional they were dubbed "military operations other than war," creating the awkward-sounding acronym MOOTWA. Yet in the post-Cold War environment of peace dividends and drastic military downsizing and budget cuts, MOOTWA represented an important justification for retaining military capabilities and capacities and developing new weapons systems, so the military embraced them and touted their accomplishments before Congress.

By the end of the decade, civilian agencies involved in CCOs, primarily USAID and State, still lacked the resources, personnel, expertise, and authority to effectively lead or conduct humanitarian assistance, stability, and reconstruction operations. Unlike the military, they also lacked a developed doctrine and standard operating procedures, so their efforts in the field continued to be ad hoc and inefficient (Hamblet and Kline 2000). No mechanism existed for interagency planning and coordination at the strategic level, and, operationally,

efforts to better coordinate an interagency response to CCOs continued to be hampered by the lack of a regional civilian counterpart to the military Combatant Commander, and by the disparity between the resources the military could bring to bear and those available to civilian agencies. Such was the institutional context within which the U.S. embarked on a global crusade to spread democracy and wipe out terrorism.

Post-9/11 strategy: Prevention through state-building

The attacks on September 11, 2001 ushered in a paradigm shift in U.S. foreign and security policy. While concerns about China, Russia, and a handful of rogue states remained, the greatest threat to U.S. security revealed itself to be an asymmetrical one that came not from state actors, but from terrorists and radical extremists operating from ungoverned spaces throughout the developing world. Although President Bush's 2002 National Security Strategy warned that the U.S. would strike preemptively against known terrorist bases, regardless of traditional notions of state sovereignty, the stark truth was that America's great military might was largely ineffective as a deterrent to cellular organizations like Al Qaeda, which could operate from beyond the reach of weak governments in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. The new national security strategy therefore laid out an expansive and ambitious doctrine of prevention, focused on reducing the root causes of terrorism by improving governance, economic development, and security capacity "across the globe (White House 2002)."

The shift in policy away from traditional threats and toward the new threats posed by non-state actors operating from weak and under-developed states can be seen in the dramatic change in the distribution of U.S. security assistance after 2001 (See Table 2.1). In the eight

years following 2001, total security assistance increased by roughly 20% over that distributed between 1989 and 2001. More telling than the increase in security assistance dollars, however, is how they were allocated. Security assistance to Sub-Saharan Africa nearly doubled, and that to Asia nearly tripled, while assistance to Oceania and Eastern Europe was cut roughly in half, and assistance to Western Europe was cut almost completely. Meanwhile, security assistance to the Middle East and North Africa, which has traditionally received the lion's share, increased by less than 10%, and aid to Latin America, despite the ongoing drug war and connections between drug smuggling and terrorism, was cut by almost 20%.

President Bush's NSS provided the vision that would guide institutional change over the next decade. The irony of Bush's security strategy is that it represented a deep commitment to

state-building, something he had criticized the Clinton administration for during his campaign for the presidency (Cronin 2007, 172). Development was touted as a critical component of U.S. national security, vital to the stabilization of weak and failing states from which terrorism and radicalism emerged. By the time the 2006 National Security Strategy was released, development, both economic and political, had been established as a "central pillar of national security, equal to defense and diplomacy (White House 2010, 6)."

Conceptualizing development as critical to America's own security would justify increases in foreign aid not simply on moral and humanitarian grounds, but as a cost-saving investment against future attacks and costly military interventions (Brainard 2007, 16). American development assistance would come with sticks as well as carrots, however. An ideological commitment to democratic governance as the balm for all social ills underscored the emphasis in the evolving national security policy on reforms in the areas of human rights,

rule of law, responsible and accountable government, and political freedoms. The U.S. would provide ample support for such reforms as part of a holistic approach to development, but commitment to political reform was a requirement to receive economic development assistance.

TABLE 2.1: Distribution of U.S. Security Assistance (in billions, constant 2009 \$US)

Region	1989-2001	2002-2009
Middle East & North Africa	103.6	111.6
Sub-Saharan Africa	27.2	51.3
Latin America & Caribbean	26.8	21.9
Asia	19.8	56.1
Oceania	3.7	1.7
Eurasia	19.6	18
Eastern Europe	10.2	5.3
Western Europe	13.4	1.1
Total Security Assistance	224.3	266.9

Source: *U.S. Overseas Loans and Grants: Obligations and Loan Authorizations, July 1, 1945-September 30, 2009.*

<http://gbk.eads.usaidallnet.gov/>

The two aspects of the Janus-faced Bush Doctrine were displayed in the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. Both were justified by the Bush administration as preemptive strikes, one against a regime that harbored terrorists and one against a regime that was believed to have both weapons of mass destruction and links to Al Qaeda. Both were conducted with the intent of replacing the existing regimes with ones that would govern more democratically and act as responsible members of the international community. This meant that after the dust settled, government and civil society in both countries would have to be rebuilt completely, or, perhaps more accurately, constructed from scratch. In neither case, however, was there much consideration or planning for post-conflict reconstruction. This is often attributed by Bush administration critics to a combination of ignorance, naiveté, hubris, and negligence on

the part of key administration officials, but even if there had been a concerted effort to plan for post-conflict reconstruction, the existing lack of capability and capacity and the absence of an established inter-agency planning and coordinating process would have severely limited its effectiveness. The resulting chaos and insecurity in the absence of any effective government in either nation thrust the military into the role of occupier, peacekeeper, and service provider for two populations desperately in need of order and stability, not to mention food, water, and electricity. The U.S. found itself involved in state-building on a scale that far surpassed anything in the Balkans or in Haiti, with neither the plans nor the civilian resources to achieve success.

The institutions you have...

In December of 2004, in a meeting with U.S. troops deploying to Iraq, then Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld was asked by a soldier why they were having to scrounge up scrap metal to armor their vehicles. Rumsfeld infamously responded “You go to war with the army you have, not the army you might want, or wish to have at a later time (Schmitt 2004).” Although he was widely criticized for being insensitive and out of touch with the troops, his statement accurately sums up the relationship between President Bush’s national security strategy and the institutions responsible for implementing it. Reconstruction efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan revealed three stark realities facing American policy makers.

The first reality was that the lack of capacity within State and USAID meant that the military would be responsible not just for creating a secure environment by defeating insurgencies, but also for rebuilding the institutions and infrastructure needed to stabilize these countries and get their governments and economies working again. These were not

tasks for which the military was trained, nor did many in the military have much experience in them, other than those who had taken part in the Haiti, Bosnia, or Kosovo operations. What the military did have, however, were the critical assets that State and USAID lacked: manpower, logistical capacity, experienced planners, and access to a huge pot of money. First in Afghanistan, and later in Iraq, the U.S. established Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) to try to tackle the dual problem of security and development throughout the countryside. PRTs were small, 100-person teams whose primary missions were to improve security, extend the reach of the Afghan government, and facilitate reconstruction (State 2006). They were to consist of representatives from State, USAID, and sometimes the Department of Agriculture (USDA), as well as U.S. Army Civil Affairs Teams (CAT), but the majority of personnel were military troops whose job was to provide some measure of security against insurgents. The civilians were intended to take the lead on reconstruction and governance issues, supported by the Army CATs. In principle, the security provided by the troops would enable the civilian agency representatives to link local needs to national development programs and coordinate local development projects with NGOs and the international donor community. The PRTs would also support Afghan National Army (ANA) forces and provincial governors in order to extend the authority of the central government and begin to establish its legitimacy among the population.

Unfortunately, the lack of civilian capacity and interagency coordination mechanisms meant that most of the civilian positions went unfilled, putting military officers in charge of reconstruction and governance issues in addition to security. When State, USAID, and USDA did send personnel, they were usually junior and inexperienced, lacked the expected expertise in governance, and had no authority to commit agency funds or resources to

development projects, giving them little credibility in the eyes of their teammates (McNerney 2006, U.S. Institute for Peace (hereafter USIP) 2009). On a team commanded by a Lieutenant Colonel with 20 years of experience and the full support of the military, this combination relegated civilians to an advisory role, rather than to the leadership role for which they were intended (State 2006). Operational guidance for the PRTs was intentionally vague to allow for flexibility in dealing with a vast array of issues in regions whose needs differed greatly from one another. But the lack of clarity led to additional confusion about civilian and military roles and responsibilities, exacerbating the disparities in experience and funding. Additionally, the civilian agencies lacked the information and communications capacity to effectively communicate with their representatives on the PRTs. This meant not only that they were limited in their ability to monitor activities around the country, but also that the civilian team members had no access to reach-back support or to information on other regional and national activities. This limited the contributions they could make to team efforts and further undermined their credibility (State 2006).

By most accounts, the military-led and dominated PRTs were largely successful at improving security, development, and governance, but there was a steep learning curve. Many projects were done without coordinating with the central government, or without consultation or buy-in from the local authorities. Other projects would turn out to be unsustainable without continued U.S. or coalition support. When a PRT in Afghanistan built a school without coordinating with the Ministry of Education, the inability of the Afghan government to provide teachers and materials undermined, rather than reinforced, its credibility (State 2006, Abbaszadeh 2008). Such mistakes are attributable to the fact that the military is not trained for such missions, nor does it have a comparative advantage in most

related tasks, other than logistics. When civilian agencies could not fill their billets on the PRT, or filled them with someone who lacked the required expertise, the military did what it is trained to do – innovate and apply the resources available to try to solve the problem at hand. This included building schools and clinics, repairing critical infrastructure, disarming and reintegrating insurgents, helping to conduct and monitor elections, providing medical and veterinary care, delivering donated clothes, school supplies, and medical supplies from American and international NGOs and private donors, patrolling with ANA soldiers, and training and mentoring local security and police forces.

In places where the security threat from insurgents was high, NGOs often could not operate, so the PRT was the only entity providing such services. In these areas, the PRTs had the most success. In lower threat areas, however, where aid and development NGOs were present, well-intentioned PRT efforts often undermined or duplicated what the NGOs were trying to accomplish. Especially during the early phases of reconstruction, PRTs focused their efforts on short turn-around, quick impact projects that built good will and confidence in the central government. This was at odds with the philosophy of experts in the development community, who believe in capacity-building projects that empower locals and create sustainable improvements. NGOs complained that the well-resourced and quick-moving PRTs were sending the wrong message by providing improvements in which the local community did not have a vested stake, or which locals would not be able to sustain over the long term (Patrick and Brown 2007). Despite the many successes of the PRTs, therefore, the mistakes they made, the tensions they created, and the increased demands they placed on the military contributed to a rising level of dissatisfaction among U.S. leaders and international partners with the existing institutional capacities.

The second revelation was that not only would the military continue to take the lead in post-conflict reconstruction, but it would also have to play a significant role in the kind of non-conflict state-building called for by the evolving national security strategy. With what little civilian capacity there was devoted to reconstruction efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan, the military found itself tasked with more than just security sector development in developing countries from Africa to Asia. The expansive definition of “security” articulated by U.S. national security policy created an imperative for political stability in the developing world from which emerged a host of new and expanded missions for the military. By 2004, U.S. forces were leading “counter-terror” missions in 18 countries in Northern and Eastern Africa, under the Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa, the Trans-Sahara Counter-Terrorism Partnership, and the East Africa Counterterrorism Initiative. Elsewhere, they were conducting anti-terror-related security assistance in the Philippines and Georgia, counter-narcoterror security assistance, and the continuing stabilization and reconstruction missions in Bosnia and Kosovo (Patrick and Brown 2007, Grimmet 2011). While the primary focus of all of these missions was military training, they also included good governance initiatives, including judicial reform, rule of law, and efforts to improve transparency and accountability, and quick-impact humanitarian assistance and development projects.

As an institution and as individuals, the military has characteristically embraced the new missions and devoted its extensive resources, manpower, and ingenuity to finding ways to achieve success in them (Gates 2009). Doing so, however, has strained the capacity of the military to effectively perform its traditional and primary mission of war fighting. Reduced time and resources available for training, extended deployments, and shortened at-home cycles have put a severe strain on service members and their families. For the first several

years of operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere, these missions were conducted on a largely ad hoc basis, without much in the way of strategic guidance, and without dedicated funding, a situation which was unacceptable to military leaders who anticipated these and similar missions would continue to be a major responsibility for the armed forces. In an attempt to define the scope of these missions and provide operational and strategic guidance for them, DOD issued in 2005 a policy directive entitled *Military Support for Stability, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction (SSTR) Operations*, and defined “stability operations” as

“Military and civilian activities conducted across the spectrum from peace to conflict to establish or maintain order in States and regions.... The immediate goal is to provide the local populace with security, restore essential services, and meet humanitarian needs. The long term goal is to help develop indigenous capacity for securing essential services, a viable market economy, rule of law, democratic institutions, and a robust civil society (2).”

This definition is conspicuously broad, and explicitly includes helping to build, rebuild, or revive both security and non-security institutions, the private sector, and representative governmental institutions. While the DOD directive acknowledged that these tasks are best performed by civilian professionals, it reflects the experiences of the previous several years by designating stability operations as a “core U.S. military mission” as important as combat operations, and directs that “U.S. military forces shall be prepared to perform all tasks necessary to establish or maintain order when civilians cannot do so (DOD 2005, 2).” The Defense Department’s 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) further directed that DOD develop a “roadmap” for “Building Partnership Capacity (BPC),” which specifically included expanding the military’s ability to help partners “extend governance to under- and ungoverned areas,” and defined governance as including “security, economy and

infrastructure, political institutions, and rule of law (DOD, “BPC Roadmap,” 2006, 12).” The QDR made clear that DOD needed to be appropriately organized, trained, equipped, and authorized to conduct the broad spectrum of traditional and non-traditional BPC missions implicit in the current national security strategy (DOD, “QDR,” 2006; Edelman 2006; USIP 2010).

While the 2006 QDR outlined major institutional reforms designed to maximize the military’s capacity to conduct S&R operations in all of their forms, Defense Department leaders also made clear that they considered the military’s dominant role in such operations to be a temporary fix born out of necessity. They became strong proponents of increasing the funding and institutional capacity of State, USAID, and other agencies to take on more of the burden of state-building (Edleman 2007; Gates 2009; 2010; Epstein 2011a). The QDR and BPC Roadmap even tasked DOD with assisting State to lobby Congress for the expansion of civilian capacities, and former Secretary of Defense Robert Gates testified before the Senate Budget Committee in 2009 in favor of an increased foreign affairs budget, stating that it is “in the Pentagon’s interest to have a healthier foreign aid budget” and that much of what DOD was spending on reconstruction efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan should be coming out of an enhanced State Department foreign operations budget (DOD, BPC,” 2006; Maze 2009).

The third reality was that the current legislative authorities, planning and approval processes, and military doctrine were not appropriate to support these non-traditional missions on such a large scale. The principal legislation governing U.S. foreign aid and security assistance, The Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (FAA61), had been amended more than 100 times by 2002, and more than 40 legislative authorities have been passed outside of FAA61 (State CRS 2007; State 2007; U.S. Congress 2003). It was outdated and

cumbersome, earmarked over 80% of all funds, tightly restricted executive authority to disburse funds, imposed burdensome reporting requirements, and was unresponsive to the kind of emerging and rapidly-changing security threats being faced by the military (Harvey 2006 ; State OIG 2007). Security assistance programs, in particular, were a legacy of the Cold War, designed to cultivate allies and build up large conventional forces with which to deter or resist Soviet expansion. The majority of aid came from the USAID-administered Economic Support Fund (ESF), a budget support program that provided fungible assistance to friendly nations trying to build up their defenses against the Communist threat. The two principle military assistance programs, Foreign Military Financing (FMF) and International Military Education and Training (IMET), were controlled by the State Department and required lead times of up to two years to get requests approved. In Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as elsewhere in the world, the military was forced to cobble together funds from multiple authorities and funding sources in order to meet its S&R and security assistance missions, and often faced lengthy bureaucratic delays when it needed to respond rapidly in order to have any significant impact (Harvey 2006). What military commanders needed was access to flexible and readily available funds for activities that ranged from training and equipping foreign militaries to fight terrorists and insurgents to building schools, clinics, and critical infrastructure.

Loosening the reins on security assistance

Dissatisfaction with the existing military capabilities went beyond the military leadership. The American public became increasingly disenchanted with the slow pace of reconstruction and the casualties being suffered by U.S. personnel, and international support

for U.S. efforts began to wane. As pressure mounted on Congress and the Bush administration to demonstrate observable improvements in Afghanistan and Iraq, policy makers recognized the importance of giving the military the tools it needed to carry out its missions there. Despite voicing concerns about loss of State Department control and Congressional oversight, Congress granted DOD a number of new flexible funding authorities.

In 2004, Congress began funding the Commanders' Emergency Response Program (CERP), authorizing a program that had been established the year before by the Coalition Provincial Authority in Iraq and initially funded with frozen Iraqi assets (Martins 2005). Congress also expanded CERP authority to Afghanistan, providing commanders in both countries with readily available, unprogrammed money to "respond to urgent humanitarian relief and reconstruction requirements" with quick-turn, high-impact projects that would have an immediate effect (U.S. Congress, "Emergency Supplemental," 2003). CERP's effect was both immediate and positive, funding projects that ranged from rebuilding hospitals and critical infrastructure to cleaning streets, removing garbage, and getting generators running in municipal buildings. Most CERP projects drew on the local economy for supplies and services, providing desperately-needed jobs and pumping hundreds of millions of dollars into the local economies (Martins 2005). Compared with similar USAID "Quick Impact Projects," which could take 6-12 months to complete and relied heavily on U.S.-based contractors, CERP-funded construction projects were often contracted through local NGOs and completed in less than half the time (State 2006). CERP funds were also used for humanitarian relief supplies, which were then delivered by the military to places NGOs and international organizations could not reach due to the security threat (Martins 2005). While

the direct incursion of the military into development raised some concerns among development experts, the positive immediate results were tangible, and in most places where CERP money was being spent, public safety and security improved noticeably (Cronin 2007, Murdock et al. 2005).

The success of CERP in Iraq and Afghanistan, combined with the growing list of countries in which military forces were conducting counterterrorism and stabilization operations, led Congress to expand the authority of an already existing but more restricted fund, the Combatant Commander Initiative Fund (CCIF). The 2007 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) expanded the existing authorization to include “civic assistance” activities, “enabling geographic combatant commanders to respond to unanticipated emergencies...by providing urgent humanitarian relief and reconstruction assistance, particularly in foreign countries where U.S. armed forces are engaged in contingency operations (U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee 2008).” This created a CERP-like authorization to be used in support of stability operations elsewhere in the world at the Combatant Commander’s discretion, with fewer restrictions than those on existing humanitarian relief and civil assistance programs.

In 2005, Congress also granted DOD a major train and equip authority under section 1206 of the FY2006 NDAA. This provided Combatant Commanders with more flexible funding for two specific purposes: to improve partner nations’ counterterrorism capabilities and to improve their ability to work with U.S. forces in combined operations. The authorizing legislation requires all training programs include elements that promote human rights and subordination of the military to legitimate civilian authority (U.S. Congress

2006).⁷ What made Section 1206 authorization distinct from traditional train and equip programs, principally IMET and FMF, was that the funds were not controlled by State, although all programs required “dual-key” authorization by the Secretaries of Defense and State (NDAA FY06). This dramatically shortened the approval process and enabled military commanders to respond quickly to friendly government’s requests for training and new equipment. Since then, Combatant Commanders have spent over \$1 billion in appropriated 1206 funds providing training and equipment to over 50 countries in Africa, Eastern Europe, the Middle East, Central, South, and East Asia, and Latin America (Serafino 2011a). Many of these countries received little or no training and equipment from the U.S. prior to 2002, but now represented important centers of gravity for improving international stability and security. This training has not only improved security capacities in these countries, but also U.S. relations with the recipient governments, creating access with which to promote non-military objectives of U.S. security policy. While, by law, 1206 money may only be used to train “national military forces,” in practice, some of the training programs for foreign military members have included non-military members of the government. By doing so, 1206-funded training has promoted civil-military relations, interagency coordination and cooperation, judicial reform, and rule of law, all considered central to U.S. political development and good governance objectives.

The new legislative authorities and flexible funding created since 2003 have enabled the military to more efficiently and effectively carry out both military and non-military capacity-building in support of U.S. national objectives. Much of this work has necessarily been in areas of development traditionally reserved to civilian governmental and non-

⁷ For ease of comprehension, subsequent references to Defense Authorization Acts will be cited as NDAA and fiscal year, i.e. NDAA FY06. Complete listings of all legislation is found in the bibliography.

governmental agencies and organizations, and in many parts of the developing world the face of the U.S. has indeed been a military one, often under the auspices of security assistance. Traditionally, DOD security assistance programs account for less than 10% of U.S. security assistance; the remainder is designated economic security assistance and controlled mostly by State and USAID, as well as other civilian agencies. After 9/11, however, DOD-managed security assistance expenditures increased exponentially, totaling over \$29 billion between 2002 and 2009, almost six times the \$5.1 billion the DOD spent on security assistance in the 13 years leading up to 2002. Over the same time period, economic security assistance increased by only 7%, totaling just under \$60 billion, as compared to the \$55 billion in economic security assistance spent between 1989 and 2001 (U.S. Agency for International Development 2010). The six-fold increase in DOD security assistance since 2001 reflects both the broad expansion of what qualifies as security-related and the shift of the capacity-building and development burden onto the military.

The reality, given the security strategy of the U.S., was that there were no other viable alternatives to having the military carry out these missions. Civilian and military leaders alike, in both the Bush and Obama administrations and in Congress, have strongly supported giving the military the tools it needed to perform these tasks. However, none of them have been content with the status quo, and these same leaders have made it clear that while the military must be empowered to perform such missions in the future, the dominant and leading role it has played over the last decade is not in the best interests of the military or U.S. foreign policy. Former Secretary of Defense Robert Gates became a leading advocate for increasing civilian capacity during the last several years of his tenure, and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has initiated a long-overdue overhaul of the State Department and U.S.

foreign aid policy. Congress, which has traditionally been especially wary of devolving too much power to the military, and members of which have been calling for such reforms for many years, has responded with legislation to significantly increase civilian agency capabilities and capacities in a determined effort to reestablish the State Department's lead role in U.S. foreign and security policy and to establish USAID as the preeminent development agency in the world.

Reasserting civilian control

The inability of the civilian interagency to respond to the crises of the past decade and the resulting heavy reliance on the military enabled institutional reforms that had previously been politically unachievable. The Clinton administration's PDD-56 attempted to create the tools and mechanisms needed to improve "the planning and management of complex contingency operations" in order to "achieve unity of effort among U.S. Government agencies and international organizations engaged in [them]." It tasked all agencies to assess their ability to meet these new missions under existing budget authorities, and to propose legislative solutions to close any potential capabilities or capacities gaps. The new policy also called for the creation within the NSC of "dedicated mechanisms and integrated planning processes" to improve interagency planning and coordination, including the establishment of an Executive Committee for any future CCO and the development of a comprehensive Political-Military Implementation Plan to standardize the government's planning process. Most of the reforms fell victim to bureaucratic inefficiencies and turf-protection and were never implemented (Serafino 2011b). Given the complete failure of the Bush administration's national security team to plan for the reconstruction of Iraq, it is difficult to

imagine that had such mechanisms been in place, at least some plan superior to what actually occurred would not have been proposed. However, that failure, and the costs associated with it in both Iraq and Afghanistan, paved the way for these and other reforms to finally gain broad bi-partisan, interagency, and legislative support a few years later.

In the aftermath of the early reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq, the Bush administration superseded PDD-56 in 2005 with National Security Policy Directive (NSPD) 44, entitled *Management of Interagency Efforts Concerning Reconstruction and Stabilization*. NSPD-44's lineage can be easily traced to PDD 56, but it also reflected the painful lessons learned from the military's efforts to lead the reconstruction effort in Iraq, and the reality that CCOs were going to continue to be the norm for some time to come. NSPD-44 established a permanent Policy Coordination Committee (PCC) for Reconstruction and Stabilization Operations under the NSC, to be chaired by the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization, a position created within State in 2004. More importantly, it designated the State Department as the undisputed lead agency for all stabilization and reconstruction operations. The Secretary of State and Secretary of Defense were charged with ensuring "harmonization [of S&R efforts] with any planned or ongoing U.S. military operations across the spectrum of conflict (The White House 2005, 2)." State is clearly in the driver's seat, however, tasked with coordinating the interagency planning process, developing integrated contingency strategies for stabilizing at-risk states, and establishing standardized guidance and procedures for stability and reconstruction operations.

State was also tasked with leading a government-wide effort to build up civilian capacities and capabilities to meet the demands of U.S. foreign and security policy. This effectively put State in charge of recommending expanded budgetary and legislative

authorities for all civilian agencies involved in S&R, and of resolving interagency differences in the process. Unlike a similar requirement in PDD-56, State's mandate in NSPD-44 to expand civilian capacity has been effective at securing the legislative and budgetary authorities to do so. Congress appropriated funds for additional civilian hires at State and USAID in the FY07 and FY08 budgets, and in 2008 codified State's interagency authority and civilian response mandate in the FY2009 National Defense Authorization Act.

However, to fulfill the vision outlined in the NSS of a new foreign policy architecture for the 21st century, one in which diplomacy reclaimed its status as equal to defense, and development was a "strategic, economic, and moral imperative (White House 2010, 1)," additional steps were still required. In 2010, the State Department released its inaugural Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR), highlighting the importance of diplomacy and development and of restructuring civilian agencies to improve both. Emulating the Defense Department's QDR, the QDDR laid out a four-year strategic plan for the State Department and USAID, calling for structural reform within State to better lead and coordinate the expansion and employment of civilian capacity, the strengthening of USAID to lead a more robust and comprehensive development effort, and the institutionalization of a crisis prevention and response capability within the interagency (State 2010).

The Obama White House also announced a new Global Development Policy that solidified development's status as a co-equal third pillar of national security policy. The new policy promised to reform U.S. development efforts, with a focus on sustainable development outcomes through economic growth and democratic governance, and through partnerships that both empowered and held accountable recipient governments. In order to do so, the policy makes a "long-term commitment to rebuilding USAID as the U.S.

Government’s lead development agency – and as the world’s premier development agency (The White House 2010).” Among the institutional reforms laid out in the policy directive, the President calls for the creation of “robust policy, budget, planning, and evaluation capabilities” within USAID, includes the Administrator of USAID as a member of his NSC, establishes an Interagency Policy Committee on Global Development on the NSC Staff, and directs that the government draft a Global Development Strategy, akin to the National Security Strategy, every four years.

These and other institutional reforms, initiated under the Bush administration and continued under President Obama, have received broad bipartisan support in Congress. In 2009 and 2010, Congress appropriated funding for over 3000 new Foreign Service Officers and Civil Service personnel at State and USAID (QDDR). Appropriations for all Function 150 Accounts⁸ increased steadily over the last decade, doubling – from \$30 billion to almost \$60 billion – since 2002 (Epstein 2011b, State 2011). Borrowing another tactic from DOD, State has begun separating its Function 150 budget request into a core budget and a separate, overseas contingency operations (OCO) budget, which accounts for roughly 15% of the total FY12 request. The OCO account requests about \$5 billion for interagency civilian efforts in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan, and another \$4 billion for civilian efforts in weak and failing states like Sudan, Somalia, Yemen, and Haiti (U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee 2011).

⁸ Function 150 contains funding for all U.S. international activities, including: operating U.S. embassies and consulates throughout the world; providing military assistance to allies; aiding developing nations; dispensing economic assistance to fledgling democracies; promoting U.S. exports abroad; making U.S. payments to international organizations; and contributing to international peacekeeping efforts. Funding for all of these activities constitutes about one percent of the federal budget. The major agencies in this function include the Departments of Agriculture, State, and the Treasury; the United States Agency for International Development; and the Millennium Challenge Corporation. See <http://budget.house.gov/BudgetProcess/BudgetFunctions.htm#function150>.

Congressional support for the new emphasis on development is also evidenced by the steady increase in foreign aid and development assistance in recent years. Foreign aid and development assistance are generally seen as low-hanging fruit for budget cuts, as they have little in the way of a domestic constituency. Yet development assistance increased 60% in FY09 from the previous year, another 26% in FY10, and the FY12 budget requests an additional 15% increase. Military and security assistance and contributions to international and multilateral development organizations have also risen steadily (Epstein, Nakamura, and Lawson 2009, Epstein, Lawson, and Resler 2011).

However, the 2012 budget request also reflects ways in which the strategic planning encompassed in the QDDR and the new emphasis on operationalizing civilian power has changed priorities within State. Despite the increases in funding for international operations, State's core budget request is essentially unchanged from 2010 levels (FY11 was funded under a continuing resolution, which carried over funding levels from FY10). Following the new policy guidance, State is focusing its energies and funds on countries where it can be most effective and where the U.S. has the greatest interest. This has meant cuts in economic assistance to Central and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia, and in development assistance to over 20 countries (SFRC 2011). State is also redirecting resources to areas of development where the U.S. believes it has a comparative advantage – food security, global health, sustainable economic growth, humanitarian assistance, and democracy, human rights, and governance (QDDR). The 2012 budget request also redirects money away from a number of domestic think tanks and foundations, and from legacy programs like the ESF and peacekeeping operations, to more flexible accounts like those that proved so effective when authorized for the military in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Expanding civilian capacity

If any single initiative illustrates the degree and nature of institutional change that has occurred throughout the foreign policy apparatus, it is the creation and evolution of the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS) within the State Department. The establishment of S/CRS was the direct result of the failure of the U.S. government to effectively plan and execute reconstruction efforts in Iraq (GAO, “Stabilization and Reconstruction,” 2007). In order to carry out the kind of foreign policy envisioned by the NSS, one that would likely involve three or more concurrent, multi-year S&R operations, in addition to numerous smaller scale stabilization efforts, the U.S. needed a greatly enhanced civilian capacity and improved interagency coordination mechanisms. The Bush administration established S/CRS in 2004 in order to “lead, coordinate, and institutionalize U.S. Government civilian capacity to prevent or prepare for post-conflict situations, and to help stabilize and reconstruct societies in transition (State 2005, 3).” Implicit in S/CRS’s mandate was a lead role in planning and managing S&R operations on the ground in foreign countries around the world. Not surprisingly, this generated significant resistance from senior officials in the regional bureaus and from Ambassadors, who have traditionally been responsible for all U.S. activities in their respective countries and regions of responsibility, and S/CRS struggled in its first few years to achieve its mandated leadership role within the State Department (GAO, “Military Operations,” 2007, State OIG 2007). S/CRS had strong support from three powerful institutions, however, that would allow it to overcome State’s internal bureaucratic resistance.

The first was the Presidency itself, or, more precisely, two consecutive presidents and their appointed Secretaries of State. President Bush’s NSPD-44 called for a “focal point...to

prepare, plan for, and conduct reconstruction and stabilization assistance and related activities,” and designated the Secretary of State as such, assisted primarily by the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization. Still, as S/CRS grew over the next few years and attempted to carry out both its interagency planning and coordination function and its mandate to lead S&R activities abroad, it continued to face resistance from the regional bureau staffs who refused to participate in S/CRS’s planning process or to allow S/CRS personnel into their region (GAO, “Stabilization and Reconstruction,”2007). So under the Obama administration, Secretary of State Clinton directed that conflict prevention and response become a core mission of the State Department and that the Coordinator position be elevated to an Assistance Secretary of State. In 2011, S/CRS was redesignated the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations (CSO), headed by the Assistance Secretary for Conflict and Stabilization Operations, and the *Foreign Affairs Manual*, which spells out roles and responsibilities within State, tasked CSO to “lead the development and deployment of a strong civilian response capability including necessary surges of personnel and resources, in coordination with relevant Department bureaus and other agencies (State 2012, 1).” Furthermore, a Deputy Assistant Secretary for Overseas Operations “monitors and directs the use of staff and other resources to achieve bureau operational priorities” and “supervises CSO’s overseas engagement teams conducting conflict prevention, response, and stabilization engagements (4).” Interestingly, the 2010 QDDR also called for strengthening the authority of Ambassadors over activities in their countries, but these internal administrative changes, pushed down on the bureaucracy from above, clearly established CSO’s lead role in S&R operations and activities.

Perhaps the most surprising support came from the Defense Department. Military leaders felt that the reconstruction effort in Iraq had fallen to them by default as a result of the lack of civilian planning and the absence of a deployable civilian capacity (Ricks 2006). DOD officials made it clear that such a civilian capacity was critical to the success of future missions, as well as the ongoing missions in Iraq and Afghanistan, and proposed in 2005 that Congress authorize the transfer of \$200 million from DOD to State specifically to bolster the capabilities of the fledgling S/CRS (State CRS 2005, 20). This money would come from the service-specific and defense-wide Operations and Maintenance (O&M) accounts, money that would otherwise have gone directly to military units to fund needed equipment and operational logistics, a testament to the importance military leaders placed on creating a civilian S&R capacity (Serafino 2011c). This was only a stop-gap measure, however; S/CRS was going to need substantial statutory and budgetary support from Congress if it was going to succeed. So the Secretary of Defense also directed that DOD assist State in its “efforts to obtain substantially increased resources for [S/CRS] and to establish a deployable Civilian Reserve Corps and a Conflict Response Fund (DOD, “BPC,” 2006, 12).” This included flag and general officers and senior DOD officials testifying before Congress in support of legislation strengthening S/CRS and USAID, support for State Department budget requests, and detailing military officers to S/CRS to improve coordination. At a time when DOD resources were being stretched thin by two ongoing wars, such unprecedented dedication of resources to another department reflected the paradigm shift that had taken place among leaders in the executive branch with regard to the appropriate role of the military in S&R operations and the need for a substantial civilian capacity to lead such activities.

Lastly, S/CRS found strong support in Congress. In response to a joint request from Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, section 1207 of the 2006 NDAA authorized the transfer from DOD to State of up to \$100 million annually in services, defense articles, and funds “for the purposes of facilitating the provision by the Secretary of State of reconstruction, security, or stabilization assistance to a foreign country (NDAA FY06, Sec. 1207; Perito 2008, 13).” Section 1207 provided State with a more flexible complement to traditional foreign aid programs, allowing it to respond to emergent S&R needs until other programs could be planned and funds allocated (SFRC 2008). Over the next five years, 1207 funding totaled more than \$445 million and supported State and USAID stabilization activities in 29 countries (State CRS 2011, Serafino 2011c). Beginning with the 2009 NDAA, Congress appropriated additional funds to DOD specifically for section 1207, so that DOD would no longer have to tap its own O&M resources. More importantly, the 2009 NDAA institutionalized S/CRS by establishing it in law and spelling out its statutory authority, which included monitoring, assessing, planning, and coordinating the interagency response to potential and ongoing S&R crises worldwide (NDAA FY09). Congress also appropriated \$45 million in FY09 under the Civilian Stabilization Initiative (CSI), \$23 million of which was earmarked for administrative expenses for S/CRS. In the subsequent two fiscal years, Congressional appropriations for the CSI nearly tripled, to \$120 million. A little over 20% of these appropriations went to expanding policy and planning capacities at S/CRS, while the remainder funded the training, equipping, deployment, and operational support of a new Civilian Response Corps (State 2011). The FY2010 NDAA also created a new Complex Crises Fund, which provided USAID with an independent source of

flexible funding for S&R activities, replacing section 1207 funds, which were not extended beyond FY2010 (Serafino 2011c, 5).

Despite the initial institutional resistance to S/CRS, executive and Congressional support has forced the acceptance of its leadership role in its functional area, and S/CRS has produced some tangible results. In 2007, S/CRS created the Interagency Management System for Reconstruction and Stabilization, a three-tiered structure of interagency bodies responsible for strategy development, deployed operational planning, and operational support to the country teams or military forces (State CRS 2007, 3). The following year, S/CRS led the development of a “USG Planning Framework for Reconstruction, Stabilization and Conflict Transformation,” which articulates the process and mechanisms by which policy formulation, strategy development, and implementation planning is conducted for an imminent or potential S&R crisis (State, “Planning Framework,” 2008). The S/CRS staff also created a new assessment tool, the Interagency Conflict Assessment Framework (ICAF), to “assess conflict situations systematically and collaboratively and prepare for interagency planning for conflict prevention, mitigation, and stabilization (State, “ICAF,” 2008, 1).” ICAF assessments have been conducted in more than 20 countries in order to identify and better understand the unique sources of conflict and potential mitigating factors in each country (State CRS 2011). The resulting assessments are then integrated into the Planning Framework to inform the development of goals, strategies, and resource allocations, and can also be used by individual agencies involved in development or conflict prevention activities to supplement interagency planning (State, “ICAF,” 2008). All three initiatives – the IMS, the Planning Framework, and the ICAF – were approved by the NSC, establishing them as the interagency standard and reinforcing S/CRS’s lead role in the planning and execution of

S&R missions. The elevation of S/CRS to bureau status in 2011 cemented that leadership role and gave CSO the institutional weight to hold its own in intra-agency conflicts with the regional bureaus.

More visibly, and perhaps most importantly, the establishment of the Civilian Response Corps (CRC) under S/CRS (now CSO) created a civilian capacity that is intended to be a counterpart (albeit a much smaller one) to the military. The CRC is intended to be a rapidly-deployable cadre of civilian experts from across the government that can respond within 48 hours to S&R crises, including those involving military conflict. Congress authorized three components of the CRC: an active and standby component of federal employees from eight different government agencies and a reserve component from the public and private sectors with expertise in various areas of reconstruction and development, modeled on the military reserves and National Guard (Serafino 2011b).⁹ By 2011, the CRC consisted of over 135 active and 1,100 standby personnel, roughly halfway toward the planned strength of 250 and 2200.¹⁰ In 2010, CRC personnel from seven different agencies made 292 deployments to 28 different locations in support of S&R operations. While a quarter of these deployments were to Afghanistan, the remainder included nine sites in Africa, seven in South and Central Asia, and three in the Middle East, reflecting CSO's emphasis on the most unstable regions in the world (State CRS 2011). State's FY 2012 budget asks Congress to continue funding all the elements of the CSI appropriation, now designated Conflict Stabilization Operations, to the tune of \$92 million, more than 70% of

⁹ Agencies committed to participate in the CRC include State, USAID, and the departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Justice, Health and Human Services, Homeland Security, Treasury, Energy, and Transportation.

¹⁰ Congress and the Obama administration have agreed that establishing the active and standby components should take priority over the reserve component, which may eventually take the form of a more cost-effective roster of technical experts who could be contracted as needed to support future reconstruction efforts.

which will fund operational support and training for the deployment of an anticipated 80 CRC personnel each month.

The institutionalization of the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations and the CRC represents the completion of the first major steps toward achieving the institutional change necessary to meet the objectives of U.S. national security strategy. It also illustrates the difficulty of overcoming bureaucratic resistance to such revolutionary change, and the level of combined inter-institutional effort required to do so. Leaders and critics alike agree that the civilian capacity and interagency planning improvements implemented to date remain insufficient to accomplish the full range and number of S&R missions that are likely to arise under the current foreign and security policy, but they are monumental improvements over what existed a decade ago, and the broad interagency support they have received so far bodes well for their continuing evolution.

Conclusion

The expansion of the role of the U.S. military in the execution of U.S. foreign policy over the last 20 years does not indicate a trend toward militarization, but is instead a story of institutional response to a major structural change to the international security environment that had shaped those institutions. Saddled with a bureaucracy entrenched in the priorities of the Cold War and unable to articulate a clear vision of America's role in the world, the administrations of Presidents Clinton and Bush responded to increasingly complex political and humanitarian crises around the world with the only instrument at their disposal that had the resources to pursue evolving American policy objectives across a spectrum from peace to war. The experiences of the 1990s and the systemic shock caused by the 9/11 attacks helped

to crystallize leaders' understanding of the evolving international security environment and their vision of how to shape it in the interest of the United States and other like-minded nations. That vision in turn called for major reforms in the foreign policy architecture of the U.S., reforms that followed familiar patterns of institutional change.

The vision for change was articulated in the 2002 and 2006 National Security Strategies, and reinforced by President Obama's 2010 NSS. At the agency level, the QDR and QDDR provided both a vision for how State, USAID, and DOD would meet the challenges of the new security environment and an outline of the first critical steps to achieve that vision. Additional steps were spelled out in NSPD-44 and the BPC Roadmap. The last piece required to effect change, a widespread and intense dissatisfaction with the status quo, finally coalesced around the institutional failures that led first to the 9/11 attacks and subsequently to the failure to adequately plan and execute the reconstruction of Iraq and Afghanistan. Still, it took a groundswell of dissatisfaction on the part of military and civilian leaders in both the Bush and Obama administrations, not to mention domestic and international public opinion, to finally overcome the entrenched resistance to change in Congress, State, and other agencies of the bureaucracy.

The State Department and USAID were the main focus of institutional change. The institutional reforms enacted by and on behalf of the State Department to a large extent mimicked structures and procedures that existed in the one institution that had responded with any success to the changing international environment, the Department of Defense. The QDDR and the separation of annual budget requests into base and contingency components are concepts taken explicitly from DOD. Elements of the Interagency Management System resemble mechanisms established by the military a generation ago to better plan and

coordinate operations conducted jointly by all four services. The creation of the CRC gives the President the unprecedented authority and capacity to deploy a civilian response to crisis, in the same way he has been able to deploy the military since the founding of the nation. Lastly, Congressional authorization of section 1207 and the Complex Crisis Fund, patterned on successful appropriations for the military like CERP and section 1206, give civilian agencies access to responsive, flexible funding needed to have an immediate impact in stabilization and reconstruction crises.

While the military will undoubtedly continue to play a significant role in stabilization and reconstruction operations around the world, in both conflict and non-conflict environments, the institutional changes implemented in recent years are intended to ensure a leadership role for the civilian agencies responsible for both the direction and implementation of U.S. foreign policy. The U.S. will likely face a broad spectrum of complex contingencies in the coming years that will require close coordination between the DOD, State, and other civilian agencies. The new mechanisms to facilitate that coordination across all strategic and operational levels will improve U.S. response capabilities and effectiveness, and the expansion of civilian capacity to execute policy in the field will reduce the demand on military forces and help restore a civilian face to U.S. foreign policy abroad.

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*Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan:
A Case Study of Military-led Stabilization and Reconstruction*

The national security strategy of the United States in the aftermath of the September 2001 terrorist attacks in New York and Washington envisions an active and engaged foreign policy. The principle threat to U.S. security interests at home and abroad is believed to come from transnational terrorism, particularly in the event that terrorists acquire weapons of mass destruction. Because such asymmetric threats from non-state actors are difficult to detect or deter, U.S. security strategy includes a proactive development component, intended to help weak and failing states enhance their capacity for governance, improve their security, and improve economic growth. The military is tasked with providing foreign military assistance and training, and so is generally thought of as the lead actor for security assistance, while the State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development are assumed to be responsible for political and economic development. But security and development are inextricably linked, and the reach and capacity of the U.S. military have involved it increasingly in areas of development that were traditionally reserved to government development agencies and NGOs. The military refers to these missions as Stability, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction Operations (SSTR), or often simply stability operations.

For the last 10 years, the U.S. has been conducting stability operations in Afghanistan. Stability operations are distinct and separate from combat operations, but an integral part of the overall strategy in Afghanistan. All units in Afghanistan at some time are involved in stability operations, but small civil-military units called Provincial

Reconstruction Teams, or PRTs, are tasked with spearheading the effort. A close examination of the mission and effectiveness of the PRTs offers a chance to study one particular component of U.S. strategy that exhibits many of the strengths and weaknesses of the broader U.S. strategy. Understanding where and why the PRTs have succeeded or failed to achieve their mission will be invaluable to the stability operations that are sure to follow in the coming decades.

Stability operations

For strategic planning purposes, the Department of Defense (DOD) defines a full spectrum of military operations, from “Phase Zero” to “Phase V.” Narrowly defined, Phase IV, often referred to as stabilization operations, occurs after conflict and involve establishing security and restoring services in preparation for transfer to civil authority, while Phase Zero, or shaping operations, are designed to prevent conflict in countries with weak or failing institutions or facing violent internal conflict.

Figure 3.1: Phases of military operations

	Phase 0	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III	Phase IV	Phase V
Phase	Shape	Deter	Seize initiative	Dominate	Stabilize	Enable civil authority
Primary Activities	Prevent Prepare	Crisis defined	Assume friendly freedom of action Access theater infrastructure	Establish dominant force capabilities Achieve full-spectrum superiority	Establish security Restore services	Transfer to civil authority Redeploy

Source: GAO-07-549, *Military Operations: Actions Needed to Improve DOD’s Stability Operations Approach and Enhance Interagency Planning*

Although the terms *stabilization* operations and *stability* operations are often used interchangeably, stability operations more accurately encompasses a range of missions and

activities that occur throughout the entire spectrum of conflict, although they are concentrated during Phase Zero and Phase IV. The activities in these two phases may be very similar, distinguished primarily by whether or not they are taking place in a post-conflict environment. According to the U.S. Army manual *Stability Operations*, the military groups these activities under five primary tasks:

- *Establish Civil Security*: Establishing a secure environment is critical to all of the other aspects of stabilization operations and to gaining the support of the population. It includes enforcing peace agreements, neutralizing small-scale resistance, and facilitating the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of combatants, as well as training host-nation security forces to take over these tasks.
- *Establish Civil Control*: Civil control is exercised by a capable police force, judiciary, and corrections system that together operate under the rule of law. In the absence of these capacities, the military must sometimes perform these functions on an interim basis while working with civilian agencies and the host nation to reform these institutions, train personnel, and establish rule of law. These efforts are often referred to collectively as Security Sector Reform (SSR), although this can also include reform of military and other security forces as well.
- *Restore Essential Services*: Stabilizing a country or region in the immediate aftermath of conflict or a natural disaster can depend largely on the ability of authorities to quickly restore the capacity to provide essential food, water, shelter, and medical care. Military forces have the logistical capacity to provide many of these services, in addition to other types of humanitarian assistance, for the short

and medium term while helping to reestablish the capacities of the host nation government.

- *Support to Governance:* The military is not expected to establish a democracy where none existed, but is capable of helping to restore public administration and public services, and helping to foster long-term political reform. The role of the military is primarily to establish a secure environment in which other partners can begin to build effective and representative institutions, but it can also support these efforts by monitoring elections, providing equipment and logistical support to government ministries, and helping to restore civil control and essential services.
- *Support to Economic and Infrastructure Development:* The rapid response and logistical capability of the military can help to jumpstart reconstruction of critical infrastructure in the wake of extended conflict or natural disaster. Infrastructure related transportation, telecommunications, resource extraction, energy production and distribution, and public services is critical to getting the economy moving again, and economic activity and growth are vital to establishing and maintaining stability.

Stability operations are not new a new mission for the military, but the standardized use of the term is. Military units performed similar activities in the reconstruction of Germany and Japan after World War II, in the aftermath of the Korean War and during the Vietnam War, in the reconstruction of Bosnia in the 1990s, and during countless peacekeeping and humanitarian and disaster relief operations around the world. However, the concept of stability operations as a synchronized set of activities that is relevant across the

spectrum of conflict and that is equal in importance to traditional combat operations is a product a post-9/11 security strategy that emphasizes military engagement around the world. Stability operations began early on in the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq, but they have also been a major effort in the broader Global War on Terror. U.S. troops have conducted a range of stability operations with governments in Africa and Asia to help them neutralize radical groups, control their territory, and reconnect with their people by improving governance and infrastructure. The establishment of a new unified military command in Africa with the explicit mandate to improve military support for civilian-led political and economic development activities on that continent is testimony to the continued role stability operation are expected to play in the coming years.

After a decade of intensive stability operations in developing nations around the world, however, it is still difficult to assess their impact or effectiveness. Outside of Afghanistan and Iraq, stabilization efforts have been fairly small-scale, relatively speaking. The experience in Iraq and Afghanistan, however, and especially in the latter, offers the opportunity to examine the effectiveness of a sustained and extensive stabilization effort in arguably the most difficult conditions imaginable, in the hopes of extracting lessons regarding the use of the military for these purposes. The reliance in Afghanistan (and later Iraq) on small, civil-military teams to lead and coordinate the stabilization effort at the grassroots level presents a microcosm of the greater strategy, in Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere, of applying all aspects of American civil and military power to improving stability in the developing world as a way of improving security for the United States. Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) represent the first institutionalized effort to synchronize and coordinate civilian and military efforts since the Civil Operations and

Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS) program in Vietnam. Although designed with an emphasis on security and force protection for the post-conflict environment of Afghanistan, the experience of the PRTs across the full continuum of stabilization activities will undoubtedly guide how the military and its partners in the civilian interagency approach stability operations in Phase Zero Shaping missions in weak states across the globe.

Over the last nine years, these Provincial Reconstruction Teams have demonstrated that coordinated, well-planned civil-military efforts can indeed help to improve stability in the areas in which they operate. Unfortunately, despite a long list of accomplishments, the strategy of using PRTs to lead the stabilization and reconstruction effort in Afghanistan appears to have largely failed. A decade after the defeat of the Taliban government, security in much of the country is near its worst levels, economy-driving infrastructure remains hopelessly inadequate, and the legitimacy of the Afghan government is challenged by high levels of corruption and poor delivery of services outside the major population centers. The failure of stabilization and reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan cannot be blamed on the PRTs, but the PRT strategy does represent a useful proxy for overall reconstruction strategy, and a mechanism for studying why the international coalition in Afghanistan has been unable to defeat the insurgency and rebuild a capable and sovereign government.

The stark contrast between the many impressive individual accomplishments and the failure of the larger stabilization and reconstruction strategy make this a useful case study with which to examine the strengths and weaknesses of military-led political and economic development efforts. As a case study, the PRTs in Afghanistan represent stability operations at their most complex and in the most extreme security environment. Stability operations carried out elsewhere in the world are unlikely to present the array of security, terrain,

infrastructure, and cultural challenges, making lessons drawn from the Afghan experience more easily transportable to stability operations in Phase Zero conditions in Africa and Asia. In addition, the mechanisms and capacities developed by the U.S. to better conduct and coordinate a whole-of-government stabilization effort in Afghanistan are more likely to be able to meet the requirements of stability operations elsewhere in the world.

Examining the evolution of the PRTs in Afghanistan reveals that they failed to achieve their three-fold mission of improving security, governance, and development for three principle reasons. First, the PRTs were too few in number and insufficiently resourced to effectively stabilize their areas of responsibility. A second reason was the failure to create effective support and coordination mechanisms for the PRTs, which resulted in crippling inefficiencies. Finally, the PRTs were attempting to impose Western-style order and values on a culture with a long tradition of decentralized and autonomous tribal authority, a history of deep tribal and clan rivalries, a near-institutionalized acceptance of patronage and corruption, and a debilitating lack of human capacity. The failure to fully understand these cultural realities led to tactical and strategic mistakes which undermined the PRTs' efforts to foster stability and good governance.

The case study that follows will begin with an overview of the greater U.S. strategy for Afghanistan and of the mission of the PRTs. Following that, I analyze each of the three mission areas – security, governance, and development – with respect to how they were affected by these three factors – lack of capacity, inadequate support and coordination mechanisms, and the failure to understand and appreciate the cultural terrain - and how the PRTs in some cases overcame them. Finally, I draw on the analysis to suggest how the

experience of the PRTs in post-conflict Afghanistan can inform stability operations in the future, regardless of the environment or country in which they are undertaken.

Defeating al-Qaeda through creative destruction

The Taliban government in Afghanistan was the first to feel the effects of what became known as the Bush Doctrine. In October, 2001, less than a month after the September 11th attacks on New York and Washington D.C. by al-Qaeda terrorists, a U.S.-led coalition commenced military operations in Afghanistan in reprisal for the Taliban government's support of al-Qaeda. President George W. Bush's justification for the attacks was articulated subsequently in the 2002 National Security Strategy. The United States would "make no distinction between terrorists and those who knowingly harbor or provide aid to them (White House 2002, 6)." Denying sanctuary and support to terrorists was part of a state's sovereign responsibility, and the U.S. would act preemptively against both terrorists and those states who failed to accept that responsibility. The military defeat and political overthrow of the Taliban took less than two months. The ground offensive was carried out primarily by Afghan forces of the Northern Alliance, with massive U.S. air support and fewer than 2000 U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF) troops. At a United Nations-sponsored conference in Bonn in December, an interim, Afghan-led government was established and all parties agreed to the creation of a United Nations peacekeeping force, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). American and coalition forces then turned their attention to the primary U.S. goal of destroying al-Qaeda, while ISAF took the lead on stabilizing Afghanistan.¹¹

¹¹ The U.S.-led international coalition, initially designated Combined Joint Task Force 180 and later subsumed under Combined Forces Command – Afghanistan (CFC-A), was separate and distinct from ISAF. CFC-A was primarily performing a counterterrorism mission, while ISAF was initially a peacekeeping and stabilization force.

Resistance from both Taliban and al-Qaeda fighters continued, at times fiercely, but it was uncoordinated and scattered throughout the imposing terrain of eastern and southern Afghanistan. By May of 2003, the U.S. declared that major combat was over and that the U.S. would now focus on stabilizing and reconstructing Afghanistan and preparing the country for presidential elections the following year. In military terminology, the U.S. had transitioned to Phase IV operations. There were fewer than 8,000 U.S. troops on the ground (Council on Foreign Relations (hereafter CFR) 2012).

The 2002 National Security Strategy identified international terrorism as the most significant threat to U.S. national security, and outlined a broad development strategy intended to address the root causes of terrorism globally – poverty, weak and corrupt governments, and political alienation. Afghanistan had been an attractive sanctuary for al-Qaeda not only because of the complicit Taliban government, but also because of the harshness of the terrain, the scattered and poorly educated population, and the poor state of development, all of which posed difficult challenges for western intelligence agencies trying to monitor al-Qaeda's operations. The U.S. and its coalition partners understood that in order to stabilize the new Afghan government and deny access to al-Qaeda or other terrorists in the future, Afghanistan would need extensive international aid in order to build any semblance of a modern infrastructure and economy, and to build the capacity of the government.

An important goal of the military-led development effort was to gain the trust and confidence of the local population, in order to encourage cooperation with the coalition forces and undermine support for the Taliban and other belligerents. As U.S. forces continued to hunt down and kill or capture Taliban and al-Qaeda fighters throughout 2002, they also deployed Army Civil Affairs Teams (CATs) and Coalition Humanitarian Liaison

Cells, small teams whose mission was to conduct or facilitate small-scale development projects to address humanitarian needs, in order to earn the trust and cooperation of the Afghan population (International Security Assistance Force (hereafter ISAF) 2008). In early 2003, the U.S.-led coalition enhanced this concept, establishing four Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Gardez, Kunduz, Bamyan, and Mazar-e Sharif, strategic locations that corresponded to heavy concentrations of the country's four main ethnic groups – Pashtuns, Tajiks, Hazaras, and Uzbeks. PRTs were intended to monitor the security situation, be the eyes and ears of coordinating bodies in Kabul, and be the locus of civil-military efforts to facilitate political and economic development, a parallel line of effort to the kinetic counterterrorism activities of the coalition forces (McNerney 2006). In late-2003, Lieutenant General Barno took command of U.S. and coalition forces, and immediately laid out a plan to expand the PRTs throughout Afghanistan. LTG Barno believed that the military strategy needed to shift from the capture or kill of counterterrorism to a counterinsurgency (COIN) strategy, with an emphasis on extending the security footprint in order to separate the local populations from the residual Taliban and al-Qaeda fighters, and on extending the reach of the Afghan government and the international presence to areas with which they had had little or no contact.¹² Establishing more PRTs throughout the provinces would create pockets of security from which to coordinate economic development and build the capacity for governance at the local level, which could then be linked to the central government in Kabul.

By mid-2005 PRTs were established in 21 of the 34 provinces, and the strategy appeared to be working. In the north, things were quiet and relatively peaceful, and in the south, an increased U.S. troop presence and the expansion of the PRTs had pushed the

¹² Telephone interview with LTG David Barno, American commander of Combined Forces Command – Afghanistan from 2003-2005, March 29, 2012.

remaining Taliban insurgents mostly out of the provinces and into Pakistan. Then came the spring offensive in 2006, and for the next five years a reenergized insurgency spread throughout the southern and eastern provinces, and even into pockets of the north and west. Violence increased dramatically as insurgents resorted to asymmetric tactics, most effectively the use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs), remotely- or automatically-triggered bombs that could be hidden from view and exploded with devastating effect against U.S. and coalition troops and vehicles. In 2009, violent attacks and U.S. casualties reached their highest levels of the war.

What had happened? Why were the PRTs unable to consolidate the gains made up until 2005 and stabilize the provinces enough to prevent the reemergence of the Taliban? Many of the PRTs had already established good relations within their respective provinces and could point to new roads, schools, and clinics as evidence of what the coalition and Afghan government would be able to provide in the way of development. Most puzzling of all for American commanders, why would the population support the return of the Taliban and the violence of the insurgency?

Provincial Reconstruction Teams

Provincial Reconstruction Teams were designed to be a civil-military partnership that brought together the governance and development expertise of civilian agencies with the logistical and security capacities of the military. The mission of the PRT was three-fold: to improve security; to extend the reach of the Afghan government in Kabul; and to facilitate development and reconstruction (U.S. Department of State (hereafter State) 2006). Improving security, governance, and development supported the two overarching objectives

that were critical to achieving the goal of a stable Afghan government: reducing drivers of conflict while increasing the capacity of legitimate institutions (ISAF 2008, 10). Guidance on how to accomplish these missions was intentionally vague, however, due to the vastly different socio-political and security conditions in each region (State 2006). This was intended to give PRT commanders flexibility to tailor their operations to local conditions, and to adapt their approach as those conditions changed.

Security conditions varied dramatically across the country, and even within provinces. In some of the PRTs, civilian team members travelled unescorted to remote parts of the province, while in others movement anywhere out of the compound required a heavily armed military convoy, and teams ventured far beyond the capital city. In areas of poor security, PRTs focused their efforts on building relationships with local leaders and working with the provincial governor to get needed services from the government in Kabul. They also funded and coordinated small, immediate-impact development projects, such as digging wells and building local schools and clinics, which were designed to improve local quality of life and build trust and confidence in the U.S. forces and in the Afghan government. High levels of insecurity often precluded international and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from operating in these areas, so the PRTs were the only entity capable of coordinating any kind of development work (U.S. Institute of Peace (hereafter USIP) 2009c).

In more permissive environments, where security was less of a problem, PRTs were able to devote more of their efforts to larger scale and long-term development projects like road construction, hospitals, and government buildings. PRTs helped to plan these larger infrastructure projects and provided the funding, but they were coordinated through provincial and national government structures to demonstrate the reach and improving

capacities of the government. Many were coordinated with local and international NGOs, and the work was contracted through local Afghan contractors, providing jobs and economic stimulus to the local economy. PRTs could implement and fund quick-impact development projects in more remote areas of the province because of their increased mobility and ability to monitor the projects to ensure the quality of the work and minimize fraud.¹³ They also had a greater ability to interact with traditional governance structures – *shuras* and *jirgas* – at the district and village levels, simultaneously building trust between the PRT and local populations and connecting local leaders to the provincial government.

Security conditions were not the only reason for the flexibility of the mission guidance. U.S. forces established three of the first four PRTs, while the British stood up the PRT in Mazar-e Sharif. However, before the end of 2003, the U.S. turned over control of the PRTs in relatively stable Kunduz and Bamyan to coalition members Germany and New Zealand, respectively, freeing up U.S. assets to expand PRTs into higher-threat provinces in the south and east. While all members of the coalition agreed on a desired end state of a stable Afghanistan under a legitimate and responsible government, they differed significantly on the best way to achieve that objective. National priorities and domestic opinions on the war played a large role in determining how each of the coalition PRTs approached the various aspects of the mission. As a result, three very distinct models for the PRT evolved.

The U.S. model, usually in the least secure environments, emphasizes force protection and focuses their development efforts on quick-impact projects to build good will and extend the reach of the Afghan government. As security conditions improve, they direct more money into the area for larger scale development projects. American PRTs consist mostly of military personnel, including Army CATs, with a single representative from the

¹³ Telephone interview with U.S. Navy commander of Nuristan PRT, March 23, 2012.

State Department, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and sometimes other civilian agencies. Initial U.S. teams were quite small, less than 75 people, but most expanded over time to around 100 personnel. The British established a second PRT in 2004 in Faryab province, also in the north. The British model was more robust than the American PRTs, but due to the lack of support for the Taliban in the northern provinces and the relatively secure environment, they were able to focus their efforts on training Afghan National Security Forces, institutional SSR, and keeping the peace between rival factions and warlords. Although led by the military like the U.S. model, British PRTs include a substantial component from the national development agency, the Department for International Development, in contrast to the extremely limited civilian capacity on the U.S. teams (Stapleton 2007). Finally, the German PRTs (they established a second one in the northern province of Badakhshan in 2004), are led by a senior civilian diplomat, rather than the military. They have a larger footprint of about 300 personnel, roughly divided between civilians dedicated to the development mission and military personnel who see their mission as peacekeeping. Because of the relaxed security environment, the Germans have gone to great lengths to maintain a strict separation between civilian development efforts and military-led security efforts (ISAF 2008, 93).

NATO took over command of ISAF in August of 2003, and from 2004 through 2008, eight other nations established or took over PRTs, supported by contributions from an additional 38 nations. Most lead nations followed some version of the British or German model, although capacities, competencies, and availability of resources varied widely by national capital, and with the exception of the British and the Canadians, most were unwillingly to expose their personnel to the higher levels of violence in the south and east as

the insurgency grew after 2005 (USIP 2009i). Generally speaking, the other non-U.S. PRTs approached the mission more like traditional peacekeeping operations, and, other than the Germans, had even more limited development capacity than the U.S. teams. The inherent flexibility and adaptability of the loose PRT guidance were critical to getting so many nations to agree to lead PRTs, but the widely varying national priorities and vague guidance also combined to create a great deal of confusion – among Afghans, NGOs, coalition and ISAF forces, and even PRT members themselves – about the role and function of PRTs and the scope of their authority (Sedra 2005; McNerney 2011).

The security mission

Of the three missions assigned to the PRTs, improving security is by far the most critical, and the most challenging. Security and development are inextricably linked, but a certain degree of security must be established before anything else can be attempted. Small-scale development projects designed to engender good will can help improve security for the PRTs among the villages that benefit from those projects, but if the Afghan population believes the insurgents will return the moment the PRT moves on to the next village or district, they will not cooperate with the PRT no matter what they are offered. This made security the highest priority for the provincial governors, who knew that they could not make significant headway on infrastructure development or service provision without first establishing a secure environment in which NGOs, development agencies, and the Afghan people could safely work (USIP 2009c).

In advertising the improvement of security as one of the PRT's principle missions, the U.S. may have oversold the PRTs' capacity and created some unrealistic expectations.

Although “improving security conditions” is one of the PRT’s primary missions, the PRT is not principally responsible for general security. PRTs operate in tandem with maneuver battalions, combat units whose job it is to engage the Taliban and al-Qaeda fighters and drive them out of the area. This is the “clear” phase of the classic COIN doctrine of “clear and hold.” Both the PRT and the maneuver battalion report up the same military chain of command to the Division Commander, but he is a one- or two-star general who is fairly removed from the PRT’s daily operations. The Division Commander might command as many as five to seven brigades or brigade combat teams, each with three to five battalions, in addition to four or five PRTs – or 13 in Regional Command East – so most of the coordination between the PRTs and the maneuver battalions in their AOR has been done on an ad hoc basis between the PRT and battalion commanders (Combat Studies Institute 2006; 2008a; 2008b).

In a counterinsurgency environment, security cannot be achieved simply by killing insurgents, although there is a core cadre of true believers who can only be dealt with that way. There are multiple drivers of conflict in Afghanistan, ranging from ideological hatred of the West to power struggles between tribal warlords, and from a lack of hope, political representation, and economic opportunity to a resentment of the corruption and abuse of power among leaders who are supposed to be serving the people. To the extent that the PRT can identify the drivers of conflict, as well as the key actors who are manipulating these grievances in order to mobilize violent opposition and resistance, and through negotiation, co-optation, or coercion address the grievances and marginalize the malcontents, it has a better chance of improving the security environment so that it can turn its efforts to the other missions.

The ability of the PRT to positively affect security assumes that it is operating in a Phase IV environment. This was arguably the case in early 2003, certainly for the north and west, although it was only true for parts of the south and east. However, after 2005 and the reemergence of an active insurgency, conditions in some parts of the east and south were closer to the combat conditions of Phase III operations than they were to Phase IV, and the PRT was not designed to be effective in that environment. The basic structure of the PRT consists of a small command element, two 10-14 man Army CATs, single representatives from State, USAID, and (eventually) the USDA, and a security element of around 50 soldiers. Even this overstates the capacities of some of the early PRTs, which had as few as 35 soldiers for security, a single CAT, and no civilian representation (Combat Studies Institute 2006). The maneuver battalion's security responsibility extended to providing reinforcement to the PRT if it got into trouble, but beyond that the PRT was responsible for its own force protection. PRTs and maneuver battalions often share information and coordinate their operations, with the PRT moving into an area after the maneuver battalion has secured it, but the small combat footprint of the PRT makes clearing an area of insurgents beyond its capability. Instead, the PRT is the principle mechanism for holding areas that have been cleared of the major insurgent threat.

The PRT's approach to the security mission, then, has depended largely on the existing security environment in which it is tasked to operate. In more permissive areas, they have arbitrated disputes between rival clans and warlords, provided support and tactical training to local ANSF, conducted routine security patrols to establish a presence and a connection with the local population, and provided security for the provincial governor and other government officials when they visited remote areas of the province. In less secure

provinces, however, the security element's primary responsibility becomes force protection, accompanying the PRT commander and civilian representatives in a convoy of armored vehicles when they travel to meet with provincial officials or to villages to meet with local leaders or *jirga* to discuss governance issues or development projects. In provinces where security is particularly poor, the security capacity of the PRT has at times been insufficient even for force protection outside of the provincial capital, limiting the activities of the PRT mostly to interactions with the governor and his staff (U.S. Navy 2009a).

Capacity

The most significant impediment to the ability of the PRTs to improve security has been a lack of capacity. The lack of capacity in the PRT is the result of three strategic decisions made by policy makers and military leaders in both the Bush and Obama administrations. The first was a conscious decision to limit the military footprint out of sensitivity to local and international perceptions of the U.S. presence as an occupation. Leaders were keenly aware of the intense and large-scale resistance that the Soviet occupation had inspired, and wanted to avoid a similar scenario (Jones 2008, 4). Military leaders also believed the light footprint was sufficient because of the relative stability of the northern and western provinces, the apparent defeat and destruction of the Taliban as a fighting force, and the effectiveness initially demonstrated by U.S. airpower.¹⁴ Through at least 2006, PRTs were able to patrol with the knowledge that close air support (CAS) was only a radio call away and could quickly respond to an ambush. Unfortunately, as the security situation began to change radically in 2006 and the insurgency reemerged and spread through the south and east, the light footprint was insufficient to secure territory against the insurgency, and the increased use of air power began to have counterproductive effects as

¹⁴ Telephone interview, LTG Barno.

civilian casualties rose. By 2009, resentment of “collateral damage” had grown so strong that it was alienating the Afghan people, feeding the Taliban narrative that the U.S. was engaged in an occupation of Afghanistan and a war on Islam. This undermined U.S. and ISAF efforts to stabilize the country, ultimately causing General McChrystal, commander of both U.S. forces and ISAF, to place tighter limits on the use of CAS (ISAF 2009). Facing an increasingly hostile security environment after 2006, the lack of CAS, small footprint, and limited capability of the U.S. PRTs severely restricted their ability to move around the provinces and greatly reduced their effectiveness.

The second strategic decision was the decision to go to war in Iraq in 2003 and the priority given to Operation Iraqi Freedom over operations in Afghanistan. With the Taliban apparently defeated, few additional troops were made available to Afghanistan while resources poured into Iraq. In April 2003, the U.S. invaded Iraq with 93,900 troops, slightly more than ten times the number of U.S. troops in Afghanistan. Although the number of troops in Afghanistan doubled to roughly 18,000 by the end of 2004, and then increased gradually to 25,000 in 2007 and 33,000 in 2008 to combat the growing Taliban insurgency, troop strength in Iraq climbed to over 142,000, then to 156,000 in 2005, and eventually to 170,000 after the surge in 2007 (Belasco 2011). The disparity in allocation of forces did not seem unjustified given the conditions in Afghanistan in mid-2003, with major combat operations apparently over, an interim government in place, and a military mission that appeared to be largely peacekeeping and small-scale counterterrorism. In hindsight, however, the intense fighting in Iraq left few resources available to shift to Afghanistan when the insurgency reemerged in 2006. According to the prevailing COIN doctrine at the time, a successful counterinsurgency required a “force density ration” of 20-25 COIN forces –

including those of the intervening force and the host nation government – for every 1000 of population (U.S. Army 2006; Goode 2009). This number was revised upward to 40:1000 in 2010 by the U.S. Army, based on a study that determined density ratios between 20 and 40 carried “significant risks” and were successful only 50% of the time (U.S. Army 2012, 3). Force density in Afghanistan a year into the reenergized insurgency was 5:1000, less than one-fourth of that called for by prevailing Army doctrine. This precluded adding additional PRTs or increasing the size of existing ones, but it also meant that there were not enough combat troops to effectively clear the areas in which the PRTs were working, severely limiting the ability of the PRTs to do the governance and development work for which they were intended (U.S. Navy 2009a; 2010; USIP 2009f). The dearth of combat troops prevented coalition and ISAF forces from effectively securing most of Afghanistan outside of Kabul, leading locals to conclude that the PRTs were incapable of providing for their security (Stapleton 2007). As a result, many chose to support the insurgents purely for practical reasons, since failure to do so meant almost certain death. By the time the Iraq War was declared “over” and additional troops were deployed to Afghanistan in 2009, the insurgency had engulfed the southern and eastern provinces and even spread to previously stable areas in the north and west.

A third reason for the insufficient number and capacity of the PRTs – and of the U.S. and ISAF forces more generally – was the unwillingness of both the Bush and Obama administrations to commit to a counterinsurgency effort, even when senior military leaders were telling them that existing efforts were failing. The Bush administration, focused on the war in Iraq and facing growing domestic and international criticism for both wars, was very slow to acknowledge the existence of an insurgency in Afghanistan. Although LTG Barno

recognized the need to shift to a COIN strategy when he arrived in Afghanistan in late 2003, the first mention by the administration of the U.S. COIN strategy of “clear, hold, and build” came in late 2005 during congressional testimony by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice on the security situation in Iraq (MSNBC 2005).¹⁵ Throughout the Bush administration, the war in Afghanistan was couched in the narrative of a greater “war on terror,” of which al-Qaeda was the principal target. Afghanistan was treated as a stabilization and reconstruction effort, driven by the need to deprive al-Qaeda of a safe haven from which to operate (Joint Chiefs of Staff 2006). A strategic review in 2006 led to a tripling of U.S. reconstruction assistance, and to a gradual doubling of U.S. troops over the next two years, but did little to stem the growing insurgency (Miller 2010a). Not until a more comprehensive review was completed in September of 2008 did the administration acknowledge the need for a “fully resourced counterinsurgency,” but by then it was too late to take any action other than to pass on the recommendation to the incoming Obama administration (Miller 2010b, 5-6). Despite that recommendation, and despite strong concurrence from the military leadership - General McChrystal, commander of ISAF and all U.S. forces in Afghanistan, General Petraeus, the four-star in charge of Central Command, and Admiral Mullen, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff - who thought they were still trying to defeat the Taliban, President Obama, supported by the Vice President and Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, rejected a fully resourced counterinsurgency. Instead, the President advocated a counterterrorism strategy designed primarily to “defeat and dismantle al-Qaeda,” and secondarily to “degrade, disrupt, and weaken the Taliban” (Woodward 2010, 253, 258). In short, the strategy of using PRTs to facilitate the “hold” and “build” phases of a broader counterinsurgency strategy was not

¹⁵ Telephone interview, LTG Barno.

supported by a consistent policy commitment to counterinsurgency, or, by default, by the combat forces necessary to effectively “clear” their areas of operations.

Support and coordination

The security component of the PRT mission was also hampered by the absence of standardized coordination mechanisms between the PRTs, the maneuver battalions, and the brigade- and division-level headquarters that controlled them both, as well as by their often conflicting mission priorities. Prior to 2004, maneuver battalions deployed from secure positions in Kabul or Bagram, conducting both combat and humanitarian operations for up to 45 days based on current intelligence, after which they would withdraw, often leaving only small Special Forces detachments to maintain any security presence (Combat Studies Institute 2006). As part of the shift to a COIN strategy in 2004, division commanders became “Battle Space Owners,” responsible for the entire range of operations in their assigned areas, and subordinate battalions were assigned smaller areas of responsibility (AOR).¹⁶ By design, PRTs were established within the AOR of a maneuver battalion, which had primary responsibility for security, but the PRT Commander, like the Battalion Commander, reported directly to the Brigade, and ultimately to the Division, Commander. The *ISAF PRT Handbook*, published after ISAF assumed overall command of the PRTs in 2006, directed that PRTs should “work collaboratively with combat units toward a common stability objective,” but also appeared to give the PRT a lead role in defining “the end states that combat operations should achieve (ISAF 2008, 21).” In practice, however, the PRT Commander was significantly outranked by the colonel in charge of the brigade, to say nothing of the general in charge of the division. For both of these men, combat operations were the priority, and they were responsible for extensive AORs and thousands of troops, so

¹⁶ Telephone interview, LTG Barno.

it was unreasonable to expect the PRT Commander to have much say in the combat objectives of the maneuver battalion that shared his AOR. Coordination between the battalion and the PRT became a function of personalities and the relationship that developed between the two commanders, who were of the same rank but with different backgrounds and experience and often from different branches of the military.¹⁷ In many cases, these officers established close and mutually supportive relationships, both personally and professionally, which resulted in close coordination and cooperation in order to maximize the effectiveness and safety of the PRTs. The lack of standardization, however, made cooperation between the two units highly dependent on the individuals leading them, and whatever trust and mechanisms for cooperation they established had to be recreated every time one or the other turned over to a new unit (Combat Studies Institute 2006; 2008a).

Even under the best circumstances, however, the kinetic operations of the battalion often undermined the efforts of the PRT to develop relationships with Afghans. In some circumstances, movement around the province in order to conduct humanitarian missions or oversee development projects had to be deconflicted at the division level as much as 96 hours in advance, limiting the responsiveness of the team (USIP 2004). If the battalion conducted a raid in an area where a PRT had recently visited to consult with leaders about development needs, locals questioned whether the PRT had actually been there to collect intelligence for the raid (Stapleton 2007). When coalition operations or airstrikes inflicted civilian casualties or property damage, the PRT was left to play the role of peacemaker, apologizing for any

¹⁷ Beginning in 2006, the Navy and Air Force began taking over command responsibility for many of the PRTs in order to relieve the burden on the Army. They provided the commander and most of the command element personnel (about 30 people for each PRT), who were given several months of relevant combat training by the Army before deploying to Afghanistan.

collateral damage and trying to restore confidence among the local population in the intentions of the U.S. and coalition forces (USIP 2009h; Stapleton 2007).

For their part, the PRT often supported coalition forces by housing SOF units or detaining insurgents in their compound, or operated in conjunction with the maneuver battalion to provide security for interagency representatives or development projects. When a PRT on patrol encountered significant resistance, it called on the maneuver battalion for reinforcements and CAS. The confusing array of missions conducted by the PRT and the inability of the locals to distinguish between PRT personnel and combat forces at times led to mistrust and a sense of betrayal, rendering the security mission of the maneuver battalion and the PRT counterproductive to the efforts of the PRT to build trust and confidence (USIP 2009f). It also undermined the efforts of the PRT to build connections between the people and the provincial and national governments, putting the Provincial Governor and other officials in the position of having to diffuse anger over civilian casualties and reassure the population that the American and coalition forces were committed to their well-being (USIP 2009m).

Cultural terrain

Arguably the most difficult challenge to the PRT's mission of improving security has been the complexity of the Afghan cultural terrain, and the time it has taken U.S. forces to develop a sufficient understanding of the tribal dynamics and how they affect security. The cultural landscape of Afghanistan is defined primarily by a divide between Pashtun tribes, which dominate in the southern and eastern provinces, and the non-Pashtun Tajik, Hazara, Uzbek, Sikh, Baluch, and Brahui tribes, which are found predominantly in the northern and

eastern provinces. However, the ethnic population is not regionally homogenous, and enclaves of up to four or more tribes can be found in any given province.

The non-Pashtun tribes, many of which comprised the Northern Alliance that toppled the Taliban, share a tradition of strong, authoritarian clan or tribal rule, often in the form of powerful “warlords,” many of whom were mujahidin leaders from the 1980s. However, these tribes are also more accepting of a strong centralized government that can stabilize relations between rival tribes and warlords, and were generally supportive of the Bonn agreement that established a government in Kabul under President Karzai (Tribal Analysis Center (hereafter TAC) 2010). The Pashtun tribes, on the other hand, have a much more egalitarian tradition, derived from their history as nomadic Bedouins. They are fiercely resistant to centralized authority, and have traditionally been governed by tribal institutions at the local level, *jirga* of tribal or village elders who oversee security and dispense justice according to Islamic law and a code of revenge and honor known as *Pashtunwali* (TAC 2010; SOCOM 2012). The insurgency that reemerged in 2006 was largely a Pashtun insurgency, kindled in southern and eastern provinces where the Taliban had always found greater support. Efforts to expand the reach of the Afghan government into these areas using the same tactics that had been effective in the non-Pashtun northern provinces – economic development and establishing ties between local government and Kabul – actually increased violent resistance and support for the insurgency, since they fed the Taliban narrative that a modernized state under a central government was an attack on their traditional way of life and on Islam (TAC 2010).

To further confuse matters, many Pashtun groups who had long been settled in larger villages and cities became more supportive of centralized authority over time, and, like most of the non-Pashtun tribes, more accepting of a modernized state. This created an urban-rural

divide in Afghan society that did not map cleanly onto the ethnic lines dividing Pashtun from non-Pashtun (TAC 2010). More importantly, the commonly referred-to “Taliban insurgency” is not monolithic, either ethnically or ideologically, containing both non-Pashtun Taliban and Pashtun groups like the Haqqani network and the Hezb-e-Islami Gulbuddin (HIG) that are independent but aligned with the Taliban (TAC 2010; International Crisis Group 2011). Groups like the Haqqani network and HIG are led by Soviet-era mujahidin warlords and have been described alternatively as insurgent groups, terrorist groups, and paramilitaries; some, like HIG, even have status as political parties. Their alliance to the Taliban is one of convenience and self-interest, and their resistance to U.S. forces and the Karzai government is primarily about preserving their own power and autonomy, although the Haqqani network has close ties to al-Qaeda and promotes global Islamic jihad (International Crisis Group 2011, 14-15).

The impression among U.S. leaders that the Taliban had little support among non-Pashtuns led them to ignore inroads the Taliban was quietly making in the north and west after 2005, among Pashtuns and non-Pashtuns alike. When the U.S. began expanding PRTs in early 2004, the northern and western provinces were considered “solved problems;” the security threat was minimal, most violence was between rival factions jockeying for regional power, and they were economically fairly stable.¹⁸ The focus of the security mission was on disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) and on rebuilding and strengthening security sector institutions like courts and the ANP. So the U.S. concentrated its efforts on expanding PRTs into the more volatile south, while existing and subsequent PRTs in the north and west were run by international partners, whose will and capacity to enforce security and go after Taliban and al-Qaeda holdouts was minimal. This made it possible for

¹⁸ Telephone interview, LTG Barno.

Taliban agents to infiltrate the north and, aided by conservative mullahs, slowly build support among isolated groups of Pashtuns. Coalition leaders were aware of these efforts as early as 2005, but because they were not accompanied by anti-coalition violence, they considered them relegated to “Pashtun pockets” and paid them little attention (Giustozzi and Reuter 2011). As time passed and the Kabul government failed to live up to expectations, unable to provide basic services or stabilize the security situation much beyond Kabul, the Taliban gained increasing support among non-Pashtuns, establishing shadow institutions of justice, tax collection, and education, and recruiting significant numbers of Uzbeks, Turkmen, and Tajiks. When violence in the north increased dramatically in 2009, coalition leaders were caught off guard, surprised that the Taliban had found sufficient support in non-Pashtun areas to become a threat (International Crisis Group 2011).

The cross-ethnic appeal of the Taliban appears to be driven significantly by conservative mullahs who, like the warlords, see the expanding reach of a centralized government as a challenge to their own positions of tribal influence and their power and dominance over village life (Giustozzi and Reuter 2011). This emergence of mullahs as firebrands against centralized authority is not new. They have traditionally gained influence in times of violence and instability, and Pashtun mullahs in the south have cultivated resistance to modernization since the 1930’s, characterizing it as a war on Islam (TAC 2010; SOCOM 2012). Pashtun mullahs were particularly powerful in rural areas of the south, because many of the traditional tribal institutions were destroyed and the village khans and elders killed by the Soviets and Afghan communists during the 1980s, leaving a leadership void that was filled by the clergy (SOCOM 2012). Under Taliban rule, local jirga and other

tribal institutions remained weak, starved of the mentorship and institutional knowledge that was traditionally provided by the khans and elders.

After 2003, as PRTs pushed out from the provincial capitals into the districts and villages, identifying influential tribal leaders became an important but very difficult task, as those nominally in charge were often not necessarily those with the most influence (Combat Studies Institute 2008b). Although the official Taliban government had been dislodged from Kabul, the Taliban withdrew to the rural parts of the south, where they intimidated and co-opted village leaders, and established shadow courts and governing institutions. Beyond the reach and capacity of the government in Kabul, and without an effective *jirga* system, villagers accepted the stability provided by the Taliban (SOCOM 2012). By 2006, the penetration of the rural south by the Taliban had created extensive safe havens from which to operate and provided resources and recruits with which to fuel the insurgency.

Another factor complicating security efforts, particularly in the northern and western provinces, was the web of underlying power struggles between rival tribes, clans, and warlords. The heavy reliance on local cooperation for information about Taliban and al-Qaeda operatives made the PRTs susceptible to manipulation by locals with private agendas. Informants or local leaders would often attempt to settle personal or clan disputes by identifying someone as a member of al-Qaeda or the Taliban (USIP 2009i; International Crisis Group 2011). Warlords and militia commanders cooperating with U.S. forces would try to get the PRT to call in air strikes on forces loyal to their rivals. The inability of the PRTs to distinguish friend from foe made it harder for them to gain the trust, confidence, and cooperation of the warlords, commanders, and tribal leaders that were critical to their efforts to improve security. The heavy reliance on interpreters magnified the problem, since the

teams could rarely be sure about whether they were interpreting correctly or where their loyalties lay (Combat Studies Institute 2006). With overlapping U.S. and coalition units operating in the same area and disjointed communications between the provincial level, Kabul, and ISAF, it was not uncommon for information gathered in the field to result in the arrest or targeting of a former militia leader who had reconciled with the government, creating a sense of betrayal among his followers, some of whom would rejoin the insurgency.

Compounding the difficulty of understanding the complex ethnic and tribal dynamics is the isolation of the majority of the population and the dismal state of supporting infrastructure. Less than a quarter of the population live in cities, concentrated in fewer than a dozen provincial capitals. The vast majority of the population lives in small, remote villages, unconnected by roads or communications from the urban centers, and many are unaware of anything happening beyond their village or valley. American troops operating in remote areas have been mistaken for Russians by villagers who were unaware of the events of the last several years (Combat Studies Institute 2006; Junger 2010). Entire provinces had less than 10 kilometers of paved roads, requiring half a day or more to make routine trips that should take less than an hour, while Kabul was more than a day's travel from much of the rural population (USIP 2009f; 2009j; U.S. Navy 2009c). This made efforts to improve security in remote villages extremely difficult, since the PRT could not maintain any kind of a sustained presence. Often their efforts to work with remote villages in the south were rebuffed, because village leaders knew that as soon as the team moved on, the Taliban would return and punish or kill those who had cooperated (McKenzie and Brody 2011). Regardless of how much the local population would have preferred to partner with the PRT and support

the expanding Kabul government, doing so meant certain retribution from Taliban fighters who had a much greater presence in the remote areas of the southern provinces.

There is no question that the sustained presence of the PRTs has been able to improve security under some circumstances. Anecdotal successes illustrate how the PRTs have mitigated the effects of each of these factors over time. One PRT gained the trust of village leaders through small development projects and then leveraged their understanding of the Afghan custom of hospitality and protection to get the village elder to guarantee the security of the PRT when they were near the village, resulting in an increase in the number of landmines and IEDs reported by the villagers (Combat Studies Institute 2006). A team in Nangahar province focused its attention on remote villages near the border that controlled passes to Pakistan. Beyond the reach of the ANSF, these villages had no choice but to support the insurgents. Once the PRT concentrated its efforts there, bringing humanitarian development and training for the village militias, some began to cooperate with the PRT and coalition forces, denying access to the insurgents. Since this also prevented the insurgents from passing through to the rest of the province and beyond, it helped to improve security elsewhere as well (USIP 2009f). Since 2010, the PRT concept has been extended to districts and villages in the form of smaller District Support Teams and SOF teams that reside in the villages, providing a more permanent local presence and helping to reestablish and strengthen the traditional governance structures, train village police, and give local leaders the capacity and confidence to reclaim their villages from the Taliban (SOCOM 2012).

These and other examples provide positive indications that the U.S. and its coalition partners have learned from many of their earlier mistakes. As American troops have gained a better understanding of Afghan culture, they have been able to demonstrate greater respect

and appreciation for tribal traditions, and to adapt their stabilization operations in ways that empower local leaders and are more likely to earn the trust and cooperation of Afghans. But the success stories unfortunately represent small, localized glimmers of improvement in an overall security environment that has deteriorated significantly throughout most of the country since 2006.

The development mission

If security has been the most challenging of the PRT's missions, development has certainly been the most controversial. Development and security are inextricably linked. It is a fundamental tenet of U.S. policy that development leads to improved security by creating jobs, improving the economy, and improving people's quality of life, giving them hope for the future and a reason to support existing government institutions. COIN doctrine identifies development as an important mechanism for separating the population from the insurgency, denying the latter support and sanctuary (U.S. Army 2006). In theory, the PRTs conduct small-scale, humanitarian development projects as a way to prove their good intentions, build trust and loyalty with the local population, and demonstrate the advantages that come with supporting the coalition and the Afghan government. This leads to improved security conditions as locals cease their support for the insurgency and cooperate with the PRT, taking a more active role in their own security and providing the PRT with information about insurgents and their operations, helping the coalition to drive the insurgency out of the area. With improved security, the PRT can then undertake or facilitate larger-scale development projects that have the potential to significantly boost economic growth and improve the reach and service capacity of the central government.

Effectively, then, there are two aspects to the development mission. The first is to provide small scale, quick-impact development projects that would foster good will among the Afghan population. Digging wells, rehabilitating or building schools and clinics, and building or paving roads creates jobs, injects money into the local economy, and establishes relationships between the PRT and the local population. These projects usually meet humanitarian needs that are beyond the capacity of the Afghan government, and so would otherwise go unaddressed. Such projects are often referred to as part of a “hearts and minds” campaign, but they are more accurately about building mutual trust, understanding, and respect, which can help to drive a wedge between insurgents and the population, and advance the stabilization mission from the hold to the build phase.

The second aspect of the development mission is to assist the provincial authorities to create a plan for longer term development, and to coordinate the approval, funding, and completion of those projects with the government in Kabul, ISAF, and international development agencies and NGOs. This aspect of the mission overlaps with the governance mission, as it helps to build the capacity of the provincial government, link it to the central government, and results in visible achievements that the local population can associate with the government. PRT efforts in this realm have contributed to a long list of major development successes, including the construction of over 4000 kilometers of paved roads, strong economic growth, improved infrastructure, the expansion of public and private service sectors, and an increase in primary education enrollment from 19% in 2001 to over 90% by 2006 (Jones 2008; Prague Security Studies Institute (hereafter PSSI) 2010).

There have indeed been examples where reality has followed theory almost to the letter. In Khost province in 2006, the United Nations Assistance Mission – Afghanistan

(UNAMA) rated the threat condition as high, so no NGOs would attempt to work in the province. After a year of concerted effort by the PRT, the people were supporting the local government and taking ownership of their own security. The governor held a peace rally, and a group of influential mullahs issued a *fatwa* against suicide bombings. The number of IEDs reported or turned in by the people doubled, and the tribal leaders took a public stand against the insurgency. As security improved, UNAMA revised its threat assessment and development NGOs began to come into the province (Combat Studies Institute 2008a). A similar process took place in Paktika province, where the PRT was able to identify areas of the province that were relatively stable and facilitate the entrance of medical NGOs to begin to provide medical care (Combat Studies Institute 2008b).

In practice, however, the relationship between development and security is far more complex than the theory indicates. Some PRT development efforts may actually undermine efforts to improve security, or create a dependent relationship that hinders more substantial development. This is particularly true in areas of the country where security remains tenuous and the insurgents maintain a strong presence. Local contractors hired by the PRT to carry out development projects must pay protection money to the Taliban and other insurgent groups in order to protect their employees and equipment. So American dollars flow through the development projects to the insurgency, helping to sustain operations against American forces (McKenzie and Brody 2011). Road construction is a critical aspect of development in Afghanistan, and can have a tremendous positive impact on the lives and economy of the population. But road construction requires the use of explosives, and corruption, poor accountability, and collaboration with the insurgency can result in the disappearance of TNT, presumably to be used against U.S. forces in the form of IEDs (U.S. Navy 2010).

Unable to significantly improve security where the insurgency is strongest, PRTs have nonetheless been conducting small, quick-impact projects, in some provinces for almost a decade. This has led critics to charge that their efforts are misplaced, that by continuing to try to build without having first cleared the area of insurgents the U.S. is not following its own COIN strategy of clear, hold, build (USIP 2009c). Traveling through unsecure areas to coordinate or oversee development projects in remote locations requires a convoy of military vehicles in order to protect the team members. These convoys not only make an enticing target for ambush, but the imposing armored HUMVEEs and Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles and heavily armed security component impede the efforts of both civilian and military members of the team to gain the trust and cooperation of village leaders and their people. Rather than the bottom-up, grass roots approach utilized by the PRT, critics argue that more effort should have been devoted to top-down SSR, including a more robust effort to train the ANSF and reform the corrupt Ministry of the Interior, which oversees the ANP (Stapleton 2007). This would have created a more secure environment in which NGOs could then have conducted development. By spending so much time and resources on development projects in order to help improve security by winning hearts and minds, the military has put the cart before the horse (McKenzie and Brody 2011).

Security conditions vary widely across the country, even within provinces, and have changed dramatically since 2006. Prospects for success of the development mission were much greater in more permissive environments, particularly in the north and west. Yet, like the security mission, the development mission of the PRT has been negatively impacted by a lack of capacity, poor coordination mechanisms, and the challenges of trying to effect development in a difficult and poorly understood cultural environment.

Capacity

Irrespective of the security conditions, PRTs lack the capacity to effectively carry out their development mission in two important ways. The first is the fact that they are grossly insufficient, both in number and in size, given the geographic context in which they are employed. At best, each PRT is responsible for an entire province, hundreds of square miles of imposing, mostly uninhabited terrain, with few roads and little to no infrastructure. In the north and west, some PRTs have at times been responsible for as many as four provinces, making it impossible to reach all but a small number of districts and villages with any consistency, if at all.¹⁹ In some provinces, the combination of inaccessible terrain and poor security has restricted the PRTs to the provincial capital and its immediate environs, leaving them with little or no awareness of what is happening at the district level, much less in the villages (Combat Studies Institute 2008b).

There is also a huge disparity between the capacities of the American PRTs and those run by other coalition nations. The German and British PRTs have relatively good development capacity, but are limited by national policies and priorities mostly to small-scale development projects. The other coalition PRTs are very lightly resourced, and since they were established in the more secure provinces of the north and west, they have concentrated their efforts on security sector reform and training local ANSF, leaving development in the more permissive environment to UNAMA and NGOs (USIP 2009i; 2009j; 2009k). The countries responsible for the PRTs are generally responsible for all coalition activities in their province, so while the U.S. generally has State Department representatives on the coalition PRTs, it directs very little, if any, money for development to them. Civilian and military

¹⁹ Under the current distribution of 28 PRTs, a few cover two provinces, while the majority cover a single province.

personnel alike serving on PRTs in the more stable provinces report feeling ignored or neglected by Afghan and ISAF decision makers in Kabul (USIP 2009c; 2009m; 2009n). Ironically, this created a perverse incentive among warlords, tribal leaders, and even government officials to stir up trouble, since they saw development money flowing into areas where security was poor.²⁰

As a strategy, the lack of attention and development resources dedicated to the northern and western provinces seems somewhat at odds with the COIN principle of clear, hold, and build. The permissive environment in the north and west could have allowed PRTs there to consolidate their hold on the region and begin an extensive build campaign as early as 2004, giving the Kabul government the opportunity to establish legitimacy among the northern population and government officials the chance to gain valuable experience that could later have been transferred to more challenging areas in the south. The U.S. strategy, however, beginning in 2004 and continuing through 2012, has followed the dictates of “economy of force,” focusing the majority of U.S. effort in the areas where the enemy was strongest.²¹

The second factor affecting the capacity of PRTs to do development work has been the inability of the civilian interagency – in particular the State Department, USAID, and the USDA – to support the teams with enough civilian development experts.²² During the first several years, many billets simply went unfilled, and those that were filled were usually filled by junior personnel without much relevant experience or expertise. They also had no

²⁰ Telephone interview, Nuristan PRT CO.

²¹ Telephone interview, LTG Barno.

²² This discussion focuses on U.S. PRTs, but coalition PRTs that see their mission as primarily peacekeeping are similarly short on civilian development capacity. The U.S. tries to assign interagency representatives to coalition PRTs, but they usually come with no resources and are there primarily as a conduit for information to U.S. leaders and to coordinate with NGOs doing development work in the region.

authority to commit agency funds, and lacked the institutional knowledge to competently represent the interests and capabilities of their parent agencies (McNerney 2006; USIP 2009c). The civilian agencies also lacked operational funding to support their people, so team members were reliant on the military for all of their critical life support, including accommodations, food, transportation, and body armor (USIP 2009a; 2009d). The civilians were intended to take the lead on development and governance issues, but in contrast to the PRT commander, a Lieutenant Colonel or Navy Commander with 17-20 years of experience and ample military resources on which to draw, their relative lack of experience and resources undermined both their credibility and value, and relegated them to an advisory role (State 2006). Without agency funding to support their own initiatives, they were left having to lobby the PRT commander to allocate military funds to projects they felt were important. This meant that decisions about development projects were often made by military personnel without significant experience in development, leading to an emphasis on security-related projects and quick-impact projects that were intended to help build relationships, but might not be sustainable. Many civilian PRT members felt that military commanders, because of the professional incentives to demonstrate effectiveness, often based their decisions on how many projects they could initiate and bring to completion in their limited time in country, rather than on what was most needed or sustainable (USIP 2009f; 2009h; Stapleton 2007).

The military had its own issues with regard to assigning personnel with the necessary skills. As PRTs increasingly contracted with local contractors and NGOs to carry out development projects, they often did so without trained or experienced contract officers or lawyers from the Judge Advocate General Corps (U.S. Navy 2009a; 2010; USIP 2009m). The military component often included civil engineers from the Navy SEABEES or Army

Civil Engineering Corps, but this was not standard, and they did not always have expertise specific to the kinds of projects being undertaken (U.S. Navy 2009b). This made it difficult to provide oversight and ensure quality control by local contractors. The military also relied heavily on the Reserves and National Guard. Many of these personnel possessed invaluable skills and experience from their civilian jobs, but they were generally deployed as a unit, and no effort was made to match civilian skills with the needs of the various PRTs (Combat Studies institute 2008a).

The biggest mismatch between capacity and need was in the agriculture sector. More than 80% of the Afghan population is involved in agriculture, most of it at the subsistence level, and yet USDA has been able to provide only very limited support to the PRTs and a majority of USAID funding has been devoted to infrastructure projects. Very few military members of the PRT had relevant agriculture experience, so commanders often chose to put their efforts and money into schools, clinics, and roads that were more visible and could be contracted to locals. Ironically, National Guard units throughout the Midwest have been fielding Agribusiness Development Teams (ADTs) to Latin America for over 20 years, leveraging the farming and agriculture experience of Guard members to improve agriculture process and production (U.S. Army 2008). Yet for some reason, these teams were not deployed to Afghanistan until 2008, and still in 2012 there are only eight in country, despite the fact that at least 12 states have ADTs in their Guard units (USIP 2009f).

Support from civilian agencies began to improve in 2006, slowly at first, but by 2010 it was apparent that both Congress and the executive branch were committed to bolstering civilian reconstruction capacity. The Bush administration created the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS) within the State Department in

2004 as a first step towards synchronizing civilian support for reconstruction with the military. Since 2006, Congress has appropriated increasing program support to hire and train more than 3000 additional civil servants and Foreign Service Officers at State and USAID and has doubled appropriations for State and other interagency overseas operations (State 2010; “Executive Budget Summary”). Congress also authorized the establishment of a Civilian Response Corps under S/CRS, which by 2011 included over 1200 “active” and “standby” civilian employees from seven different agencies who could be deployed to support reconstruction operations around the world. As a result, most teams now have a strong representative from State, USAID, and USDA, at a minimum, as well as occasional representation from Justice, Energy, Commerce, and other agencies (State 2011a).

Support and coordination

Post-conflict reconstruction in Afghanistan called for a synergized, holistic, civil-military effort that took advantage of the logistical capacity, manpower, and initiative of the military and the development experience and expertise of the civilian interagency. Coordinating such an effort requires well-defined and agreed-upon processes and mechanisms to align mission objectives with national priorities and to synchronize allocation of resources and lines of effort, both vertically and horizontally. Unfortunately, no mechanisms for such close coordination existed at the outset, and the combination of poor security conditions and military resources that dwarfed those of the interagency rendered reconstruction a military-led and dominated effort from the very beginning. As reconstruction progressed, planning and coordination mechanisms evolved to try to support development at all levels, and to include the multitude of actors – civilian, military, American, Afghan, coalition partners, UNAMA, NATO, international organizations, and

NGOs – all well-intentioned and committed to the goal of a stable Afghanistan, but each with different objectives, philosophies, policy guidance, and capabilities. Some of these mechanisms greatly improved the ability of PRTs to promote development at the provincial level and below, while the absence or poor design of others created inefficiencies and undermined effectiveness. For most of the last 10 years, the PRTs have been left largely to their own devices and ingenuity to navigate the web of competing or conflicting guidance emanating from Kabul, Washington, and other national capitals.

Undoubtedly, one of the most challenging aspects of putting together a civil-military team to promote development has been the culture clash between the disciplined, hierarchical, and well-resourced military and the bureaucratic, independent, and poorly-resourced civilian agencies. The loose guidance issued to the PRTs in order to give them flexibility to adapt to widely varying circumstances also created a great deal of confusion about the role of civilian members. While they were intended to be the lead agents for political and economic development, they were often relegated to advisory status because of lack of experience and funding (State 2006). Without specific guidance or a defined hierarchical relationship, civil-military relations on the PRTs were, to a great extent, a function of the personalities of the PRT commander and the representatives from the interagency. In many cases, the civilian leads and PRT commander worked very well together, but the challenges to team-building were many.

For the first year or two, civilians did not go through pre-deployment training with the military team members, and their rotations were as short as three months, which was inadequate time to get enough of a sense of the situation and the mission to make any kind of real contribution. For the first several years, civilian billets were filled on a largely ad hoc

basis, with the result that many did not have the skills, experience, or temperament needed by the PRTs.²³ Many in the military assumed that State representatives were experts on political development and governance, when in fact, most had little to no relevant experience or expertise in how to run a government. Personnel from USDA often had very specific agricultural skill sets, applicable in only certain regions or environments, yet they were initially assigned without regard to matching their skills to the needs of the province (USIP 2009c). Without clearly defined roles and responsibilities, the PRT commander often determined the tenor of the civil-military relationship. An interagency assessment in 2006 concluded that there was often a “lack of understanding of the importance of incorporating non-Department of Defense representatives into strategy development and decision-making (State 2006, 14).” But to military officers, who approached every mission by first identifying goals, objectives, and available resources and then developing a strategic plan, the civilians did not appear to have any sort of plan or systematic approach to accomplishing their mission (Combat Studies Institute 2006). Some PRT commanders dictated the priority of all plans and operations, marginalizing those civilians who refused to get on board; others valued civilian inputs and incorporated them into their planning (USIP 2009l). Although a military officer was officially in charge of the PRT, some civilians resented being subordinate to them, believing that “the military should be a resource of the civilians, not the other way around (USIP 2009a).” Sometimes personality clashes resulted in civilians being sent home, or simply opting out of the mission, leaving military team members to fill their role. One USAID representative felt his authority was being usurped by the ADT, and asked to be reassigned elsewhere rather than working with them (USIP 2009f; 2009m).

²³ Military manning of the PRTs was also largely ad hoc for the first several years. Not until 2005 was there an effort to institutionalize the training and composition of the PRTs (Combat Studies Institute 2008a).

Despite these difficulties, many PRTs were able to establish effective and supportive working relationships within the team. Teams lucky enough to be assigned military commanders who understood the importance of team-building and civilians who were knowledgeable and who could adapt rapidly to new situations and take initiative were often able to overcome the inherent structural inefficiencies. Many on both sides described their counterparts as “indispensable,” “critical,” or “top-notch.” Most importantly, the problems and failures identified over the first several years translated into proactive institutional changes within the interagency, and by 2009 many of the most debilitating issues had been or were actively being addressed (State 2011b).

A concerted effort by Congress and both the Bush and Obama administrations that included the creation of the CRC, increased budget authority, and improved interagency coordination mechanisms in Washington has tripled the number of civilians committed to the effort in Afghanistan and shifted from filling vacancies with available bodies to assigning people with relevant training, experience, and expertise (PSSI 2010; USIP 2009g). By mid-2011, there were over 1000 federal civilians deployed to Afghanistan, up from 320 at the beginning of 2009, with a total of 1200 expected by the end of the year (State 2011b). Of 421 civilians that arrived in 2009 as part of a “civilian uplift,” (the interagency avoids the term “surge”), 270 were deployed outside of Kabul to PRTs, maneuver battalions, and brigade and division headquarters (USIP 2009g; 2009l). Civilian deployments are more often synched to those of the military, and most civilian representatives on PRTs now train with the military team for all or most of the pre-deployment training. Many now deploy for a second time, or extend their deployment in the same location through two or more PRT rotations, providing invaluable continuity and field experience to the teams (U.S. Navy 2009a). Civilian

instructors are also integrated into the training to better educate the military on the capacities of the other federal agencies. These changes have helped to build mutual understanding and respect, break down preconceived notions and biases, and create a true civil-military command leadership team, greatly improving the functionality and effectiveness of the PRTs.

The ad hoc nature of funding for the PRTs was an additional source of tension between civilians and the military. Initially, most of the money came from the Defense Department's Overseas Humanitarian Disaster and Civic Aid (OHDACA) account. These funds are appropriated annually by Congress to be used by the military worldwide for small scale development projects and disaster relief. In 2004, Congress began funding the Commanders' Emergency Relief Program (CERP), designed to provide commanders in the field with readily available, unprogrammed money to "respond to urgent humanitarian relief and reconstruction requirements" with quick-turn, high-impact projects that would have an immediate effect (U.S. Congress 2003). CERP money came with few strings attached, often allocated as cash to PRT and other military commanders to be used at their discretion. State and USDA representatives, on the other hand, came with no money and no authority to commit agency funds. Not surprisingly, the agency that controls the money sets the priorities, and for the military commander, whose first priority was security and force protection, these were often projects that he felt would have an immediate impact and build some credibility and loyalty among the local population (Abbaszadeh et al. 2008). So while civilians were supposed to be the lead decision makers for political and economic development, they were forced to lobby the PRT commander to spend CERP money on projects they felt were important (USIP 2009f). USAID team members did have access to funds from the Quick Impact Program (QIP), but bureaucratic regulations, a lengthy approval process, and the

requirement for all projects to be coordinated and overseen by a USAID implementing partner made this program less responsive than CERP and limited its value to the PRTs. Using CERP funds and hiring local contractors or NGOs, the PRT was often able to complete projects in less than half the time as those funded through QIP (State 2006).

Structurally, the disparity in civil and military funding on the PRTs remains; although interagency access to funding has improved, and over 440 projects have been completed using QIP funds, 70% of PRT development projects are paid for with CERP funds (USAID 2012; U.S. Navy 2009b). Coordination on the use of CERP funds has improved dramatically, however. In part this is due to improved understanding and cooperation on the teams themselves, but it is also due to institutional changes put in place up the food chain from the teams. Guidance from the U.S. military commander in 2005 directed that all CERP projects be coordinated with USAID through civilian counterparts on the PRTs and, after the civilian “surge” that began in 2009, at battalion, brigade, and division headquarters (State 2006). Additionally, various spending thresholds have been established, above which “dual-key” authorization is required by the lead civilian and the military commander at each level (USIP 2009g).

In addition to the challenges of civil-military coordination within the teams, PRTs must coordinate their development activities with a multitude of external actors. These other actors generally fall into three categories: officials of the Afghan provincial and national government; parallel civilian and military chains of command; and NGOs.

Although an important objective of the PRT’s development mission is to improve security and force protection by building good will among the local population, the mission’s larger goal is to promote sustainable economic development while simultaneously expanding

the reach and legitimacy of the Afghan government. By working with the Provincial Governor, who is appointed by the central government, to bring needed infrastructure and other development to the provinces, the PRTs help to demonstrate to the population the capacity and commitment of the government to bring stability and prosperity to the country. This is accomplished by helping the governor orchestrate a Provincial Development Plan (PDP), which will prioritize projects within the province given the available funds from Kabul, the PRT, or ISAF. Provincial Development Committees (PDC), established in 2005, include “line directors” from ministries in Kabul, members of the governor’s staff, and district leaders who bring proposals from villages and other local leaders, as well as representatives from UNAMA and NGOs (ISAF 2008; USIP 2009f; Dziedzic and Seidl 2005). The line directors help to ensure that the PDP is aligned with the Afghan National Development Strategy (ANDS), and the process requires national-level support for major projects, and commitment of resources by the governor and PDC for the sustainment required by most projects (U.S. Navy 2009c).

In practice, like so many other aspects of reconstruction in Afghanistan, coordination of development between the PRT and the provincial government rarely functioned as intended. Success often depended significantly on the governor, some of whom were men (and one woman) of integrity and courage committed to doing right by their people, while others were corrupt and cowardly, prone to taking bribes, bias, and patronage, and unwilling to take political risks that could affect their standing in Kabul or to venture out of the capital except to cut ribbons at completed projects (U.S. Navy 2009a; 2009c; 2010; USIP 2009m). PDCs in many provinces were not established or not functioning until PRTs were established, some as late as 2010, so the PRT often put together the PDP, and then presented

it to the line directors and governor for their approval to put an Afghan face on it (U.S. Navy 2009a). Building up the capacity and legitimacy of the PDCs has been a major line of effort for many PRTs: mentoring local leaders to address the needs of their people and to route their requests through the PDC; getting the governor to engage in the process rather than simply directing requests to the PRT; mentoring line directors to lead the planning process; and fighting corruption (USIP 2009f; 2009m; U.S. Navy 2009b; 2009c).

Where they have been successful, the PRTs have used the PDC and the PDP process to highlight government responsiveness to the people and ensure that the plan effectively addresses prioritized local needs, building legitimacy and support for both the provincial and national governments, and improving the security situation for the PRT and ISAF forces in the process (U.S. Navy 2009b; 2010; USIP 2009f). However, according to the assessment of at least one State Department representative, the process would quickly revert to traditional practices of patronage and bribery without the constant efforts of the PRT to enforce transparency and the integrity of the process and to assist the PDC with the hard work of developing a long-term plan (USIP 2009m). Corruption remains a common problem, and locals often try to approach the PRTs directly with requests for development assistance, since they know that is where the money is coming from, and often because they are tired of the governor or members of the PDC demanding payment for inclusion in the PDP (USIP 2009f).²⁴ Sub-governors or tribal leaders whose projects fail to gain the support of the PDC often become spoilers, refusing to provide security for travel or other projects in their area if their own projects are not approved (U.S. Navy 2010).

Linking the PRTs' development efforts with the greater national effort has also been difficult. The State Department-led interagency assessment conducted in late 2005 concluded

²⁴ Telephone interview, Nuristan PRT CO.

that their efforts were, for the most part, not coordinated with national-level programs (State 2006). In fairness, the ANDS was not developed until the same year; prior to that there had only been a list of National Priority Programs (Stapleton 2007). Nor was there any standardized guidance for vertical coordination of development projects until ISAF published the ISAF PRT Handbook in 2006. But as late as 2009 there were still PRT commanders and entire brigade staffs who were completely unfamiliar with the ANDS (USIP 2009l).

Development continues to be fraught with failures of vertical coordination between the national, provincial, district, and village levels, significantly undermining the effectiveness of the combined international effort (PSSI 2010). At times, the Afghan government has criticized the PRTs for running a parallel development program, uncoordinated with national strategies and beyond the financial control of government ministries, but the PRTs have responded that effective counterparts at the provincial and district levels simply did not exist (Stapleton 2007). With a national literacy rate of less than 30%, qualified locals are in high demand, and can often earn much more money working directly for the coalition or for international organizations and NGOs. Those that do choose to work in government prefer to do so in Kabul or one of a few smaller provincial capitals, where security is better, pay is higher, and they are closer to the centers of power, rather than out in the provinces and districts where they are needed to help extend the reach of the government (Kemp 2011; USIP 2009m). Another reason is the continuing deterioration of the security situation in much of the southern and eastern provinces after 2006. As the insurgency spread, PRT commanders reported having to abandon approved projects, many of them major ones, due to lack of security, and reverting back to small, uncoordinated but

quick-turn and immediate impact projects in order to try to restore local relations and improve security (U.S. Navy 2009a).

Coordination within the American architecture has proved equally complex and inefficient. Along with the expansion of the PRTs in 2004, the U.S. strategy divided the country into regions, with a military division assigned to each region as the “battle space owner,” responsible for the full spectrum of activity in its region. Today there are five Regional Commands, each commanded by a U.S. or coalition partner division, and all under the overall command of ISAF. The Division Commander, a one or two-star general, further divides his battle space among a number of brigades. The Brigade Commander, a colonel, commands the maneuver battalions that comprise his brigade and any PRT assigned to his AOR, making him the individual most responsible for the operations of the PRT.

The relationship between ISAF and the PRTs is somewhat muddled because of the level of national autonomy reserved to the lead nations (Welle 2010). Although ISAF has supervisory authority over all PRTs, actual operational authority over American PRTs really lies with the Division Commander, who also controls the allocation of CERP funds. ISAF at times has issued operational or policy guidance directly to the PRTs, bypassing the Division and Brigade Commanders. This can create confusion, but when direction from ISAF is uncoordinated or in conflict with orders from Division, PRT commanders generally ignore ISAF and comply with the orders of the U.S. Army general who writes their fitness reports and controls their development funds (Combat Studies Institute 2011; USIP 2009e; Stapleton 2007). Attempts by ISAF to get PRTs to report on common metrics so that ISAF could maintain a nation-wide awareness of progress and “atmospherics” have failed to produce more than 20% of the data requested, largely because ISAF reports are a low priority for PRT

commanders due to the informal nature of the relationship (Welle 2010, 57). Ironically, the lack of feedback from the field leads to the development of policies by ISAF that PRT members charge are made in a vacuum and without PRT input.²⁵

A parallel reporting system existed for the civilians, but it was even more confusing. Until 2009, State, USAID, USDA, and other interagency members each reported directly to representatives from their parent agency at the U.S. Embassy in Kabul, or sometimes directly back to Washington. Not only did this hinder awareness, coordination, and information sharing, but it meant that the civilian leads for development were jumping over the brigade and division which directed the operations of the PRT and controlled the lion's share of development funds. Not until after the civilian uplift in 2009 did the interagency consolidate all civilian activities under a single Deputy Director for PRTs at the U.S. Embassy and gain the capacity to mirror the military chain of command by assigning a lead civilian representative of equivalent rank to the commander at the brigade and division levels (USIP 2009e; 2009g).

Horizontal coordination at the national level was plagued by similar inefficiencies. Prior to the promulgation of the ANDS in 2005, individual agency strategic plans drawn up in Washington or at the embassy were not coordinated with each other and did not connect the PRT efforts to broader national programs (State 2006). Coordination between State and other agencies at the embassy and ISAF was plagued by parochial attitudes, poor communications, and civil-military tensions. Despite the Ambassador's standing as the senior U.S. representative in Afghanistan, the military was clearly the most dominant player, and the embassy staff was reluctant to push back on initiatives of the commanding general, even when it appeared he was making a mistake (USIP 2009a). Insufficient vertical coordination

²⁵ Telephone interview, Nuristan PRT CO.

with civilians on the PRTs and poor information systems meant that, as late as 2009, USAID did not have reliable data on the location and status of all of its completed, planned, and ongoing projects around the country (State 2006). This failure had been identified by an interagency assessment in 2005, but USAID had been unable to remedy it, and was reluctant to share what information it did have with counterparts at ISAF or in the Afghan government. State Department leaders were also uncooperative, resisting Afghan government efforts to have a greater say in PRT development efforts and refusing to participate in an ISAF effort to establish common goals and metrics for all PRTs because they did not align with the American objectives being promulgated from the embassy (USIP 2009b).

Some of the coordination failures, both vertical and horizontal, were a function of capacity. Lacking their own equipment, civilian representatives often relied on the military for communication with the embassy, and so could not always make or receive regular reports, choking off the vital flow of information in both directions. Even when they could get through, embassy manning until 2009 was extremely thin and turned over often, so the person they were trying to reach for support was frequently out of the office, recently arrived and still trying to build awareness, or on their way out the door (USIP 2009l). The PRT concept was predicated on the assumption that civilian team members were a conduit to reach-back support at the embassy and in Washington, but for the most part that support did not exist.

The interagency has made significant efforts to address many of these issues, however. The creation of S/CRS and the CRC has improved planning and coordination in Washington and increased the number of civilian personnel available to support the mission in Afghanistan. The Obama administration's civilian uplift in 2009 increased the capacity at

the embassy, consolidated the leadership of the civilian effort, and integrated civilians in the military chain of command, all of which has greatly improved civilian support to the PRTs and the ability to coordinate development efforts across the country.

Not surprisingly, this architecture often led to conflicting and confusing guidance to the PRTs. To some extent, PRTs are a “rogue element,” responsible to so many masters that they effectively did not work for anyone (Combat Studies Institute 2011). Much of their autonomy comes from their ability to spend CERP money. At the division level, different commanders delegate the authority to spend varying amounts of money to the Brigade or PRT Commander. When a new Division or Brigade Commander takes over, such authorities can change, sometimes affecting the responsiveness of the PRT to local needs and undermining their credibility (Combat Studies Institute 2008a; 2011; U.S. Navy 2010; USIP 2009c; 2009l). PRTs help to develop the PDPs, which are ostensibly aligned with national strategy and blessed by Division or higher, but each maneuver battalion and its subordinate companies are also allocated CERP funds, which they often use for security-related projects that are not included in the PDP. This makes it difficult for the PRT to maintain a comprehensive picture of development in the province, and creates opportunities for local leaders to play one unit against another (Combat Studies Institute 2011). There was very little standardization with regard to coordination between the PRT and the maneuver battalions, or between the PRT and Brigade and Division headquarters; like civil-military relations within the team, these were often personality dependent (Combat Studies Institute 2006; 2008a). Every time a division, or a PRT, rotated out, new relationships and coordination mechanisms had to be established, and the incoming unit had to quickly be brought up to speed. The lack of continuity and loss of institutional knowledge sometimes led well-intentioned

commanders at all levels to make mistakes that set back carefully managed relations between the PRT and the locals, as when a new Brigade Commander agreed to build 50 schools in his first meeting with the governor, without consulting the PRT, without reference to the ANDS, and with no idea of the capacity of the governor or the Ministry of Education to support and staff the schools (USIP 2009l).

The loose control of CERP funds has proved to be a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it has enabled PRT commanders to respond quickly and effectively to leaders from the governor down to the village level when doing so could improve working relations between the PRT, local government, and the population. Since it is the main source of funding for development, it also gives the PRT leverage over the governor and PDC to enforce a transparent and responsible development process that responds to the needs of the people (U.S. Navy 2009b). Although the locals understand that the money is coming from the Americans, allocating CERP money primarily to those projects that support the ANDS, have been integrated into the PDP, and have been approved by the governor and ministerial line directors helps to connect the Kabul government to the people all the way down to the village level.

Unfortunately, loose control and the lack of standards for delegating authority also resulted in poor oversight, creating the potential for fraud, corruption, and waste (DOD 2011). As a result, the Defense Department has increased the controls and restrictions on CERP funds, which has increased the administrative burden on the PRT and slowed response and approval times. Demonstrating the disconnect between policy makers in Kabul and Washington and the reality on the ground in Afghanistan, most CERP expenditures must now comply with DOD Financial Management Regulations (FMR) and Federal Acquisition

Regulations (FAR) manuals, which are intended to govern how DOD does business with U.S. and international contractors under normal circumstances, but are a poor fit for post-conflict reconstruction in a country like Afghanistan. Under the FMR and FAR, most projects in Afghanistan must now meet U.S. building codes. This entails the use of non-local materials, advantaging international contractors over local ones, and increasing costs as much as ten times what it would cost to construct the same project using Afghan techniques, standards, and materials. Absurdly, compliance with the FAR also undermines PRT efforts to fight corruption and fraud by requiring the PRT to compensate corrupt or incompetent Afghan contractors when the PRT cancels contracts with them. This has created the perverse incentive for the PRT to focus on smaller, less expensive projects that the commander can approve and control himself, rather than on larger projects that better support the ANDS and long-term economic development.²⁶

Coordinating development with NGOs has been particularly frustrating for the PRTs. PRTs have generally been most successful in regions where poor security precludes NGOs from operating, making the PRTs the only game in town (State 2006). In principle, as security improves and NGOs move into an area, PRTs should be able to reduce their development activities and focus more on security sector reform. They would continue to support both the development and governance missions by participating in the PDC and development of the PDP and helping to identify and fund development projects that could be undertaken by UNAMA or NGOs. Many NGOs have, in fact, worked closely with the PRTs, to their mutual benefit and to that of the Afghans. However, many others refuse to cooperate or coordinate with the PRTs, for a variety of reasons.

²⁶ Telephone interview, Nuristan PRT CO.

Some object on ideological grounds to the military's involvement in development. They charge that what the military calls "humanitarian assistance" is driven not by altruism but by political and military strategic objectives, and that the military does not comply with development best practices, sacrificing sustainability and capacity-building for quick results that further the COIN effort (Dziedzic and Seidl 2005). American officials do not dispute the fact that military-led development efforts also further the goals of stabilizing the Afghan government and undermining support for the insurgency. Rather, they counter that the PRTs serve development needs that would otherwise go unmet, either because civilian agencies do not have the capacity to respond to immediate needs or because NGOs cannot meet the needs given the security environment. The DOD also does not dispute that the military lacks the training and expertise needed for development work, or that this has resulted in costly mistakes. Yet the PRTs' overall track record is quite good, and the incidence of poorly implemented projects is comparable to that of NGOs (Dziedzic and Seidl 2005; U.S. Navy 2009a). Critics from the NGO world conveniently ignore the fact that the concept of exactly what "best practices" are is itself controversial in the development community, and that many NGOs also pursue political objectives outlined by the governments of donor nations (Stapleton 2007).

Other NGO personnel object for the more practical reason that the military's involvement in development for strategic purposes makes all development and development workers targets for insurgents intent on destabilizing the government and delegitimizing the American and coalition presence. The concern is that PRTs blur the lines between military and civilian development and assistance efforts, shrinking the "humanitarian space" in which NGOs have to work and calling into question their impartiality (Sedra 2005). Their fears are

not unfounded. NGO workers were increasingly targeted as ISAF and the PRTs expanded their footprint after 2003, and many NGOs were forced to pull out of rural areas. The open cooperation between international military forces, the Afghan government, and the UN on development has caused some NGOs to guard their independence fiercely, as being associated with stabilization efforts can put them at increased risk (Stapleton 2007).

Ideological and security concerns about cooperating with the military are behind the refusal of many NGOs to attend meetings of the PDC or participate in the development of the PDP, despite invitations to do so by governors (USIP 2009m). Many are unwilling to share information on their projects with the PRT, leading to a duplication of effort and hampering efforts to build a comprehensive development picture. Lack of communication has also denied the PRTs the expertise of NGO personnel with extensive experience in Afghanistan, particularly knowledge of local culture, personalities, and drivers of conflict that could have significantly aided the PRTs' development and governance missions and probably helped them to avoid costly mistakes (State 2006; Sedra 2005). Unfortunately, it has also at times prevented the PRT or maneuver battalion from responding to threats to NGO workers in their area (Dziedzic and Seidl 2005).

Under these difficult circumstances, PRTs accomplished a great deal in terms of humanitarian and infrastructure development, building schools, clinics, roads, wells, irrigation projects, police headquarters, and government buildings, often with little oversight or direction from their chain of command. Unfortunately, the lack of vertical and horizontal coordination resulted in a great deal of inefficiency, confusion at all levels of the chain of command about the status of development, and sometimes costly mistakes that were counterproductive to the mission of improving security and enhancing governance.

Cultural terrain

When the U.S. declared war on Afghanistan in 2001, few people in America knew anything about life in Afghanistan. Even at State and the DOD, knowledge and expertise was extremely limited. So it is not surprising that the PRTs faced a steep learning curve as they approached the development mission. Had they been somehow enlightened with the knowledge and understanding of Afghan culture that U.S. forces have gained over the last decade, they would have undoubtedly altered the focus of their development efforts in rural areas. A better understanding of the cultural terrain would have also helped them to better contend with the widely varying tribal and ethnic dynamics, and to alter their development efforts in order to reinforce the importance of local governance structures. In any discussion or assessment of PRT development efforts in Afghanistan, the projects most often referred to are roads, schools, clinics, and wells. There is no doubt that building roads was one of the most critical and empowering projects that PRTs could pursue. They connected the provinces to Kabul and other population centers, and made it possible to get goods to markets that were previously inaccessible. Education was a high priority for local and provincial leaders, who often asked for schools to be built. Similarly, health care was almost non-existent outside of major cities, so clinics were in high demand. New schools and clinics were relatively quick and inexpensive to build, provided great photo opportunities for the PRT and the Provincial Governor, and brought a rush of hope, enthusiasm, and support for the PRT and the government. They also fit the U.S. narrative of the coalition forces bringing new freedoms and opportunity and better quality of life to the people of Afghanistan, helping to maintain domestic support back home. However, poor security often made travel outside of the local area dangerous, even on the new roads, and most people in rural Afghanistan were engaged

in subsistence-level farming, with little extra to sell in a market. Schools and clinics were often built without consideration for whether the provincial and national government had the human capacity to staff and support them, creating a sense of betrayal and making the central government look corrupt and incompetent when the buildings remained empty after they were built.

While there was certainly a great need for these projects, arguably what was needed most in rural areas was small-scale agricultural development to increase crop yield and improve storage capacity, so that villages could become self-supporting and have produce to take to markets via the new roads (Combat Studies Institute 2011; SOCOM 2012). Much of the institutional and traditional knowledge regarding farming techniques was lost with the destruction of the khans and tribal elders under the communists, and local capacities had atrophied further under the Taliban regime. Rural Afghans needed irrigation projects and assistance with the most basic farming techniques even more than they needed schools and clinics. Yet, in a country in which 80% of the population is involved in agriculture (in some provinces it was as high as 95%), agricultural development was largely ignored until 2005, and the PRTs were apparently unaware of a USAID program designed to rebuild agricultural markets (USIP 2009n; State 2006). USDA had minimal capacity to support the PRTs and no dedicated funding, and the first National Guard ADT did not deploy until 2008, more than six years into the reconstruction effort (Kemp 2011; USIP 2009f). The one area of development that did focus on agriculture was poppy eradication, which was a high priority for the U.S. But in many places, poppy eradication was a failure, because alternative agricultural development efforts were insufficient or because poppy was so much more lucrative than substitute crops. Where eradication was successful, it often had the unintended

consequence of depriving locals of their livelihood; without an alternative, many joined the insurgency (Combat Studies Institute 2006; 2011; USIP 2009k).

A factor that hindered development in the south was a poor understanding of traditional Pashtun culture, and the way in which development efforts fed the Taliban narrative of a war on traditional values in rural Pashtun areas. In these areas, most of them beyond the effective reach of the central government, the Taliban have established shadow governments which provide services such as justice and education that lend some measure of stability to tribal life, even if it is at times harsh (USIP 2009d). The ability of the PRT to bring life-improving development – on a scale beyond the capacity of the Taliban – to these areas, particularly in the form of roads and other infrastructure, represents an asymmetric advantage over the Taliban (Kemp 2011). However, this type of development, which is designed to build support for the central government and increase connections between the provinces and Kabul, by its nature threatens the authority and autonomy of the traditional and fiercely independent rural tribes in the south. The fact that these projects also tend to advantage the more settled and urbanized groups and extend the modernizing influence of the center supports the Taliban narrative that these efforts are part of an American-led war on Islam and traditional tribal culture, a narrative that resonates with many in the rural south (TAC 2010). Similarly, the PRT emphasis on value-driven goals like education and expanding women’s rights, priorities for American leaders and domestic audiences, is often unwelcome in these areas. Not only do these ideals threaten fundamental Islamic traditions, but they are far less important to many than the provision of basic necessities and predictable security (USIP 2009e).

As a result of this dynamic, PRT development efforts in the south have in some ways helped to strengthen the insurgency. Taliban leaders have moved in after the construction of schools and installed their own teachers and curricula, excluding girls and extending their influence over the next generation of young men (USIP 2009c). Major projects like the upgrade of a power plant at Kajaki Dam in Helmund province that would extend the power grid to unserved areas generated fierce Taliban resistance, since connecting rural villages to the power represented a major extension of the modernizing influence of the center. The Taliban attacked not only the project itself, but also its supply lines and the workers employed by the projects, highlighting the inability of the central government to provide the security and stability it had promised (McKenzie and Brody 2011).

Lastly, the pervasiveness of low-level corruption in Afghan society has plagued development efforts in all parts of the country. Corruption by government officials with influence over the PDP, including line directors, PDC members, and even governors themselves, has undermined efforts to use development to build legitimacy for the provincial and national government. At times, PRT commanders determined they were better off negotiating smaller projects directly with local leaders in order to circumvent corruption within the system the PRT itself was trying to implement.²⁷ The limited ability of the PRT to effectively monitor all of the projects under its purview has led to extensive fraud in the form of shoddy construction, substitution of inferior materials, incomplete projects, and skimming of funds by local contractors. Government office buildings funded by the Bamyan PRT became unusable after one winter when substandard plumbing and insulation caused pipes to burst, flooding the buildings (USIP 2009j). In 2009, as security conditions worsened, PRT and Brigade commanders began cancelling projects they could not effectively monitor,

²⁷ Telephone interview, Nuristan PRT CO.

because without oversight corruption by contractors and local officials was rampant (U.S. Navy 2010; USIP 2009). Paradoxically, efforts by the PRT to reduce or punish corruption by cancelling projects or marginalizing corrupt officials often created anger and frustration among the local populations and their leaders who had been promised these projects, ultimately damaging overall mission effectiveness.

The governance mission

The third mission is commonly referred to as the “governance mission,” but this is perhaps misleading and cause for unrealistic expectations about what the PRT is trying to accomplish. Despite the rhetoric in U.S. national security strategy documents regarding the promotion of democracy and the universal values of freedom, liberty, and human dignity, such terms are conspicuously absent in documents describing the mission and purpose of the PRT. According to the initial guidance from the U.S. Embassy in 2003, the objective of the PRT is “to extend the reach [or authority] of the Afghan government (Perito 2005; State 2006).” The official mission statement that appears in ISAF’s *PRT Handbook* was agreed to by the multinational PRT Executive Steering Committee two years later, in January of 2005, and reads:

“Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) will assist the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to extend its authority, in order to facilitate the development of a stable and secure environment in the identified area of operations, and enable Security Sector Reform (SSR) and reconstruction efforts (ISAF 2008, 3).”

Nowhere in the *PRT Handbook* does ISAF task the PRTs to promote “good” governance explicitly. The word “democracy” appears only once in the entire document, in a warning against including “a broad vision statement for aspirations such as a full-fledged

democracy” in their development plans (ISAF 2008, 14). Justice and human rights are only discussed in an appendix on UN-recommended best practices. Rather, the emphasis in the handbook’s articulation of the PRT concept and its guiding principles is unmistakably on “stability.” Stability is achieved by decreasing drivers of conflict while increasing “legitimate institutional capacity.” Stability is defined in terms of government effectiveness and legitimacy. Effectiveness is defined in terms of security, specifically as having a monopoly over the legitimate use of force, including the armed forces, policing functions, and the judiciary. Legitimacy is considered high if the “population supports the [governing] authority against competing political entities,” and is contrasted with an authoritarian model that “does not have the consent of the people to be governed (ISAF 2008, 13).” Neither is an explicit reference to good governance, although a rather academic sentence several pages later does define legitimacy in terms of good governance. However, there is a sharp contrast between this passage and the paragraph which precedes it, which directs that “Increasing the effectiveness of legitimate authorities in Afghanistan...should focus on enabling the state institutions that use force.” The governance mission of the PRT, then, is explicitly not to promote democracy and good governance, but to help build the institutional capacity of the Afghan government to extend its reach, provide security, and provide basic services for the population, in order to create popular support for the central government. The successful elections in 2004 and 2005 and the 2005 assessments by the U.S. government and military commanders indicate that they were initially successful at creating that support. The reemergence of the insurgency in the south in 2006 and the steady increase in violence through 2009 is attributed primarily to the inability of the Afghan government to capitalize on that early success and establish its legitimacy in the eyes of the people.

Capacity

The PRT is not designed to enhance governance capacity directly. The PRT's ability to enhance that capacity is a function of its ability to effectively carry out the security and development missions already discussed. As such, the challenges discussed above, and particularly the impact of poor security on the PRTs' ability to travel to remote areas of the provinces, significantly limited their ability to improve the capacity of the government at the provincial level and below. However, to the extent that their work with the provincial governor and PDC produced tangible development results, many PRTs reported that the process did empower government officials and begin to generate support for both the provincial and the national government. From this perspective, perhaps one of the biggest challenges to improving local governance was the lack of capacity to reach out into the provinces, away from the capital, to work with leaders at the district and village levels. Again, the ability to do so varied greatly depending on security conditions. In more permissive environments, the CATs would often engage with the sub-governors at the district level, mirroring the interaction at the provincial level, and the PRT Commander and civilian representatives would visit villages and sit down with local jirga and shura to hear their concerns. But even in these environments, they were only able to reach a small fraction of the population, and then only on an infrequent and irregular basis. Turnover of the PRTs every 10-12 months meant that local leaders might only see the same team members once or twice, making continuity and relationship-building extremely difficult.

PRTs were certainly not staffed to provide guidance or instruction on how to run local government, although that is at times exactly what many military officers found themselves doing. State Department representatives were not experts on running local governments, nor

had many had any personal experience doing so. Designing government is a function generally performed by NGOs and academics in developing countries, but in areas where security precluded NGOs from operating, PRTs often did the best they could to fill the void. Most PRT commanders and State Department representatives worked closely with the provincial governor, his staff, and the line directors from the ministries that supported the governor's development efforts. They often had daily contact with the governor, attempting to build trust and influence, but their ability to affect the performance of the provincial government was less a function of their knowledge and efforts than it was of the individual governor's commitment to running a responsible and effective government.

Support and coordination

Coordination problems that affected the security and development missions often had a secondary impact on achieving the governance mission. New roads offered the promise of connecting with markets and resources previously unreachable by many, but when the pace of road construction outstripped the ability of the ANSF and ISAF forces to effectively secure the countryside, travelers often found journeying beyond their local area fraught with danger. Bandits and insurgents harassed robbed or killed travelers, or ISAF or ANSF patrols harassed and detained them. Corrupt members of the ANP would set up check points and demand payment for safe passage (Jones 2008, 4). Occasionally, travelers were mistaken for insurgents and attacked by ISAF forces. These experiences undermined any confidence locals had in the ability of the government to provide a safe and secure environment.

Well-intentioned development projects that were not properly coordinated with the Afghan ministries often did more harm than good, raising the expectations of the local population and then leaving them unmet. New schools were a high priority for many local

leaders, but when PRTs built them without coordinating with the Ministry of Education to see if there were teachers available, the end result was often an empty building and a sense that the Kabul government was corrupt or inept. To make matters worse, the Taliban often moved in and filled the void, provided mullahs to teach a radical, anti-American and anti-government curriculum. A regional government office center was built in Qalat province with the approval of the governor and the Ministry of Urban Development, and yet the development plan made no provision for paved roads, electricity, plumbing, or maintenance, so the completed buildings sit empty as a monument to government waste and ineptitude (USIP 2009h). To a population struggling to survive on menial jobs and subsistence farming, poorly executed projects like these reinforce the perception of the government as corrupt and incompetent.

Poor communication up and down the parallel chains of command and across the agencies that were supposed to be supporting the PRT was often counterproductive to the ultimate goal of enhancing the reach and credibility of the Afghan government. A stunning example is the visit of the ISAF commander, an American general, to a new provincial governor who was trying to establish himself. The State representative on the PRT tried desperately to get the embassy to postpone the visit until the governor had been able to get his feet under him, but the embassy staff replied “We don’t tell four-star generals what to do.” To make matters worse, the general brought with him – unannounced – the former governor, whom the locals and PRT leadership knew to be a corrupt drug lord and murderer. The failure of the military to coordinate down its chain of command and of the embassy to coordinate horizontally with ISAF led to an embarrassing mistake that undermined the credibility of the PRT, ISAF, and the Afghan government (USIP 2009a, 19-20).

Cultural terrain

Objectively speaking, the factors that have most significantly hindered the PRTs' efforts to improve governmental capacity are functions of Afghan culture and recent history, and have been far beyond their control. Two in particular – widespread corruption among government officials and security forces, and the lack of human capacity, in the form of educated, responsible civil servants – are unlikely to change for many years, if at all. Corruption has unquestionably been the single biggest challenge to building the legitimacy of the Afghan government, from the national level down to the provincial level and below. Patronage and payoffs have long been a part of Afghan culture, divided as it is along tribal and ethnic lines and given the recent history of warlordism, but the money pouring into the country from the U.S. and other international sources and the establishment of wholly new institutions of government created opportunities for the accumulation of such immense wealth and power that the scale of corruption vastly exceeds what has traditionally been acceptable. From the beginning, the government has relied on the support of powerful warlords who command the loyalty of tribe members and large militias, so many were appointed to be governors, district sub-governors, and regional police chiefs. Many paid extremely large sums for their positions, and their influence over the deployment of security forces in their province and the allocation of Western development money gives them ample opportunity to recoup their investment by extracting payments from their constituents.²⁸ Efforts during the first several years to reform the Ministry of the Interior (MOI), responsible for civilian governance functions from Kabul down to the districts, as well as for the ANP, were insufficient to curtail the extensive corruption in that ministry. Corruption and abuse of power in the ANP is so widespread that it is widely distrusted by the population, many of

²⁸ Telephone interview, Nuristan PRT CO.

whom consider the ANP a bigger problem in their daily lives than the Taliban (U.S. Navy 2009a; Jones 2008). In 2007, President Karzai created the Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG) to exercise tighter central government control over subnational levels of governance. Most of the MOI's governance functions were transferred to the IDLG, and it was vested with the power to appoint governors and subgovernors in order to remove some of the patronage from the system. However, President Karzai himself has been accused of pressuring the IDLG to appoint his preferred candidates, men and women who are loyal to him (USIP 2009h).

Corruption that starts at the top inevitably pervades throughout all levels of the system. Bribe-taking by governors, line directors, and members of the PDCs undermines not only the integrity of the process but also the confidence in the government that the process is intended to instill. Corruption at lower levels has led to increased oversight from Kabul, such as the IDLG, but creates a tension between the need to limit corruption and efforts to empower local leaders in order to enhance governance capacity at the provincial level and below. Assigning competent and honest ministerial line directors to the provinces to work with the provincial government, while continuing to report to their parent ministry in Kabul, has the dual purpose of linking provincial and national development and monitoring corruption. However, the poor levels of security and distance (both literal and figurative) from Kabul make it difficult to keep good people in these positions (USIP 2009g). The culturally-constructed respect and loyalty for the warlords-turned-government-officials and the tenuous popular support for the central government make the allegiance of the warlords indispensable to Karzai's government, in turn leaving them largely untouchable for their crimes and corruption. Even when their crimes escalate beyond graft to torture and mass

murder, Karzai excuses them, and continues to work with them (Aikins 2011). The PRTs can do little besides report their observations up the chain to ISAF, which sometimes pressures the central government and sometimes succeeds in getting corrupt officials removed, but ultimately, such decisions remain the sovereign right of senior Afghan leaders, who often continue to overlook corruption in order to maintain stability and support.

The second factor that has thwarted the PRTs' governance efforts is the debilitating lack of human capacity. In a population with greater than 70% illiteracy, the pool from which to draw qualified candidates for government service is extremely shallow. The effect is exacerbated in the provinces by jobs in cities that pay higher wages and offer a safer environment and by the fact that people who demonstrate competence at the provincial level are often plucked away for jobs with more responsibility in Kabul (USIP 2009m). The dearth of competent candidates for government service is compounded by counter-productive policies of the international actors in Afghanistan, who siphon off many of the best qualified people to support their own operations. College educated Afghans with experience in legal matters, administration, engineering, urban planning, and project management are in high demand and critical to reconstruction and improving governing capacity, but the salaries paid to English-speaking Afghans by ISAF, UNAMA, and international NGOs to act as interpreters or advisors are often far greater than what they could earn working for the government in their area of expertise.

The PRTs have little to no capacity to affect this deficiency. They can help to improve the infrastructure that supports governmental capacity by building schools, clinics, and government office buildings and by bringing in the supplies and equipment needed to, but training the teachers, doctors, nurses, line directors, and other officials and staff takes

months or years and is beyond the scope of the PRTs' mission or capability. PRT commanders and State Department representatives do work closely with the governors and line directors, mentoring them on leadership, organizational principles, and responsible governance, but there is little they can do to change the behavior of these individuals if they are corrupt or self-serving. The CATs try to do the same thing at the district level, but their reach is limited and turnover of both Afghan and U.S. Army personnel is high, so it is difficult to have any lasting effect.

The lack of capacity and reach at the provincial level and below limits the ability of the government to provide security and services, creating space for the Taliban to erect its shadow government institutions and fill the void left by the central government. The rise in violence and expansion of the insurgency from 2006 to 2009 caused much of what little capacity there was in the provinces to collapse, as officials withdrew to the provincial capitals or Kabul out of concern for their safety. The justice system is often singled out for its slow, bureaucratic process and lack of responsiveness to the needs of the people. In many rural parts of the southern and eastern provinces, the Taliban provides a more effective and responsive system of justice and dispute resolution than Kabul can, teachers for the education of boys, and even collects taxes. The support that many in these regions express for the Taliban has little to do with their ideological teachings, but rather is attributable to the ability of the Taliban to provide more reliable and consistent services and a degree of stability that the central government has proved incapable of establishing.

Conclusion

The nearly decade-long experiment in synchronized civil-military stability operations undertaken by the PRTs is difficult to characterize as simply a success or a failure. For every example of abject failure in one part of the country, there is an example of stunning success in another. Looking at the country as a whole, however, it is hard to argue that the PRT-led stabilization strategy has been able to achieve an acceptable level of security, government capacity, or development. Security has improved since 2009, but violence is still at higher levels than in 2005. The Karzai government appears increasingly corrupt, inept, and unpopular, and confidence in the 2010 presidential elections was much lower than for the 2004 and 2005 elections. The Ring Road has been a major upgrade to the transportation infrastructure, but more than 90% of the population remains unconnected to the power grid, relying on diesel-fed generators if they have access to electricity at all. Economic growth has improved fairly steadily, but most of the population outside of the major population centers remains unaffected by it, and joblessness is still a major concern.

The inability of the PRTs – and the coalition forces more broadly – to achieve their objectives in the three mission areas of security, development, and governance can be attributed to a wide array of factors, but most of them are a function of the lack of capacity needed to perform the mission, poor support and coordination, and a Western perspective that failed to grasp the intricacies, nuance, and importance of Afghan culture, history, and heritage. The lack of capacity, both military and civilian, hindered all three PRT missions. Insufficient numbers meant the PRTs could never cover the AOR they were assigned, leaving the Taliban and other insurgents room to counter or undermine each gain they made in local villages. The lack of civilians experienced in development and government led to numerous

mistakes by well-intentioned military leaders trying to further their mission objectives as best they could. Similarly, mistakes caused by poor coordination – vertically within the U.S. military and horizontally between the U.S. military, civilian agencies, the Afghan government, and coalition partners – consistently undermined efforts to win over the loyalty of the Afghan people and establish support for the Afghan government.

Perhaps most damaging, the lack of understanding of Afghan culture and society led military and civilian leaders at all levels to develop and execute strategies that were often counterproductive to their intended goals. They failed to align their expectations to the realities on the ground or to tailor their efforts and tactics to the unique needs and attributes of each province and each ethnic group. Instead, the PRTs and other military and civilian actors tried to apply Western organizational principles and standards or techniques that had been successful in other parts of the country, without regard to the vast cultural and ethnic differences that separated Afghans from Americans and from each other. Particularly with regard to the ethnic Pashtuns in the south, they failed to comprehend the long history of decentralized authority and tribal autonomy, or to recognize that their efforts develop modern infrastructure and enhance the capacity of the central government would threaten that autonomy and inadvertently feed the insurgency.

The successes and failures of the PRTs provide military leaders and civilian policymakers with a roadmap for the improvements that need to be made in American civil and military expeditionary capabilities. While it is extremely unlikely that the U.S. will embark on a stabilization and reconstruction effort on the scale of Afghanistan or Iraq again in the foreseeable future, it is almost certain that both the military and its interagency counterparts will engage in stability operations in emerging, weak, and failing states in

Africa, across Asia and the Middle East, and in Latin America. Reducing instability in these regions will be a vital aspect of U.S. national security policy for many years to come. Although the challenges in each region and country will differ, the factors that limited success in Afghanistan – American capacity, poor civil-military coordination mechanisms, and a lack of regional and cultural knowledge and awareness – will affect U.S. efforts elsewhere in similar ways. Addressing those factors now, in anticipation of future stabilization operations, will pay large dividends, in terms of efficiency and effectiveness, which will save lives and resources and help improve America's image in the developing world.

Human capacity, particularly on the civilian side, was a contributing factor to almost all of the problems encountered in the stabilization effort in Afghanistan. State, USAID, USDA, and other agencies need to have a rapidly deployable response capability to support humanitarian crises and disaster relief efforts, as well as the capacity to support and sustain small-scale, continuing operations in a number of countries. Fortunately, a great deal has already been done to create this capacity, manifested in the creation of the Civilian Response Corps and in the recent upgrade of the S/CRS to bureau status, as the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations. The CRC has over 130 active and over 1000 standby personnel on its roster from eight different agencies, and deployed 292 people to 28 locations in 2010. However, this is only half-way to the needed strength of 250 active and 2200 standby personnel, and Congress must continue to authorize the funds needed to train and deploy the CRC (State 2011). Perhaps more importantly, the State Department must reevaluate its training, evaluation, and promotion systems to better support deployed operations and joint civil-military assignments. Existing incentive systems do not reward such assignments, with

promotions more often going to Foggy Bottom insiders who have stayed close to the centers of power and influence (Murdock et al 2004).

Capacity issues for the military will lessen significantly as the U.S. begins to withdraw troops from Afghanistan in 2012. However, the experience gained in stabilization and reconstruction operations needs to be protected and institutionalized, or else the military will find itself with sufficient bodies but insufficient experience the next time around. DOD needs to create a database of personnel with leadership experience on PRTs who could be tapped to lead small civil-military teams elsewhere in the world on short notice if the need arose. Broader training is needed as well, however. Prior to Afghanistan and Iraq, the Army assumed these duties could be carried out by the specialized Civil Affairs Teams and SOF personnel. Under the paradigm of the new national security strategy, DOD now considers stability operations to be a core mission of all military forces, but few receive any actual training related to stabilization activities. The Navy has a robust Maritime Security Sector Development program that operates in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, and the Air Force has a similar program for air sector security, but the vast majority of personnel involved in planning and executing these missions have no relevant experience or training. Like the early PRTs, they approach the civilian and military leaders of partner nations with well-intentioned offers of training and capacity building, but are learning as they go what the real needs are, who the power brokers are, and how local customs and traditions affect what they can hope to accomplish.

All three services need to improve the training provided to deploying units, including courses, lectures, and exercises on development best practices, governance, working with NGOs, and cultural awareness for the region to which they are heading. The military

currently has schools to train individuals in each unit on important collateral duties such as legal officer, aviation safety officer, hazardous material handling, and maintenance management. These schools usually last several weeks and provide each unit with a resident expert of sorts, but also connect those individuals to a network of experienced professionals who can provide reach-back support. The DOD should establish a stability operations course, based on the experiences in Afghanistan, for officers and senior non-commissioned officers, providing each unit with someone to lead the planning of stabilization activities and creating a cadre of personnel throughout each service who could plan larger stability efforts. On Navy ships, this role is currently filled by the Command Chaplain, who coordinates volunteers to spend a day or two painting schools or repairing churches while the ship is in port for a visit. This kind of superficial approach will no longer meet the needs and demands of U.S. partners in the developing world.

Civil-military coordination has improved immensely over the last 10 years as a result of the Afghan experience. New mechanisms and structures are now in place at the national and institutional level to facilitate joint interagency-military planning and operational coordination, and the State Department has implemented a long list of reforms that draw on organizational principles at DOD. Yet the civilian agencies (State in particular) and the military remain vastly different cultures, with inherent biases and stereotypes that make cooperation difficult. Most of the civil-military coordination reforms have been about the planning process at the strategic or operational level, such as planning committees supporting the National Security Council or the creation of civil-military staffs to support the military's regional Combatant Commanders. More mechanisms are needed to establish a civil-military link at the tactical level, and to expose both sides to the capabilities and expertise each has to

offer. The stability operations course proposed above should include civilian instructors and students, as the PRT training program eventually did. This would increase familiarity and create personal connections among civilian and military peers that would facilitate cooperation and mutual support at all levels in future stability operations.

Another area with good potential for increased coordination is agricultural development. In most parts of the developing world, this is spearheaded by civilian development agencies and NGOs, as it rightfully should be. Yet weak and failing states can pose security risks that preclude civilians gaining access to the populations most in need, and natural disasters can create requirements for rapid response that USDA and USAID cannot yet meet. Army National Guard ADTs could do both, either in lieu of or in cooperation with civilian organizations, until situations changed to allow the mission to be handed over completely to civilians. It seems absurd that ADTs have limited their operations to Latin America for 20 years, when agricultural development is in such desperate need in Africa and elsewhere. In Africa, many soldiers come from rural villages, and most will return to them. Many even leave their units during harvest or planting times, affecting the units' readiness. ADTs could work with African militaries to teach modern farming techniques, animal husbandry, and basic veterinary techniques that the soldiers could then take back to their families and villages. This would have the added benefit of improving security capacity, since it would reduce absences related to farm work. But it is critical that such efforts be coordinated with USAID, USDA, and NGOs working in the same areas, in order to synchronize efforts and reduce redundancy. Each of these actors may not be able to devote personnel to a specific location year round, but if a district or village received assistance quarterly, it would not matter if it came from a different source each time as long as it was

coordinated. The point here is not to push the military into development work in areas where NGOs and civilian agencies should be doing the work, but to create mechanisms for communication and coordination so that the military can support those operations when it is needed and where it makes sense.

This is one of the intended functions of U.S. Africa Command, which was designed to have a robust civilian interagency staff to help plan and coordinate military support to civilian-led aid and development work. Unfortunately, many of the civil billets remain unfilled, and the intended close civil-military coordination has not evolved to the extent it was hoped. The AFRICOM experiment needs to be revitalized, with additional personnel assigned and a reinvigorated effort to establish standardized mechanisms for coordinating operations and building a comprehensive database of development efforts and military and civilian contacts on the continent. A similar structure should also be put in place at other regional commands where there are likely to be requirements for coordinated civil-military stability operations, including Central Command, Southern Command, and Pacific Command.

Funding for military stability operations is an area that needs immediate attention in order to reduce fraud and waste, but also to eliminate needless bureaucratic processes that impede the ability to accomplish the mission. For many years, military assistance of this type was funded primarily out of one of two pots of money – OHDACA and International Military Education and Training (IMET). Over the last 10 years, Congress has authorized a number of more flexible accounts to support stability operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere. In addition to CERP, these include “Section 1206, 1207, and 1208” funds, so named for the section of the National Defense Authorization Act in which they are described,

the Combatant Counter Initiative Fund, Joint Combined Exchange Training, the Combating Terrorism Fellowship Program, and Anti-Terrorism Assistance, to name a few. All of these programs are designed to allow U.S. military forces to work with and provide training and equipment to foreign security forces in order to improve their capabilities, but the broad conception of security under the post-9/11 paradigm is often stretched in order to use these funds for unintended, if well-intentioned, purposes. The web of different accounts, each with different restrictions, authorizations, and limitations, makes it incredibly difficult to understand and manage how the military is paying for the services it provides. This creates opportunities for fraud, but also for unintended misuse or waste that can undermine the mission and hurt the careers of personnel who unintentionally mismanage funds. These programs need to be streamlined, consolidated, and simplified, with increased control given to Combatant Commanders, along with increased accountability and transparent procedures. Additionally, they need to be decoupled from regulations like the FMR and FAR, and new regulations need to be written that better reflect the realities encountered when dealing with local contractors and building conditions in developing countries.

By far the most difficult challenge facing the military and the interagency is how to build the language skills and cultural awareness to support stability operations anywhere in the world. It is simply not possible to develop the capacity to cover every contingency, and to do so would be a waste of resources. The military has increased its efforts to groom cultural awareness and language skills in its officers, increasing the availability of and requirements for language classes at the service academies and introducing semesters abroad and inter-service academy exchanges with an array of countries around the world. DOD has also built a database of service members with critical language skills, and it has heavily recruited

Arabic and Pashtu speakers in the past decade, but this will not help if the next stability operation is in Sub-Saharan Africa or Southeast Asia. As a next step, the military needs to expand partnerships with academia and the development community, identifying ethnic, cultural, and regional experts who can develop training curricula for deploying units and perhaps work directly with them in an advisory capacity. Military deployments to permissive environments also offer incredible opportunities for research, creating an incentive for graduate students or academics to embed with military units the way that journalists now do in conflict zones. In return for acting as a cultural advisor or part-time interpreter, academics and graduate students with needed expertise could be provided with transportation, food, lodging, and medical care with the military unit, access to foreign officials for the purpose of surveys or interviews, and sufficient autonomy to conduct extensive field research. Greater effort should be made to extend similar opportunities to members of the interagency, who would gain experience both with the military and in their designated region of expertise or responsibility.

These initiatives would go a long way toward improving the ability of the civil-military apparatus to conduct coordinated, efficient, and effective stability operations worldwide. Without the need for a security element, the U.S. could deploy small civil-military teams of a dozen, 20, or 30 people for a period of weeks or months if needed, or create a civilian capacity within deploying military units to lead or coordinate aspects of security sector development that are more appropriately conducted by civilians. Having a cadre of military personnel who are well-versed in all aspects of stability operations and in various languages and cultures would also create the ability to provide security for a civilian team while simultaneously increasing the capacity of the team to pursue missions related to

governance, development, and humanitarian relief. If the United States is going to successfully carry out a forward-leaning, engaged foreign and security policy that includes a significant effort to help foreign partners develop economically, politically, and militarily, then it must apply the lessons of the Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan in order to create the knowledge, capabilities, and mechanisms required to seamlessly integrate civilian and military efforts across a broad spectrum of conditions.

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