PAST IS PROLOGUE: ABROAD IN SYRIA WITH THE GHOSTS OF IRAQ

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FOREWORD

In the lead-up to the 2003 invasion of Iraq, the short-lived Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA) briefly held a mandate to lead post-war reconstruction efforts. The Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) under L. Paul Bremer replaced ORHA before its plans could be implemented. Autopsies of replacing the ORHA and the consequences of the CPA's subsequent handling of the Iraq mission abound, but they focused on the Iraq mission as a historical narrative. However, the United States (US) now faces a lengthening list of probable reconstruction and stabilization (R&S) missions in the near future. Rather than burying the autopsies, the contrast between ORHA's plans and the CPA's implementation offers instructive lessons for future R&S missions.

Such a study is of paramount importance as the short list of countries likely to need R&S assistance includes Syria, Libya, Yemen, Central African Republic and South Sudan as well as, sadly, Iraq again. Whether or not the US military is deployed to bring an end to the crises, failure to assist in R&S processes following a ceasefire is not an option. The power vacuums that follow crisis are a perfect breeding ground for extremism, transnational crime and recurrent violence, all of which have international, as well as national and regional security ramifications.

This paper presents a framework that planners can use to speed the planning process and improve traction. R&S contexts require the ability to function at a high level within conditions of ambiguity, violence and chaos. Using past lessons as principles rather than fixed points on a checklist speeds implementation and guides efforts from a stronger and more flexible start-

ing point. As governance reform is a core thrust within US intervention frameworks, this document argues for improving future operations through a paradigm shift away from top-down R&S interventions. This shift changes the interveners' focus from producing effective stable democratic government structure. Instead, operations should flexibly analyze the social, economic and political conditions that local populations aspire to, and support the design and growth of fit-for-purpose structures of governance to produce stable democracies, ensuring civil society involvement in decision-making and design.

The author bases this recommendation on the recognition that both failures and successes tend to show commonalities. Repeated failures tend to show a checklist mentality, and the inclination to prioritize technical fixes over building relationships and developing inclusive processes. Off-the-shelf institution-building without sufficient up-front analysis of local conflict dynamics and social schisms often leads to temporary gains at best, or abject failure at worst. Successes are often tied to adaptive structure that correct the top-down approach.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. David Alpher was a Research Professor of Peace and Stability Operations at the Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute. Dr. Alpher has 15 years' experience implementing field programs within conflict affected and fragile environments in other organizations. As a district manager and then Chief of Party, he has led youth engagement and IDP reintegration programs in Iraq, also managing the civil-military engagements within a complex R & S operation; facilitated back-channel dialogues in Israel and the Palestinian Territories; led conflict analysis missions in Nepal and Ethiopia; and backstopped a range of peacebuilding and development programs throughout Africa and the Middle East. In addition to this programmatic expertise, he holds an MS and PhD in conflict analysis and resolution, focusing on the comparative effect of democratization vs. poverty alleviation as the pillar of international development policy. Dr. Alpher is also the Washington Head of Office and Advocacy Manager for Saferworld, which he joined in 2013 as the organization's first permanent representative in the US, leading advocacy efforts to shape US foreign policy, and publishing extensively on a range of issues related to peacebuilding and conflict resolution. He is also a veteran of the United States Army.

INTRODUCTION

"Although they made their own mistakes, ORHA and
the CPA were both victims of the Pentagon's cavalier
attitude toward postwar responsibilities. There were
no coherent plans for establishing governance, provid-
ing security, or restoring public services."
          -introduction to an interview with
           General Jay Garner

Nature abhors a vacuum, and the end of violent
conflict by definition leaves a big one. If that vacuum
is not filled by something positive, it will be filled by
something negative, and the negative tends to move
with shocking speed; this is as close to inevitable
as history offers us. In the absence of good gov-
ernance, peace and security, warlords, transnational
criminals, paramilitaries and factional forces take the
field unchallenged. All of these individually are a
threat to local populations, but each of them also fits
into a pattern of regional and international security
threats serious enough that the error of leaving these
power vacuums unaddressed results in unstable envi-
ronments.

History offers another in its short list of inevita-
bilities: all wars eventually end, but they rarely end
cleanly. Thus it's a safe assumption that there will
be eventual reconstruction missions in countries such
as Syria, Libya and Yemen, but it's also a safe as-
sumption that every dynamic that would otherwise
have held these countries together as unified, peaceful
nations will have been shattered by the time the recon-
struction operation begins. Even if the Islamic State in
Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and Syrian President Bashar al

Assad both vanish overnight, it would be fantasy to imagine that Syrians will simply acquiesce to a *status quo ante* once the shooting stops. The Syrian population could once have been described as varied and diverse, but is now thoroughly divided, antagonistic, mistrustful and convinced that the national government is malign.

This description is hardly limited to Syria alone, but could be applied to nearly every country currently in crisis worldwide, including (still) Iraq. Libya is currently divided between four competing governments, all based around differing tribal alliances, and facing a growing ISIS presence. Yemen's civil conflict remains unresolved, with local populations and the international community divided over support for the government in exile, a Saudi coalition that has become an actor within the conflict rather than a peacekeeping intervener, and an ongoing insurgency. Each of these cases are worsened by the perception that international actors are ambivalent, prioritizing their own interests, or using the conflict as a proxy war.

Discussion of the Iraq mission here is not meant to suggest that it should serve as a template for future interventions, nor is it intended as another in a lengthening list of post-mortem analyses. The US mission in Iraq was unique in American history, in its scale, design and execution as well as in the ideological and political assumptions that drove it. Many of the building blocks fundamental to that design—ideas such as state-building, which will be discussed later in this monograph—are fading from American planning in no small part because of the failures of that mission,

and it is unlikely that we will see another planned or implemented the same way.

Despite that, there are still critical lessons to be gained which can help to improve the inevitable future interventions. Those interventions will not be duplicates of Iraq, neither will they be a one-size-fits-all approach nor a checklist mentality. This monograph will seek to examine the differences between the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA) and the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), each of which had authority over the design and mindset of the Iraq mission, with the goal of identifying lessons about processes, if not content.

Past is prologue

The first American effort at post-war reconstruction in Iraq was ORHA under retired General Jay Garner. In January 2003, Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Douglas Feith, on behalf of Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld contacted Garner about assuming the ORHA mission. He was asked to undertake the formation of a group that would draw up plans for post-war reconstruction of Iraq "should there be a war."[1]

To some degree, planning for a post-Saddam Hussein Iraq had already begun, but within disassociated offices and with little to no horizontal integration. Most problematically, serious efforts to understand Iraq's history and current state and provide that analysis to potential planners had already been carried out, but that analysis was never incorporated into any planning structures. The Department of State had undertaken the Future of Iraq project in 2001,[2]

which resulted in a 1,300-page volume that contained a thorough analysis of Iraqi social schisms and political pressures and the likely drivers of violence—a tragically accurate analysis, as it bore out. General Garner was aware of the report and its conclusions at the time he was asked to form ORHA,[3] and requested that members of the Future of Iraq team be seconded to ORHA, but his requests were denied. This kind of lead agency power struggle is common across all US whole-of-government approaches.

Nevertheless, ORHA was intended to be a fusion cell, bringing together the planning capabilities and operational minds from across the spectrum of agencies and actors. From the beginning, however, the team was plagued by a lack of funding, resources and authority. The job was pressed for time—Garner was acutely aware that his team had at best a matter of months to create plans that in historical examples had taken years to produce. Increasingly the team was also aware that the Pentagon was dismissive of the idea that advance planning was needed at all.

Two months after General Garner accepted the ORHA mission, the US invaded Iraq on March 20, 2003. A month after the ORHA team's April arrival in Baghdad, General Garner was removed from his role along with the whole of ORHA, and replaced by the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) under L. Paul Bremer. ORHA's plans to find and hire former government employees who could assist in the reconstruction were precluded by the implementation of the CPA's General Order Number One, de-Ba'athification of the government. Plans to incorporate as much of the Iraqi Army as possible into a new force

that would support stability during the transition to a new civil government were precluded by the CPA's General Order Number Two, which disbanded the Army entirely. Before any of ORHAs plans and priorities could be put into meaningful practice, in fact, they were countermanded, shelved or dismantled. Iraq's subsequent descent into violence is well-documented, as are the ramifications of the two General Orders.

In the aftermath and historical examination of the failures of the Iraq mission, core American doctrinal principles changed significantly. Concepts like *state-building* have been marginalized, and concepts like *resilience* and *fragility* have taken center stage. *Stabilization* and *reconstruction* are often tarred by their association with the corruption, waste and misuse of money spent on thus-titled programming in Iraq and Afghanistan. Overall, the role of stabilization has shifted from being a strategic goal to being a specific and critical sub-section to a larger and more comprehensive effort. Of significant note, intervention structures are beginning to recognize (if not yet sufficiently) that the host government's motives and intentions, as well as its absorptive capacities for change need to be added into the planning calculus. In a series of interviews done by the author on this subject, one USAID respondent replied, "We think surgically and assume that the government is a willing partner. Surgical [stabilization] programs won't change the fundamental problem of exclusionary governance—our first question should be whether host country policies will undermine the work."

The loose pattern of surgical tactical efforts combined with variations on strategic distance persists

despite these changes. Far from the regime-change-and-occupation model of Iraq or Afghanistan, the 2011 American efforts in Libya focused on removing Qaddafi through direct action with air power alone, but left reconstruction and development largely to European powers. In Syria, ongoing Western efforts to oust Assad and defeat ISIS alike have been limited to airstrikes and the provision of trainers and advisors to local combatant groups. Diplomatic efforts to secure Assad's ouster have been hobbled by competing efforts to keep him and his government in power.

In Yemen, the American approach has been even more hands-off, devoted to diplomatic support for the government in exile and material support to a coalition of Gulf States engaged in the actual combat. In Africa, we tend to see an even lighter touch—Special Operations troops fielded to limited engagements against specific targets; legal sanctions against specific individuals or groups; strong humanitarian aid provision and support for high-level peace processes. The increasing competition between regional and international interests across the Middle East introduced a proxy war dynamic that was not present to nearly the same degree in 2003.

Overall, it can be argued—and is often the local perception—that the level and intensity of American involvement tends to correlate more with our own national security interests rather than an objective analysis of need. While there is an element of self-interest in any intervention by definition, the tipping point comes when the actions of the intervener are perceived to bring harm to the local population or to prioritize other lives over their own. This consideration needs

to provide a baseline within any planning or strategic discussion because humanitarian considerations aside, American long-term security needs are best served by willing partnership and good relations with post-crisis populations and governments, which are in turn undermined by that same tipping point. Short-term security goals can be unavoidable or critical, but are all too often carried out without sufficient integration into strategic goals or communication focused on long-term actors, who could provide a different perspective and help avoid unintended disruptions.

Of the country contexts mentioned above, none appears to have an end in sight, or provide any clear lessons that future planners could make use of in the design of new strategy. Over the past five years, all of the Middle Eastern examples have become progressively more violent. *How* these crises will end and *when* that day will come are, quite obviously, unknowns. How they can be prevented from perpetuating the cycle of recurrent conflict such that peace is not simply a pause, is as yet a critical question without a clear answer.

The various component parts of what might otherwise seem to be a coordinated grand strategy, are in fact rarely coordinated at all, and can be argued that they do not constitute a strategy at all. Special Operations raids, drone strikes, development programming and State Department efforts may all be taking place in the same geographical location, but are very rarely coordinated or even communicated across Agency boundaries, and frequently trip over each other. It would be inaccurate to infer a unitary American approach, when what exists is closer

to a series of American approaches, differing subtly or radically depending upon which office they originated within, and in which country they operate.

In short, it appears that little planning for "what happens afterwards" in Syria or any of the other countries listed above has taken shape at all. When long term planning has occurred, evidence suggests a tactical outlook with a worrisome lack of strategy, and persistent retention of a number of un-learned lessons and demonstrably incorrect assumptions. First and foremost among these is a simple template which can be learned and then applied in all future situations. As in the quotation that heads this section, "there were no coherent plans for establishing governance, providing security or restoring public services" in Iraq—the inference is that if we build a government, provide security and restore services, all will be well. All of these are of course important, and all of them are deceptively simple, because it is *how* they are decided upon, *how* they are implemented and whether or not the society is able to incorporate the changes peacefully and equitably that makes a far more critical difference than simply whether they exist or not.

Another common error is the timeline, for example, in mid-November of 2015, Secretary of State Kerry announced a plan for transition in Syria, whereby UN-monitored elections would follow Assad's removal within 18 months.[4] This plan vanished only a month later under pressure from Russia.[5] Even had it remained in place as it stood, however, numerous historical examples tell us that an eighteen- month timeframe would be recklessly short and likely to cause more problems than it solves.

A final example of common errors is the idea that interventions directed towards reconstruction and reform of governance must focus on the creation of democratic institutions and a functioning multi-party government. Hard-earned experience tells us that elections[6] held within heavily divided societies tend to worsen factional frictions rather than alleviating them. In countries where such interventions are necessary, the social capacity to carry out the contest of multi-party elections peacefully is usually absent.

Even locally-led efforts are not immune to failure. In 2012, the US Institute of Peace convened a project called the Day After.[7] This was billed as an indigenously led and designed process—by Syrians, for Syrians—to formulate a post-Assad plan for security and governance in Syria. However it was designed, the resulting report described a near-textbook plan for instituting liberal Jeffersonian democratic governance in Damascus. Not only does this report read as though it was written by US Agencies as opposed to Syrians, but we lack even a single historical example of successfully implanting such a government without (as there was in post-World War II Europe) any significant prior history of a power-sharing democratic governance. In fact, the past nine years have seen an unbroken downward slide in the strength of democratic governance worldwide.[8]

Existing plans tend to gloss over the inevitable effects of a shattered and factionalized polity on the timeline for democratic governance and stability. "The Day After" report, for example, makes only vestigial reference to sub-national customary forms of author-

ity which permeate every level of Syrian society, and are the one mechanism of governance that Syrians tend to trust.[9] – These sub-national authorities must be treated with great caution, as they tend to become spoilers when not incorporated, or often compete for authority if *poorly* incorporated into the governance structure. Libya is another perfect—if tragic—example of this, where an inter-tribal struggle for political power has shattered the brief calm that followed Qaddafi's fall.

What *is* known is that planning for reconstruction—let alone implementing those plans—and mitigating the risks of conflict recurrence, is a long and complicated process that requires years rather than months. The one-size-fits-all approach has repeatedly been shown not to work.[10] The design of the Marshall Plan for post- World War II reconstruction, for example, was begun at the dawn of 1942, immediately after the American entrance into the war. Planning began then on the assumption that if we won, we'd need it; and we'd need as long as possible to put it together. Attempting to plan on the fly in Iraq on the assumption that we *wouldn't* need it was a terrible error.[11]

Although checklists and one-size-fits-all may tend to fail, we can, and should identify and consider a series of points in the contrast between ORHA's plans, the CPA's implementation and the benefit of hindsight. We can then apply these as a set of principles rather than as a checklist of activities. If not sufficient to create success, these principles cannot be forgotten because they *are* sufficient in their absence to create failure. For the most part, the reader will

notice that these points relate to process rather than result. Governance and the definitions and nature of government reform as part of the larger process merit a longer discussion and are afforded such in the latter half of this monograph.

Towards a working set of principles: ORHA and CPA's differences and their implications on future principles

The nature of counterfactuals is that we cannot, of course, know for certain that ORHA would have produced the success that eluded the CPA. We can, however, say a few things for certain. It is clear that there were fundamental differences between the two organizations' mindset and strategic approach. We can make safe statements based on experience and hindsight about the consequences of some of the CPA's different approaches. We can see evidence of flexibility, analysis and long-term thinking in ORHA's approach that was not present in the CPA strategy. As I have already mentioned, even if ORHA's approach would have produced a clean success, we also know from experience that no prior plan should ever be used in new situations without change. By highlighting the differences between the two approaches (rather than simply fleshing out a post-mortem of ORHA's or the CPA's salient points) in light of experience, we should however be able to shine light on a set of principles that can serve us well in the design of future operations.

Duration of planning

The primary lesson here is also the simplest: start planning long before it seems necessary to do so. General Garner cites the Marshall Plan[12], the design of which began immediately after the Pearl Harbor attack, more than three years before the end of the war. Although there was of course no way of knowing how long or brief the war would be at that point, the rationale was quite sound—precisely *because* we had no way of knowing, planning should begin as soon as possible. This was not done in Iraq—planning there was ad hoc and on the fly, on the apparent assumption[13] that the overall effort would be brief and painless enough that there would be no real need. ORHA saw planning as a long process; the CPA saw it as unnecessary.

Planning depends on analysis, not the other way around

The CPA appears to have seen long-term planning as unnecessary because the administration was aiming towards a result they considered a foregone conclusion. The administration ignored or dismissed the analysis of sub-national schisms and frictions that predicted social breakdown, and proceeded on the assumption that the only challenge would be replacing one set of government institutions with another. Viewing the situation thus as an entirely technical exercise, success could be achieved simply by committing more resources until that desired conclusion came about. That foregone conclusion is detailed in statements by administration officials that appear dismissive of the need for forward-looking analysis and

planning, as well as the existing body of analysis.[14] This is highlighted in instances such as the "reality-based community"[15] comment made to journalist Ron Suskind in the lead-up to the 2003 invasion. In such a conception, planning would of course not be necessary, and it is this reasoning which guided the hand of Paul Bremer and the CPA.

This flies in the face of a large and growing body of research on the success rates of implanted democracy. The Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction (SIGIR) assessment's[16] indicated that among the core causes of failure in Iraq was the lack of pre-agreed structures of accountability, reporting and responsibility among the various American and coalition entities. Even given the advance planning afforded the post-war occupation that later became the Marshall Plan, it was not announced as such until June of 1947. It took until April of 1948—nearly three additional years after the end of World War Two and more than seven years after planning began—for the Plan to be put into practice.

Even had there been a plan based on sound historical analysis as opposed to ideological assumptions, the process of reconstruction is exceedingly complex and requires more flexibility than rigidity. The Marshall Plan's second-in-command, Harlan Cleveland, called it "a series of improvisations… a continuous international happening."[17] No easy or universal roadmap exists for navigating that kind of complexity—but planning and operations will start on an improved footing if we recognize that complexity is inevitable from the outset and proceed accordingly.

Duration of operations

Garner has opined that if he had even as little as another 120 days[18] to implement the plans that he was beginning to put in motion, the outcome in Iraq could have been quite different. There is no evidence to suggest that this amount of additional time would have been enough to produce success. On the contrary, there is overwhelming evidence that even the longer 18-month timeline suggested elsewhere by Secretary of State Kerry would have been at best wildly optimistic, and at worst actually dangerous.

The difference is that General Garner focused his timeline on what it would take to *get traction* on the processes that could eventually produce a stable peace, rather than suggesting this is the time it would take to *produce peace*. This is a critical nuance, and it is arguable that the additional time could have both shortened the duration of US involvement and smoothed a quicker transition towards a more resilient goal.

What both Garner's ORHA and Bremer's CPA agreed on in principle, if not in mechanics, was that any occupation should be short. What Bremer appeared to mean by this is that it wouldn't need to be long; what Garner meant by it is that intervention forces would be initially welcomed, but that it would take very little time for *liberator* to become *occupier* in the Iraqi mind. Future planners should take note of the difference between these two interpretations, and that every historical example we have available tells us that "short reconstruction" is an oxymoron. As much as the duration of operations *can* be reduced,

long and careful pre-planning is the only way to accomplish it—but there will be a balance to negotiate between traction and occupation.

Identify and use/reform what exists as much as possible, rather than attempting to replace it.

In Garner's vision, the Iraqi military and civil government should be retained, not only are those as institutions critical to maintaining security and properly functioning civil society, but also to prevent widespread unemployment of still-armed security forces, which could be a recipe for disaster. Experience tells us that these two elements cannot be replaced or imposed for very long from external sources. Bremer's perception for dismantling the Iraqi military was that as an institution, it was fatally tainted by its use as a tool of repression and its treatment of the Iraqi people over decades under Saddam Hussein's rule. Tainted perhaps—but not fatally.

Militaries are no different than other government institutions in that neither they nor the populations they (ostensibly) serve, perceive them in unitary, monolithic terms. To be sure, where there have been long-term and widespread abuses by the security forces, some units and individuals must not be allowed to continue service. The Leahy Law,[19] which prohibits international assistance to individuals and units accused of human rights violations, would rightly prohibit American use of, or assistance to such units regardless of any desire to turn a blind eye. Turning a blind eye would be a mistake regardless, as human rights and good governance—which populations experience largely through their relationship

with security services—are a fundamental part of preventing the rise of violent extremism.[20] However, regardless of abuses from, or towards some quarters, indigenous militaries are also seen as "our own," and certainly more so than any intervening force.

An honest, and above all transparent effort to incorporate those units and individuals that *can* be reformed should be made at the very least. Currently, efforts at Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) tend to focus far more on the two Ds than on the R—the reintegration portion is historically the most difficult and least well-funded.

Members of the American military and Department of State reinforced this point recently at the second annual conference on Leveraging US Security Assistance in Support of Accountability for and Prevention of Human Rights Abuses, held at the United States Institute of Peace (USIP).[21] Brigadier General Mitchell Chitwood pointed out that there is a difference between individuals and institutions, and in his experience within the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission in Afghanistan, even within "bad" institutions, there will still be individuals who can and want to promote change.

Local connections are particularly important—currently, the Syrian National Coalition (SNC), the first in a series of efforts to produce a post-Assad government for Syria, all too closely mirrors the "hotel government" that Ahmed Chalabi and the CPA put forward in 2003. The bitter memory of that experience is not lost on either Syria or Iraq today. Local Councils (LCs) within Syria, which have significantly more per-

ceived legitimacy to the Syrian population than any entity currently outside Syrian borders, are not being leveraged sufficiently to offset this perception. The LCs do not respect the SNC. Other successor SNC efforts to produce a new Syrian government suffer from similar problems. None have managed to sufficiently involve local in-country parties either across horizontal sectarian lines, or vertical lines of sub-national authority and legitimacy. In Libya, four competing governments claim to be the legitimate national leaders. As Libyan society and politics views itself through the lens of tribal rather than national allegiance, these governments represent different tribal groupings rather than a truly national effort. Western efforts to choose one as *the* legitimate government without recognizing the power or the social implications of that lens, or the power structures that serve as glue within the society, are incorporating a fatal flaw.

Such locally-respected intermediaries exist in nearly every culture and context on earth—certainly, within countries such as Syria, Libya and Yemen. Depending on culture and nation they may be tribal, religious, clan or ethnicity-based, but their functions are similar—among which is to serve as intermediaries between local populations and State-level governance. Their presence and involvement in reconstruction and governance efforts is critical,[22] but it comes with several warnings. Leveraged unwisely, they can co-opt national government for their own uses, or themselves be co-opted. If these intermediaries are excluded, they can become extremely effective spoilers, or competing structures of authority. Numerous risks do exist, but these are outweighed by the near-certain failure of any effort that simply neglects to consider them.

Bremer further pointed out that much of the military personnel vanished rapidly following the fall of Baghdad, and thus "there was no military to employ."[23] Garner countered this by arguing that while technically true, many had reappeared and could have been brought back.[24] The experience of Iraq shows us how quickly disenfranchised, unemployed and still armed soldiers can form the nucleus of insurgency. It is not, sadly, the only example.[25]

The ultimate truth of the Iraq example will never be known, since no attempt was made to re-employ the vanished soldiers. We do however have a reasonably clear understanding of where those soldiers went and what the cost was in Iraqi and Coalition lives.[26] Whether or not the attempt would be completely successful, any increase in trained indigenous forces and resulting reduction of those available to become fighters of another sort represents a positive advance.

Any urge to isolate or purge politically tainted civil government should be treated with the same skeptical eye. To be sure, efforts should be made to ensure that there is no fifth column left behind the fall of an autocrat, with the power to cause damage to ongoing operations. However, those with necessary knowledge and experience who wish to stay and assist in the formation of new civil structures should be encouraged to do so. Their assistance and institutional knowledge (over and above technical knowledge) is invaluable, as is the statement that governance is local rather than foreign.

The mundane counts more than the philosophical

Freedom and peace are essential to human development, but ironically they are also abstract concepts that don't necessarily register when someone is starving, freezing or unable to find clean drinking water. At its foundation, government at any level is expected to provide physical safety to a population; if its presence is not experienced through critical services like the provision of water, sewage and power, it will be ignored or resisted regardless of how conceptually high-minded it is. The vacuum produced by that failure to provide essential services is easily filled by other entities, which create competitive sources of authority. Those effective authorities—criminal, insurgent or simply sub-national—will rapidly begin to take on more legitimacy than the formal government. Examples of this include Hamas and Hezbollah in their respective areas of control in the Gaza strip and Lebanon, where these groups command greater respect than the national government in one case, and the representative government in the other. It is in fact critical to incorporate locally respected structures of authority and legitimacy, however it is just as critical to help ensure they operate *within* a context rather than *becoming* the context.

A fatal shortcoming of USIP's Day After report is its almost exclusive focus on the construction and establishment of functioning state-level justice and governance in Syria. The report's table of contents lists the rule of law, transitional justice, security sector reform and electoral reform/forming a constitutional assembly, constitutional design and economic restructuring and social policy" as chapter headings.[27]

Only in the chapter on social policy does it address rebuilding the municipal services that would restore day-to-day normalcy to the population. This gives a clear indication as to the priorities within the report. It also, within its text, assumes (through the omission of a contrary position) that the civil population will trust or want to communicate with the state-level government. This is not a safe assumption in any country mentioned thus far.

As in Iraq, the government of Syria is run by the ostensibly secular Ba'ath party. As in Iraq and the rest of the examples, gaining and maintaining political leadership and low-level municipal positions alike requires party membership. The first result of Bremer's de-Ba'athification policy was to eject political apparatchiks from office, along with every teacher, engineer and civil official who knew how to rebuild and run these mundane, day-to-day functions critical to civil society. Comparatively few of those office-holders were ideologically aligned with the Hussein regime in such a way that would preclude them from working towards a democratic Iraq. While there may be some saboteurs left behind in a post-Assad Syria, the benefit to be gained from identifying, retaining and reforming the moderates far outweighs the potential damage done by ideological hardliners.

Garner included planning for insecurity within his Unified Mission Plan for Post- Hostilities Iraq: "The potential for instability will likely exist for some time after the war is over. The most probable threat will come from residual pockets of fanatics, secessionist groups, terrorists and those would seek to exploit ethnic, religious, and tribal fault lines for personal

gain. The threat from these groups would manifest itself in high impact tactics such as car or suicide bombings, sniping, and 'hit and run' raids. A high level of such attacks will have an adverse impact on the creation of stability, a prerequisite for self-sustaining peace."[28] The CPA rejected several recommendations for higher troop and resource commitments. It bears repeating that a similar shortfall appears to have been present in Libya following the death of Qaddafi, and plans should be made to ensure it is not repeated in other future contexts.

Security is high on the list of important mundanities; quite obviously, a breakdown in public security can jeopardize every other goal of reconstruction. It would be dangerous, however, to draw too facile a conclusion that the ends, ways and means of producing short-term security are always in accordance with those of producing a positive, sustainable peace. Quite often these can run at cross-purposes.

Reconstruction is a civil issue with a military component, not a military issue with a civil component.

One of the primary lessons from both Garner and the SIGIR report is accountability and responsibility needed to be worked out before operations began, not afterwards[29]—in Iraq, they never really came together. Both ORHA and the CPA were plagued by turf battles and simple confusion over who was reporting to whom, to what end, and who was supposed to be accountable for what.

Neither ORHA nor the CPA, interestingly, had a clear enough mandate based on origin to be able to accomplish this feat of organization. ORHA was created by a Presidential Security Directive with the mandate, but without the authority or support to carry out its intended mission. The CPA came into Iraq with an executive mandate, but its origins are somewhat opaque,[30] as described by the Congressional Research Service in 2005. The RAND Corporation in 2009 described the CPA as a "hastily improvised multinational organization."[31] Thus, while the CPA may have enjoyed the visible support of the administration and come in with the ostensible authority to carry out its mission, the lack of clarity about where it came from[32] fogged perceptions about who it reported to and for what purpose. This would have been bad enough in a purely American mission, but was particularly damaging within a *multinational* context. The CPA was expected to have a mandate outside of, as well as within, the American component of the mission, which added heavily to the confusion.

The origin of structures and from whence their mandates' stem is critical because the *clearly understood intent* of the mission is fundamental to every aspect of success. That intent defines direction and resource allocation, and is in turn defined by the organization from which it stems. In all of the country contexts listed thus far, this will also be the case. Development in Libya following Qaddafi's death, for example, was largely left to the European powers, whose presence still dominates. International interest in Syrian stability is also higher than usual among European nations, which have shouldered the brunt of the refugees. Garner's view of the organization and purpose of

post-war efforts, expressed in the April 2003 draft of a post-war plan,[33] is laid out in its introduction:

1. History will judge the war against Iraq not by the brilliance of its military execution, but by the effectiveness of the post hostilities activities. Therefore, at the heart of our thinking has been the imperative to avoid a strategically barren victory: that is military achievements that, however impressive in their own right, nonetheless fail to alter the political context in which they occur.

2. This Unified Mission Plan describes the way in which ORHA intends to empower the Iraqi people to shape their own destiny, once they are free from persecution by Saddam Hussein and his brutal and corrupt regime. It is a civil-military plan for an environment which will see an evolving transition from military to civil primacy, throughout which civil and military actors must be viewed as equal partners. Using classical strategy terms, it seeks to marry the Ends and the Means by setting out the manner in which the latter is applied to the former, in other words, describing the Ways.

In this set of guidelines, we see a fairly nuanced vision with several points worth touching on specifically. First, the intervention overall would be judged based not on how long major combat operations lasted, but on how effective the reconstruction was. Second, the military action existed within a political context, not in isolation. Third, the intent was not to set up an imposed government, but to "set about empowering the Iraqi people to shape their own destiny." Fourth, this was by nature an operation in which "civil and military actors must be viewed as equal partners."

The glaring omission here is the local actors, which should have been included not simply as equal partners, but also as directors of the mission and its intent. The missed lesson contained within the SIGIR final report is that the involvement of local populations, officials and power structures (formal and informal alike) is critical in the design and implantation of reconstruction efforts. When interviewed about failures in Iraq, American officials universally spoke of the confusion over authority and accountability. Iraqi officials universally said that nobody ever asked them about how to plan or implement post-war reconstruction.[34]

Reconstruction is fundamentally an operational concern, not a policy concern, as it should essentially be the desires of the people who live in that area rather than U.S. preconceived notions that guide planning. Reconstruction does, however, exist within a strategic and policy framework—it's not enough to understand what needs to be done operationally, we also must understand the ultimate long term objective. The subtlety here is that ORHA was founded under the direction of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, Douglas Feith. This placed it within the ideologically-driven realm of the Bush administration, but under the leadership of an operational commander like General Garner, who was an experienced field commander without an ideological agenda. This difference in perspective created tension between an ideological approach and an operational one. Especially since the Bush administration appears to have had a goal, but not a strategy which could have served to moderate and check the ideological assumptions.

The sum total of all of the above is that the aim of all reconstruction is, as has been said in other quarters, the creation of a better state of peace. Military forces do not create peace, but can secure sufficient space for those elements of national power primarily concerned with governance, development and peace-building to freely institute their programs and build host nation capacity. Use of military forces to implement development and governance programming in reconstruction environments maybe necessary in some instances, however it should not be assumed to be necessary in every instance. Non-governmental or civil implementers should be preferred wherever possible.

Remember history

In Iraq, the Sunni-Shia divide was critical to account for—and catastrophic in its omission. The analogue in Syria is the Sunni-Alawite divide. Similar to recent Iraqi history, the Alawite minority has been in a position of dominance for many years, protected through systematic threat and occasional brutality towards the Sunni majority—and that was before the current war and atrocities that have gone along with it. Pre-Qaddafi Libya had no real history as a unified country. In Libya, society and governance were rather a constantly negotiated product of tribal leadership with entirely nebulous geographical borders and no unifying identity akin to a Westphalian system. For 42 years that loose network was artificially held together by a strongman who played threats and favors against each other in order to maintain his own power, while remaining fundamentally tribal just below the surface.

Divided societies do not respond well to the imposition of democratic governance, in particular where such divides are exacerbated—as they are in Iraq, Libya and Syria—by a lack of historical experience within a power-sharing government. In such societies, elections are often seen as a winner-take-all event, and office-holders are expected to provide benefits to their own constituencies with little regard for the whole of the nation. Imposing elections too rapidly tends to overwhelm the ability to absorb the contest without violence.

Human beings and societies are not solely defined or motivated by *ancient hatreds*, but through current felt experience. Thus, while not *all* history is entirely relevant, it should be studied and understood nonetheless because it provides a roadmap for understanding where social schisms are likely to be found and what might cause deeper divisions. Historical context should be kept in mind as a guide inasmuch as it shapes the current cultural landscape which produces any given actor.

Deep analysis of social and political history has been done in all of these potential intervention areas. There is little that needs to be generated from scratch. As mentioned above, the US Department of State had already conducted an exhaustive study of Iraqi socio-politics that could have served well as a guide for planners of the 2003 mission. Coordination cells, formed for the express purpose of gathering already-existing information that could be brought to bear on expected interventions, would ease planning considerably.

Reconstruction, development and diplomatic initiatives require at least as much funding and resources as any military initiative

We cannot fund security efforts at high levels while simultaneously short-changing diplomatic and development efforts, and hope for sustainable success. Successful development does not simply mean that more facilities were built. Facilities require maintenance, and deciding upon their nature and placement requires a great deal of public consultation, as well as oversight and systems of accountability. In far too many instances, these elements were missing in the Iraq reconstruction.[35] [36] More deeply, development and peacebuilding alike require long, sustained engagement across and throughout a population to ensure the inclusion of marginalized populations, nurture relationships and build political consensus.

Likewise, democratic governance does not simply mean the existence of political parties and a recurrent, legitimate election process. Democratic governance implies a long process of peacebuilding, resulting in a resilient and cohesive society willing to work together to achieve goals that transcend the individual wants of the sub-groups within it. The former can be achieved quite rapidly with enough resources committed to the purpose. In absence of the latter, however, it will invariably fail.

Successful reconstruction is more than a matter of resources. In fact it is strongly arguable that underfunding of diplomatic and development efforts is a chronic problem, as the combined total allocated for non-military foreign assistance amounts to less

than one percent of the total annual federal budget.[37] Understanding and incorporating the more qualitative points about development and peacebuilding is far more important than setting any particular dollar value.

Most of all, successful reconstruction requires time and it requires a view towards peace as much as a view away from war. Implementing this also suggests the need for a change in how the United States monitors and evaluates (M&E) programming. Currently, M&E efforts tend to be geared towards quantifiable outputs that can easily be seen and counted. The above argument, however, suggests that this type of measurement can be simultaneously completely accurate and completely irrelevant, since it is the quality of relationships, not the presence of institutions, which ultimately counts most.

Planning, supporting and building a peaceful civil society is hardly idealistic work, although ironically it is often thought to be. Rather it is hard, grinding work that requires a firm and realistic grasp of the challenges that face broken and warring societies. Funding of development and diplomatic initiatives needs to be equal to military and security; but more accurately, the U.S. should prioritize, balance and target resources based on a thorough grasp of the realistic reconstruction needs as construed by the local population.

Post-2003 elements that must be added to consideration:

Peacebuilding and the Material Support Act

The Material Support Act prohibits "provid[ing] material support or resources … knowing or intending that they are to be used in preparation for, or in carrying out [acts of terrorism]." This act was first enacted as Title 18[38] of the United States Code in 1994, and thus was on the books at the time of the 2003 invasion of Iraq. Until 2001, however, it went largely unnoticed. In 2003, the act had little apparent bearing within any of the recorded discussions or on the differences between ORHA and the CPA's actions.

The law's original intent is entirely laudable — namely to keep American resources from ending up in the hands of those engaged in terrorism and transnational crime. In the years since its inception, however, it has become simultaneously broader, more far-reaching and tending towards worrisome nebulousness as far as its definition of terrorism and the requirements for proof that a particular party is engaged in illegal activities.

In 2010, the US Supreme Court ruled against the Humanitarian Law Project in Holder v. Humanitarian Law Project[39] , asserting that the Non-governmental organization (NGO)'s work to provide training on peaceful conflict resolution to the Kurdistan Workers' Party and Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam violated the Act's definitions of training and providing expert assistance and advice. In meetings and research interviews conducted by this author, peacebuilding NGO

staff and Department of Defense personnel alike have repeatedly stated that the combination of nebulousness and breadth, along with that court ruling, had a strong chilling effect on their level of outreach to local actors in high-threat environments.

This is critical because getting the necessary people in the room to make peacebuilding and reconstruction operations successful and sustainable, requires working with people who have been involved in conflict. By definition, they are not without stain; paraphrasing General Petraeus, you don't need to make peace with your friends. This is emphatically not a relativist argument that everything is a grey area, and thus US interveners should turn a blind eye to dark histories. It is, however, recognition that in conditions of war, angels are somewhat thin on the ground.

The historical list of failed peace processes correlates as much with who was shut out of the room as it does with who sat at the table. American planners and operators cannot hope to partner with the necessary people to make post-war reconstruction successful or sustainable if they are prohibited from having the conversations that would identify them and allow them a seat in the room. Such a change is, of course, easier said than done. But if the goal of reconstruction is peace *and* escape from the cycle of wars, American policy must reflect the need to deal with all actors within a conflict, which been reinforced across the board in recent experience. When General Phipps, former commander of the 101st Airborne Division in Afghanistan, was pressed on why he had begun holding talks with the Taliban, he replied "that's how wars end."[40]

NGO involvement, unity of effort and the 360-degree battlespace

In the aftermath of the 2003 invasion, it was announced that all operations including NGO operations would be coordinated within the military's command and control. Immediately after that, nearly every NGO previously on tap to commence operations inside Iraq pulled out, leaving a bare handful to pick up the slack.

With the exception of humanitarian relief (food, shelter, medical supplies and the like), NGO operations historically tended to take place either before or after violent conflict and major reconstruction operations. Involvement *within* complex operations during ongoing conflict and within reconstruction operations is a comparatively new space for those NGOs which work with social, political and governmental programming. It is abundantly clear that neither the military nor the government is capable of carrying out every task involved with reconstruction operations, any more than NGOs can (or should) take on security operations.

Long-term issues of development, peacebuilding, diplomacy, politics and community security, just to name a few, fall within the spectrum of NGO operations. These issues are not core military training objectives, if trained at all. There is an inherent learning curve as the various component parts of complex operations learn to work together in absence of historical lessons for how to do so productively. In the process of navigating that learning curve, a number of cautionary tales have become apparent.

Col. Paul Hughes, formerly of ORHA, cited Von Clausewitz through the British strategist B.H. Liddell Hart in a 2004 argument that Iraq was turning into a disaster[41]: war should not be undertaken without a clear understanding of what we desire to achieve following the war's end. Col. Hughes stressed that towards that end, unity of effort, inclusive of NGOs, must be achieved. All parties concerned have to learn to work together towards that common end.

There are good reasons why NGOs should in some cases coordinate their operations with those of government or military forces in the same area of operations. However, there are also clear reasons why in many cases they cannot or, more importantly, *should* not do so. The relative safety conferred upon unarmed NGOs, who operate in unarmored vehicles in high threat environments, occurs because of the perceived neutrality of NGOs, however this concept of neutrality has eroded steadily for over a decade. 2013 saw the deadliest year on record for NGOs. Although the actual number of deaths decreased somewhat in 2014[42] due mainly to widespread reduction in outside-the-wire deployment, the number of attacks actually increased.[43] Although final data has not yet been verified, 2015 is trended toward those same numbers.

NGOs and humanitarian aid workers are increasingly targeted because of the perception that they are intelligence gatherers. In other instances, the perception may arise that NGOs are working on behalf of a national security agenda. Interveners, for example, often seek to achieve stability by supporting the same State-level governments who violently

repressed the people during conflict. The dissonance between State and NGO mandates can undermine the trust relationships built with local populations that non-governmental work depends upon, while also undoing the work itself, exacerbating problems, and giving the impression that NGOs have been co-opted. The solution is more complicated than it would initially appear—NGOs are a critical piece of recon-struction, and *unity of effort with NGO involvement may not be possible or desirable*.

Phase Zero

The term *post-war* rarely lives up to its intended meaning. Indeed, a pessimistic reading of history suggests it may have little meaning at all except for being synonymous with *pre-war*. In 2006, the US Mili-tary's planning doctrine built in some recognition of pre-war with the addition of Phase Zero,[44] which specified actions that should be taken within what otherwise looks like peacetime conditions in order to help prevent future outbreaks of violence.

Detailed commentary on the nature and utility of the phase doctrine overall is outside the scope of this paper, but some brief commentary would be beneficial as background. Although the Phase Doctrine appears to be entirely linear, transition lines between phases may be entirely unclear. Transitions do not move only in one direction, and any given country or region may be in multiple phases in different locations at the same time. With the above in mind, three aspects of phase zero bear particular scrutiny.

First, the addition of phase zero should be included as a notation that *post-war* may be extremely optimistic and bear little resemblance to conditions on the ground. The nature of reconstruction cannot simply focus on rebuilding broken structures as though they had once been whole, and reconstructing governance is not new, but already familiar if dimly remembered.

Second, the definition of phase zero describes a space and scope of work that otherwise belongs to development and diplomacy. This is emphatically not an argument for turf protection—the training and resources for development and diplomacy are not typically found within the military, and the timing and agenda of rarely match that of military short-term objectives. There is a more fundamental problem: *pulling development and diplomacy within the military planning doctrine inherently contradicts the lesson that reconstruction is a civil problem with a military component—not the other way around.*

Third, General Garner considered development and diplomacy a foundational part of ORHA's strategy although Iraq reconstruction operations did not map well onto the linear Phase approaches. Phase Doctrine suggests: "Such operations do not develop in a linear way, with neat transition phases, all carefully controlled by some detailed and rigid master campaign plan. They evolve and fluctuate at different levels, in different ways and in different places. In this, a clear visualization of duration, timing and consequences is important in order to allow civil and military decision-makers to shape their environment; i.e. when to do something, how long to do it for, and what are the desired resultant effects?

The complex post-hostilities operating environment in which both military forces and civilian organizations will operate requires a truly integrated civil/military approach and structural and intellectual agility, at every level."[45] Although future interventions will not be the same as in Iraq, it's extremely unlikely that Garner's understanding of complex operational environments as fluid, chaotic, non-linear and varied depending on your perspective, will lose much relevance.

Reexamining "governance reform"

In the aftermath of a series of failed interventions, the ideas of state-building and governance reform have both been re-examined. The concept of state-building no longer has the same prominence or parameters that it did in the early stages of the 2003 Iraq mission, and proponents of democratization have distanced themselves from it as much as possible. That re-examination is still ongoing, but lacking clear conclusions, some elements still tend to remain, such as a reliance on the structure and component institutions of liberal democratic government, as opposed to focusing on the functions of governance.

The nature of governance, and in particular *good governance*, exists at the core of any definition of a functioning, safe society, so they will be examined in depth. This examination will incorporate many of the features of the sections above, as ultimately those sections describe a set of principles and process that lead from analysis through the inception of planning,

which is the basis for operations. Ultimately, as Hart and Von Clausewitz pointed out, operations and planning are nothing unless they lead not simply towards a moment of victory, but in turn towards a goal of peace and security.

Francis Fukuyama famously declared the emergence of liberal democracy to be "the End of History.[46]" By this he meant that it represented the ideal form of government, and any further evolution would be limited to refinements in its process, but not its nature. This is an arguable premise in the best of circumstances. The nature and philosophy of governance continues to evolve even within the stable democracies of the West. The last decade has seen a worrisome reversal in the number and stability of democratically-governed states, many of which were the product of Western interventions. These fragile and conflict-affected states are definitionally the areas in which stabilization and reconstruction missions take place, often being far from the best of circumstances. The World Bank reports[47] that of the 103 countries that experienced civil war between 1945 and 2009, 55% relapsed into violence after a cease-fire. Since 2003, there have been no *new* civil wars… every one is a relapse into violence.

The transitional environments faced in these R & S operations are areas where governance is definitionally fragmented and dysfunctional. Trust between populations and their governments is at its lowest ebb, along with the willingness to work together toward a shared purpose. Societies themselves are fractured, divided, mistrustful, repressive and antagonistic. In such areas, corruption is usually high, and the mechanisms to ensure transparency and accountability within govern-

ment are usually low to nonexistent. In short, these are areas in which the capacity of institutions is least likely to make any positive difference at all.

Despite this track record, most definitions of good governance focus on the functional capacity of government institutions on the assumption that the population is whole and supportive. The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) defines good governance thus: "Good governance has 8 major characteristics. It is participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive and follows the rule of law. It assures that corruption is minimized, the views of minorities are taken into account, and the voices of the most vulnerable in society are heard in decision-making. It is also responsive to the present and future needs of society[48]."

That definition is useful, but in the absence of willingness and trust, fearful and marginalized populations turn away from formal courts and return to locally-administered justice. In absence of representation and shared power, tribes and clans ally and challenge national governments for authority and legitimacy. In fragile and conflict-affected circumstances, functional capacity alone does little good and tends to be unsustainable and often adds to the fragility and conflict. Despite this, interventions aiming to reconstruct and reform governance continue to prioritize courts, ministries, police services and outlining the Rule of Law and standards of conduct. Rarely do they address the conditions of social breakdown that rot the heart out of security and stability, or pursue good governance

as a healthy and inclusive decision-making process. Rarely do interventions approach good governance as a holistic construction representing the experience, perceptions, needs and desires of an entire population that in this case may be unwilling to trust or work together. Just as rarely do they approach governance as an idea that pre-dates Westphalian notions of State and sovereignty, which may work well without them.

Interventions have instead prioritized the construction of institutions and infrastructure as set-piece objects which by virtue of their existence help to produce the desired social effects. This frequently goes hand-in-hand with a checklist mentality. An example is measuring success in terms of how many miles of new roads have been built, but missing the fact that local villages avoid them because they are too dangerous to use. Another metric is measuring expansion of the power grid, but failing to notice when the grids go down because repair crews cannot access troubled neighborhoods. In the absence of a national power grid, local industries for power generation and delivery may have sprung up to fill the gap, and will now be supplanted by development initiatives, ultimately resulting in unemployment. Intervention often misses the idea that stability imposed onto such unhealthy conditions comes across as repressive and opens the door to resistance.

Efforts at the construction or institution of improved governance as part of R & S missions have varied greatly over the past several decades—from the Marshall Plan of the 1940s to the reconstruction of Iraq and Afghanistan most recently. The attempts are many—but the record of successes is disturbingly

short.[49] Elections instituted on imposed timelines have been boycotted[50] or backfired,[51] drawing even deeper divisions within already divided societies. Reconstructed governments have failed to match local realities and needs,[52] or been negatively perceived by local populations as "Western imperialism."[53] The term *state-building* has rapidly begun to fade from use, in part because of a recognition that states are hardly as unitary or unified as the term suggests,[54] and partly out of a sense of painfully-earned humility about what interveners can and cannot achieve.[55]

Such experience makes it clear that the mere presence of governmental capacity or infrastructure cannot be equated with good governance. Quite the contrary, it can provoke greater instability. Formal state institutions are ultimately *also* necessary for long-term guidance and maintenance of the critical functions of justice, infrastructure and security. History and experience necessitate a critical re-examination of the governance mission and process in regard to stabilization and reconstruction efforts.

To some degree, this is already underway—the institutional models that defined American entrance into Iraq and Afghanistan have largely fallen. In the meantime, no new institutions have arisen that would entirely replace them, and American interventions in Libya, Yemen, Syria and elsewhere have taken a variety of forms—although too many of the abovementioned features have remained as commonalities. At time of writing this document, the United States finds itself in a gestational period, in which various methods and methodologies are being attempted at an extremely fine-grained level by various offices within

the Department of State, Department of Defense and USAID. None of them have gained enough traction to take on the mantle of a new strategic directive, and few of them are substantially connected to other programs conducted outside of their own offices' mandates.[56] This presents both opportunities and risks. The lack of an overarching institutional directive can open the door for paradigm shifts that will improve future operations and policy—but the retention of common operational features such as technocracy and checklist mentalities can still hold back productive shifts.

What is good governance?

Good governance lacks a single, unified definition. The most common conception among the nations of the West is that of *liberal democracy*—most simply, "a democracy based on the recognition of individual rights and freedoms, in which decisions from direct or representative processes prevail in many policy areas."[57] This is a way of saying that in such a government, transparency, accountability and public input from civil society are critical to the perception of legitimate authority.

Good governance also suggests Isaiah Berlin's idea of the balance of *freedom from*, and *freedom to*—as he put it, positive and negative freedom[58]—both of which are requirements. The former defines our ability to make choices without outside constraint, such as President Roosevelt's freedom from want and freedom from fear.[59] The latter adds a dimension, defining our ability to make choices free from *internal* constraint—the chains we impose upon ourselves based on class or education.

The United Nation's definition of good governance stresses that "in the community of nations, governance is considered 'good' and 'democratic' to the degree in which a country's institutions and processes are transparent. 'Its institutions' refers to such bodies as parliament and its various ministries. 'Its processes' includes such key activities as elections and legal procedures, which must be seen to be free of corruption and accountable to the people. A country's success in achieving this standard has become a key measure of its credibility and respect in the world[60]." The World Bank, UN Development Programme (UNDP) and US Agency for International Development (USAID[61]) all use fundamentally similar definitions, and are similarly uncritical of their own conclusions regarding legitimacy and their reliance on the strength of institutions.

While none of the above deploy the phrase *liberal democracy*, all of them imply that good governance and western democracy are synonymous. They attempt to describe a form of government defined by the rule of law, with free, fair and competitive elections between multiple political parties rooted in political and needs-based rather than identity-based, ethnic or sectarian grounds. The powers of government are limited by a written and legally binding constitution and through such institutional means as separation of powers and by procedural requirements that enforce power-sharing among local leaders and government officials. We can shorthand this by invoking President Abraham Lincoln's words from the Gettysburg Address—"government of the people, by the people, and for the people."

This is neither an exhaustive nor a definitive definition, and it is important to note that nowhere above is any attempt to list the necessary institutions or offices, as no such list or definition exists, *which is entirely deliberate*. The American, Australian, German and French systems of government, for example, would each be considered liberal democracies despite significant differences in their form, structure and priorities. That differentiation and lack of concrete parameters provides a level of flexibility wherein a set of guidelines can be set down, while still allowing nations and peoples to define good governance for themselves, such that it is never an outside imposition. Good governance should always be internally generated and appropriate to local history and desires.

Importantly, I would synthesize the definitions of good governance thus: *the definition of good governance neither maps the structure of a government, nor seeks to indelibly name it. Rather it urges the identification of a collection of processes through which the lives and dignity of a population are best protected as it makes itself heard and directs its own destiny, and invites ideas and additions for evolution and improvement*. Good governance is a process, not a product; a verb rather than a noun.

However, the emphasis above on flexibility and locally generated definition does not match the imposed, pre-defined structures of recent R & S operations. Definitions of good governance articulated by Western nations are prone to assumptions based on the Fukuyama-esque perception that democracy is a fait accompli — now that we know what it should look like, the task is simply to build it. When designing a governance model, it is often mirrored after the intervener's concept, and too rarely accounts for the needs of the local population. That perception all too often

leads analysts to gloss over the amount of process it took to get these established democracies to function the way they currently do, the social divisions that had to be overcome, and the fact that a great deal more work is needed in every case to maintain the current stability.

Viewing good governance as a pre-defined result or an off-the-shelf product, for example, can blind analysts to the fact that within a population that has deep social divisions and no history of power-sharing government, the sudden institution of elections can have the effect of deepening rifts as each social group votes along partisan lines for its own people and agenda.[6263] In nations with a marginalized minority, the idea of representative democracy carries frightening overtones of the "tyranny of the majority."[64] In countries such as Iraq and Sri Lanka, where such fears are based on painful experience, majoritarian democracy has contributed significantly to conflict rather than to peace. Even within a comparatively stable nation such as the United States, minority populations all too often feel that rule of law is applied inequitably to them[65].

Why change our conceptions?

The non-governmental organization (NGO) Freedom House reports that 2015 saw the ninth straight year of decline in democracy and human freedom worldwide.[66] It is true, although simplistic, to say that building sustainable democratic governance is a long, slow process. But that nine-year trend combined with the high percentage of new democracies that slide back into chaos within a few years is sending a message: something is wrong with our conceptions and our process.

If we are going to improve policy and operations in future R & S environments, it's vital to recognize that core fact and commit to a critical re-examination of how we think about governance and its reconstruction. More important by far, however, is to recognize that the successful path is not one of finding faster ways to build the institutions. Rather, we need to find better and faster ways to address fundamental problems that tend to trip up the process, such as:

- While true democracies do tend on average to be more peaceful than other countries, times of transition are also times of fragility and thus countries in transition towards democracy tend to carry a higher than usual risk of violence.[67] [68] Libya, Iraq, Afghanistan, Egypt and South Sudan are only a short list of apt examples.[69] [70] [71]
- While change itself (in society or government) does not tend to correlate with violence or fragility, the *rate* of change and *order* of change do, and the (perceived) sudden appearance of representative government can trigger nationalist violence along ethnic or sectarian lines.[72] This is especially true in countries with no history of democratic experiences, where government and "the people" are perceived as two separate things, one of which rules over the other.[73] Violence is extremely likely in transitions where shortcuts were taken or where the process of transition at an institutional level outstripped the society's ability to absorb the shock of change, or the ability of institutions to resist manipulation by sub-national elites.[74]
- Fukuyama may have argued that liberal democracy constituted the end of history, but most of the world's nations—including the democracies—do not resemble Westphalian nation states either in polity or in historical conceptions of governance.

Conceptions of state-building (whatever name it goes by at a given point in time) must simultaneously take into account how wide the gulf may be between Westphalian ideals and local conceptions of polity and governance; how the interposition of Westphalian ideals by intervening forces may be interpreted by locals; and what alternatives can be elicited to match local ideals.[75]

The fundamental trap is thinking that since we as interveners have an example in mind of what the result should look like, the process can be shortened by imposing a checklist and simply building the requisite institutions. A balance must be struck, recognizing that in situations where the reconstruction of government is necessary, time equals lives lost—speed is in fact of the essence—but shortcuts and technocratic fixes ultimately extend, rather than limit the losses.

Essentially, the lessons learned from past interventions urge a paradigm shift towards a view of process *as* product. This document is not intended to be a definitive map of how to achieve this. Rather it is intended in the same sense as the definitions of good governance above—as a basic set of points to guide further thought on that paradigm shift and suggest what governmental R & S policy and operations (and by extension what military support to such) would look like.

There are two important caveats:

1. Beware of unintended meanings

Stability and effective government can seem necessary, but words like *effective* and *stable* can mask all manner of sins to local populations, and carry baggage

that external interveners neither perceive, nor foresee. North Korea, for example, has an extremely effective police force. Saddam Hussein and Mohamar Qaddafi both had extremely effective control and maintained stability in Iraq and Libya, respectively. Stability often translates as *calm and non-violent* to the citizens of a Western democracy, but to populations facing autocratic governments or predatory militias, it often has violent and repressive overtones.

Thus the focus here is on *good governance*, rather than on *effective government;* and on *security* and *safety* rather than *stability.* Where stability is used, we should recognize that the word describes far more than an absence of violence. Using North Korea as an example again, there is little violence in the streets, and yet the country is economically fragile, and the society vulnerable to shock.

Government is the physical architecture of institutions and capabilities that come under the employ of a nation-state. *Governance*, on the other hand, relates more to the experience of those institutions by the governed, as it is that experience more than the existence of government or the effectiveness of institutions which marks the critical difference between fragility and resilience.

Putting this distinction into practice is of course easier said than done, as available and experienced officials tend to come from historical elites with no expectation that they should, or can consult with the broad population; and populations have no expectation that they should or will be consulted.

2. Necessary, if not sufficient

Necessary vs. sufficient is a basic logical test[76] that should be applied to any policy or operations. It is used to examine whether any given action can, in and of itself produce a result (sufficient), or cannot produce the result, but can prohibit success in its absence (necessary). First and foremost, all of the points and solutions raised here are necessary, but not sufficient to produce a successful outcome; there is no one point or solution that can guarantee success. Any one of them can, however, through absence or misapplication, cause failure. While it could be argued that security is first among equals and should thus by nature be addressed before other aspects of sustainable development and good governance, this paper contains recurring reminders that such priorities, as well as the definition of security, should be elicited from local populations based on local needs, not assumed through outside analysis.

Necessary, if not sufficient, is critical to keep in mind, since resistance to policy change and operational shifts often stems from a broad statement that "yes, but that won't produce success." Second, no effort takes place in a vacuum, either in terms of local dynamics, events and other interventions, or temporally—where a particular country finds itself on the developmental scale at time of intervention, and the history of governance it draws upon will alter the relative importance of development, diplomatic and security interventions.[77] Component parts of an intervention affect each other constantly, and while each component effort can individually succeed or fail, so

the whole can succeed or fail because of how those parts were integrated, forgotten, misapplied or designed. Efforts at reconstruction of governance should always be seen as compound efforts requiring a holistic approach, never as a unitary silver bullet.

The components of governance process

The purpose here is not to improve our conception of what government is so that we can design and implement it more effectively. The purpose is to suggest that policy and operations focus instead on obtaining local definitions of expectations for good governance. In this manner, the governance strategy is designed to a fit-for-purpose pathway.

Just as there is no definitive list of characteristics for good governance and no single template for intervention, no definitive checklist can guarantee success or cover all potential points of risk. Situations of fragility, conflict, reconstruction or stabilization are definitionally characterized by ambiguity, chaos, violence and corruption. In order for individual operators or high-level policy-makers to function well in such conditions, it is far more important to understand representative examples in such a way as to enable flexible, adaptive thought and action.

Herein lies the reason for focusing on the points highlighted below:

- As with the procedural points above, these represent important choke points in and of themselves, but also have more than the usual connectivity with other areas of programming.
- Through their linkage to those other necessary

areas of focus, they present common points of op-
portunity and threat.
- Well-integrated within the larger pattern of recon-
struction, they can provide a layer of connective
tissue that helps both individual efforts and strate-
gic-level efforts focus towards this idea of process,
fit-for-purpose governance and locally-generated
definitions.
- They can also help disparate efforts to connect and
interoperate more effectively, ultimately produc-
ing a more effective operation.

As with "necessary if not sufficient", while these
should not be seen as a checklist of things to do in
order to ensure success, they *should* be seen as a re-
minder of things that cannot be forgotten.

Fit for purpose governance

One central lesson from most past interventions
is that governance tends to be conflated with govern-
ment, and viewed as an overlay—a thing rather than
a process, something whose presence is equated by
nature with the will of the population to be governed
by it. One overarching central assumption is that R&S
operations, particularly those relating to governance,
should focus on support for the creation of conditions
of inclusive peace, safety and security—not on the ar-
chitecture or the shape of the government itself. That
architecture should be secondary, preferably designed
and led entirely by the host nation with the support,
but never the judgment of aid providers, and good
governance should refer to those structures (whatever
their nature) which support those conditions and help
them flourish. Government itself should be supported
by interveners only inasmuch as it contributes to the
creation of those conditions.

This can be addressed by changing our frame of reference away from working towards a set-piece ideal of government, asking instead what it is that the governed want their government to do, how that government will go about doing it, and what it needs in order to make that possible. Thus intervention works backwards from the intended end-state (a better peace and security, for example) building or supporting whatever is necessary to achieve that state. Thus, the nature and character of governance is designed as fit-to-purpose, based on the input of the population. *This is an opportunity to model the workings and benefits of good governance within the design of R & S, thus reinforcing the message.* In this way, we can ask what it is that government should look like given the conditions found on the ground, rather than attempting to build a one-size-fits-all solution that's unlikely to fit local needs and conditions.

Interveners must understand that there is a long list of reasons why the kind of communication and understanding between governments and the governed that characterizes established democracies may not exist in fragile and conflict-affected environments. We cannot assume that populations or government officials will know or believe that they can or should interact with one another. In many parts of the world, the rights, roles and responsibilities contained within conceptions of kinship and customary law supersede those contained within the concept of a *citizen.* Multiple competing sources of authority and legitimacy may exist.

Beware the lure of short-term gains

Long-term vision of an improved end-state should guide all actions, both strategic and tactical. The litmus test for any operation or programmatic implementation must be whether it contributes towards the achievement of that long-term vision, or whether it could distract from or undermine it. For example, while security is of course a priority, some of the methods and tools necessary to produce the condition rapidly may involve heavy-handed or repressive tactics that also tend to exacerbate the problem in the long run. A lack of deep analysis in pre-operational planning can be catastrophic, but just as dangerous is analysis and operations predicated upon the timelines and priorities of *interveners*, dissonant or disassociated from those of the local population.

In Yemen, there is mounting anecdotal and quantitative evidence that lethal drone strikes contribute to increased radicalization.[78] In Kenya, the collective profiling of Muslims, extrajudicial killings and widespread violence by the police forces have been linked to an increase in attacks and threat from the Somali militant group al Shabaab.[79] In fragile areas which lack effective police services, local self-defense forces (such as arose in Sierra Leone and Liberia in the 1990s) have often been fostered in order to fill the security gap. These self-defense forces have often become self-interested vigilantes, challenging the legitimacy of the state as well as state's ability to provide security.[80] In Afghanistan, the effort to make short-term gains in local security led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) coalition members to undertake approaches which exacerbated growing rifts between the delib-

erations on governance and national direction taking place inside and outside the capitol.[81]

This problem can be mitigated first and foremost by acting based on a sound strategy with a clear objective in mind,[82] and keeping the final objective in mind when designing tactical steps. Clausewitz phrased this, in "On War", as "tactics is the art of using troops in battle; strategy is the art of using battles to win the war."[83] In challenges of R & S, winning the war is not limited to the destruction of an enemy's ability to wage war, but to the achievement of a better peace,[84] which requires the work and expertise of a far greater array of governmental and non-governmental organizations, strategists and operators than is contained within any military. Planners and operators alike must keep in mind that intervention is no longer a matter of military involvement alone, and thus lacks a single unified chain of command and communication.

Rather, conditions involve military, governmental, non-governmental, local, international and regional actors within the same space—what are now called complex operations. Each of the actors involved may be pursuing a different strategy, and based on a different set of principles and capabilities. While there are some who argue for unity of effort involving non-governmental as well as military and civilian governmental entities,[85] [86] this tends to be resisted heavily, and for reasons which must be acknowledged and respected.[87] NGOs working within local populations and with local staff members, for example, depend on a perception of neutrality and distance from national agendas and military forces for their safety and for their ability to interact within marginalized popula-

tions. While experience suggests that unity of effort with all entities within a complex operational environment will be difficult if not impossible to achieve, a clear idea of what *fit-for-purpose* looks like in the service of objective conditions can help to elicit areas of common purpose around which at worst, efforts by differing groups will not trip over one another.

Further, potential problems arising from short-term goals can be mitigated by ensuring planning and operations are based on thorough, early and ongoing analysis such that tests can be made to determine whether each of those tactical steps aids or hinders progress towards that objective. Security is not an objective in and of itself — it is *a* goal, to be sure, but it would better be described as a condition within which other goals can better be achieved. Analysis should involve as many stakeholders as possible and *prioritize local viewpoints and perspectives*.

Adding to the difficulty, alignment of short term and long term goals can also be disrupted by divergence of timelines, goals and perspectives among donor operational units, as well as between donors and host structures. The military generally operates on short planning schedules, and can be moved in midstream due to fluid conditions and dynamics in the field, whether or not that movement is detrimental to an individual project. USAID assumes much longer planning schedules, but is still beholden to a maximum 18-month funding cycle, which is too short to gain the necessary traction. International Non-Governmental Organizations (IOs) assume still longer timeframes and will tend to remain in place through shifts in on-the-ground dynamics, however, IO operations are still

impacted and often undermined by staff turnover and funding fluctuations.

International organizations such as the World Bank tend to have a technocratic, econometric mind-set,[88] which like the military, tends to equate greater resources with shortened timelines, These timelines may be contradicted by more relationship-based and political viewpoints of IOs and diplomats, and the recognition that shorter timelines should be closely examined to determine whether shorter is better in a given situation. Local entities, national or sub-national, may have an entirely different set of goals and planning purposes in mind than interveners, and it cannot be assumed that the goals of national and sub-national groups are in alignment.

Ultimately, good, stable relationships based on a mutual willingness to negotiate on matters of importance are at the heart of stable society as they are in power relations among societies. Influxes of resources—particularly *rapid* influxes of resources—will change relationships by changing the power dynamics of the parties.[89] Logically, therefore, timetables and distribution of resources should be based around the preservation or strengthening of relationships as key elements to reach a better peace.

Level the playing field

In order for national-level government to have the best possible effect, all levels, layers and segments of society must be able to interact with it and make that interaction felt and heard. In situations of conflict and fragility, that kind of level playing field rarely, if ever,

exists. This brings us face to face with a basic catch-22: in order for conditions of peace, security and good governance to arise, existing social orders must be changed to reduce or eliminate toxic dynamics such as political marginalization, exclusion, and injustice.[90] This could however be read as contradicting the argument about the dangers of changing and endangering relationships, and certainly carries risks associated with the loss of power by some groups alongside the gain in power by others.

This is a case in which long-term changes for the positive may require short-term instability, and it should be understood that this is imbued with ethical as well as logistical risks. Artificially empowering one group in relation to another can set up dynamics of opposition and friction between or among different groups.

While there is no universally agreed-upon template for how to approach aid or support to a fragile country such that this dynamic is entirely mitigated, interveners experienced with local-level and state-level engagement currently operate on a programmatic assumption that the more broadly participatory programming is, the more inherent mitigation it carries with it.[91] Non-governmental development organizations that program support for governance reform tend overall to mirror this.[92]

Realistically, risk cannot be entirely avoided—but improving our understanding of its nature is a step in the right direction. Improving the role of adaptive learning within programs, and increasing flexibility and agility in programmatic structures will allow for

greater risk tolerance while also mitigating dangers. At the very least, interveners should proceed from an understanding that this problem exists, and factor that understanding into their thinking on individual actions and policies, seeking to minimize the amount of likely unintended consequences and maximize positive outcomes.[93] The best role for military support in these situations is to ensure safety and security, and focus on protection of civilians in order to see a changing society through the transition with a minimum of bloodshed.

Root out patterns of exclusion

Of all the points within this paper, rooting out patterns of exclusion is one of the most critical to understanding how policy connects with operations, and how civil society voices make the transition from exclusion to inclusion. Michael Easterly[94] and other commenters on development and governance have stressed the need to move away from designing assistance through expert consultation, as opposed to consultation with the local population. Assistance designed by outsiders tends to conform to outside norms, resources and timelines, rather than being mapped out by local needs, history and resources, and thus is fragile and prone to instability. They speak instead of program design through "feedback loops,"[95] in which citizens would inform government and/or interveners of what they need, governments and interveners would provide it, then citizens would critique and course-correct to inform the next iteration, and so on.

The mechanisms of communication, information dissemination and research necessary for such loops

do increasingly exist. Local and international NGOs act as intercessors that can collect information from civil society and report it to governments and interveners. Ubiquitous technological platforms such as SMS messaging and mobile phones further decentralize the information sourcing[96] and connect previously unreachable communities.

However, although the idea of local design and feedback loops is sound in principle, civil society is no more unitary or monolithic a thing than formal government. Civil society contains elites and marginalized groups, sectarian, tribal or other schisms, differences in culture between urban and rural areas, differences in access to technology and communication. Making this conceptual shift from outside to local design is necessary, but including marginalized and at-risk populations in planning consultations is not simply an exercise in finding better technology to access their opinion, it is also a matter of identifying and overcoming power imbalances within societies that may prevent, discourage or discount participation and information from some of the population.[97]

Ultimately, both effective institutions and inclusive involvement of civil society are necessary for functioning good governance, but both top-down and bottom-up interventions have met with mixed results at best. The keystone is the willingness of the two to work with each other. Successful support to governance will aim for a synthesis, and instead focus on the interaction between the two.

Intercessors are key to ensuring that the many and varied voices of civil society are connected with top-

level governance. In countries with a viable civil society as defined by the presence of high-functioning non-governmental organizations, those organizations should be leveraged for this function. This should not be done uncritically. Potential problems can be mitigated by paying particular attention to the power dynamics and fractures present within the society in question and by helping to ensure that marginalized voices are included and heard. Note that doing this definitionally alters the power balances within a fractured society, and can cause as well as alleviate problems.

Local national NGOs are prone to two common failings: One, they tend to be concentrated within urban centers and thus their analysis does not represent rural or more far-flung communities. Often, they are also biased towards elites. Perhaps the most glaring example of the pitfalls of such an analytical blind spot is the 1979 Iranian revolution, in which a wide array of intelligence services embedded within the capitol city realized belatedly that the political dynamics of Tehran were not mirrored in the countryside, where the revolution had its roots and gained critical mass.[98] The failure to predict the Arab Spring—both its origins and its fate as a movement—stems from much the same source.

Local national NGOs also tend to mirror patterns of marginalization and elite control. In Nepal for example, marginalized Madhesi (an indigenous people from Southern Nepal at the core of many of the recent anti-government protests) women and youth are poorly represented in government—and rarely found in the Kathmandu-based NGOs that undertake the

majority of governance work in Nepal.[99] The vast majority of the high-functioning NGOs (i.e. those which are capable of administering foreign donor funding) are staffed by high-caste and well-educated individuals from the capital, and are mistrusted by the population outside of it. This pattern is repeated worldwide more often than not, thus the search for intercessors tends to repeat patterns of marginalization that contribute directly to the social and political fragility.

In other areas, tribal and informal governance structures may serve as intercessors rather than NGOs. These groups can be quite powerful, but are representative of one rather than all identity groups within an area, and should thus be approached with caution.

Build up, don't supplant

In addition to formal militaries and civil governments focused on stability, non-state customary forms of organization and localized governance based on kinship, religion or class, exist and persist through even large-scale conflict. These structures have authority and legitimacy and can serve as bridges between civil society and official governance. They should not be marginalized in favor of imported formal structures, but should be leveraged and incorporated to help direct, define and produce better communication. In fact such structures *must* be incorporated into the conversation about reconstruction. When excluded from decision-making, these customary structures often see emergent formal governance as competition or a threat. These structures hold the authority to move large swaths of the population away from inclusive process, and often have the capacity to mobilize military forces.

Complex dynamics arise when leveraging such systems, and the approach to informal structures of governance as such a bridge (what Boege, Brown, Clements and Norman call "hybrid orders[100]" of governance) is emphatically not without risk. In the best of circumstances these bridges can provide the glue that reverses fragility and disintegration, and builds resilience within the system. They can be spoilers as easily as they can be allies. In any circumstance, their nature, agendas and needs should be thoroughly understood rather than seen automatically and uncritically as allies.

Such structures can function well as brokers of communication and involvement, but the competing demands of allegiance and obligation from kinship-based authority vs. formal authority can also create friction, fragility, corruption and competition for representation and resources. State structures can usurp the authority of societal forces[101] and reduce their legitimacy in the eyes of populations, or become usurped themselves. In some cases, support to subnational authorities enables the national government to continue functioning at a low level, in turn facilitating corruption, perpetuating state ineffectiveness and factionalization. In Afghanistan, outside assistance for local governance tended to destabilize, rather than stabilize both the local government entities and the relationship between those local entities and the national government in Kabul[102].

Planners and operators should recognize two things as a baseline. First, whether or not interveners choose to work with such informal structures, they

will be present and are not about to disappear; on the contrary, in conditions of longstanding instability and conflict, they have likely gained importance over time as sources of authority, stability and security. They must be accounted for, recognized and acknowledged, or they will tend to become spoilers in a process that threatens to undermine their authority.

Second, any influx of funds, resources or attention into an unstable region will tend to further destabilize local patterns. Some degree of *intentional* destabilization may in fact be necessary if unhealthy patterns are to be replaced with healthier ones. If this is recognized, and if the intentional destabilization is identified, understood, designed and directed by the local population, the probability of healthy growth increases. If that baseline is not recognized, or if it is directed from the outside, resistance will grow and the inverse becomes increasingly likely.

Expand the scope of monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation is all too often limited to those elements of programming and operations which can be counted cleanly, such as how many training courses were held, or how many were in attendance? How many judges and courthouses are usable, and what is the length of time between incarceration and a case being heard? As with the *experience of governance* being more important than the *presence of governance*, however, it is not the quantifiable outputs but the relationships, trust and increase or decrease in willingness to work together, which are closer to the foundation of successful reconstruction.

Fixing technical capacity problems is far faster and financially cleaner than repairing and healing broken relationships and mistrust. It also tends to be more easily evaluated for audit purposes. Because of that, it is tempting as an intervener to start the easy process first, trusting it to hold the fractured society together until that too can be healed. Historically speaking, this process does not work well. 40% of countries emerging from civil war or violent conflict slide back into warfare within ten years,[103] a very rapid degeneration. The ones that do not tend to backslide have a far deeper history of power sharing and sit in a far better neighborhood than those that do regress. Most countries that emerge from a civil war without returning to conflict, likely did not require intervention.

Accurately measuring the success of government reform programs requires more than quantitative measures of the amount of instituted programming. It requires a critical examination of the relationship among different sectors of society, between society and government infrastructure, and whether intervention altered relationships for better or worse. The personnel, who are trained in qualitative research techniques appropriate for such measurements, and who focus attention on power analysis within the society, as well as who have the long-term relationship and societal penetration with local populations that enables the work, tend to reside within international NGOs. Military commanders and NGO personnel have a long history of hesitant working relationships occasionally boiling over into outright antipathy. It behooves both sides of the equation to improve that working relationship.

The process will be greatly facilitated, if military commanders recognize and acknowledge reasons why NGO personnel may be unable to work with intervening forces.[104] The NGO mission depends on their ability to continue a trusted working relationship within a society. Personnel must not be seen by local communities or by hostile forces as intelligence sources or as working on behalf of foreign agendas. That perception will strongly degrade security for expatriate personnel and local national staff, as well as undermining trust in their mission. In part because of a general blurring of lines within complex arenas, deaths among humanitarian workers have risen every year without exception since 2001, and reached a record high in 2014.[105] Military commanders should be cognizant of the risks and ramifications their actions can have on these groups, and be as transparent as possible with NGO personnel, so as to best ensure that when information can be shared, it will be shared.

Recognize security needs differ depending upon perspective

A safe and secure environment is an important aspect of good governance. However, as part of the paradigm shift suggested here, military support to good governance should see security less as a requirement of governance apparatus and more as a condition necessary to ensure good governance. Thus, rather than attempting to strengthen the security forces of a government that the population potentially mistrusts, military support should focus on establishing and maintaining a safe enough environment for the local population to pursue a more holistic vision.

Depending on the community and circumstances, different aspects of security may take precedence over protection from violent groups. In order to build a locally appropriate definition of security needs, communities themselves should be approached in order to elicit analysis of needs and threats. Full understanding of the *community*, the threat and risks should be incorporated into strategy and planning so that intervening military resources can be better utilized. If food security or unemployment are greater threats to stability in a particular community than physical attack, this is instructive as to which troops, which equipment and how much support is necessary to employ in a particular area.

Local communities often have a different perception of threat than outside analysts. In Bangladesh, the peacebuilding NGO Saferworld encountered a program site in which both terrorist and criminal violence were prevalent. Threat and security needs seemed apparent to expatriate staff, but when the community members were asked about the greatest cause of insecurity in the area, they said "traffic." On further investigation, it emerged that while they were aware of the terrorist and political violence nearby, they felt that their odds of getting caught up in it were low. On the other hand, there was only one road between the village and the nearest market, with no safe space on either side of it for pedestrians, and fast-moving traffic deaths and injuries were extremely common. The community viewed violence-related programming as a waste of time and money, evidence that the implementer had not asked the proper questions or had ignored the answers. Attempting to pursue that line of programming in the face of this evidence would have reduced trust and willingness to work together.[106]

Different parts of a country will respond to governance and government differently. Needs should be determined locally, not nationally

Perhaps the clearest recent example of this is Iraq, in which the perception of State-level government and governance within the respective Sunni and Shia areas of the country view the national government quite differently. During the latter part of Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's administration, confidence in the Shia-dominated government was markedly lower within that Sunni population,[107] and perception of how Maliki was doing his job was polarized along sectarian lines.[108] All of this is at best a slight improvement from where the situation was in 2004 prior to the 2005 elections, which the Sunni boycotted en masse on the blanket assumption that there would be a sectarian vote, resulting in Shia domination of government, and marginalization of the Sunni population.[109]

This example illustrates the potential for strong differences between how segments of a population can or should be urged towards engagement with a national government in R&S conditions. National plans and operations must be closely examined for differences based on demographic characteristics. A thorough understanding of relationships (or lack thereof) and the interests of sub-national informal entities which may support or resist such efforts, is essential.

Reiterating points about informal structures, populations will not simply turn away from their own trusted, familiar indigenous systems in order to use new systems, no matter how technically efficient they

may be. There is a long transition to be made, and this transition can be greatly facilitated by those existing informal structures. Informal structures typically contain the individuals, institutional knowledge base, and most importantly, the sense of popular legitimacy to help facilitate transitions.

In the Sunni areas of Iraq, for example, tribal leadership is the primary structure of governance. In Shia areas, tribes are less important, and the leadership is built around religious structures.[110] In both areas, although the origin of authority is different, the location of authority is within a similar level of society, what we might call grass-tops rather than grass-roots level: senior, though still civilian.

Conclusions

Examinations of the 2003 Iraq invasion's aftermath contains a great deal of detailed information as to what went right and wrong. We cannot afford to lose those lessons or fail to apply them in the situations ahead.

Building a functioning, inclusive, democratic and participatory state is a long, messy and most often bloody process. This paper, recognizing that, does not seek to provide a roadmap that will quickly or invariably lead to success. Instead, it seeks to lay out a way of looking at the process of creation that will address or avoid some of the more glaring errors that have in the past led efforts astray. There are two central questions we seek to answer here—the first is what successful governance reform should look like; the second is what military support to governance should look like.

The first question has been framed in terms of moving away from the technical implementation of Western democracy, and instead moving towards support for locally-construed needs and fit-for-purpose governance. The second question stems from the first. Rather than build a set checklist of duties, tasks and skills that military can be trained in or derived from military training, we should instead examine and design military support in response to situational needs.

This puts the emphasis on up-front situational analysis and assessment of local dynamics, actors, gaps and available structures, as opposed to building a manual for use in all deployments. Following that analysis, the military would then be tasked appropriately to the needs of the situation rather than assuming that the military will be in place and providing support based on a pre-determined set of goals. The military is one tool among many elements of national power which can, and in many cases should be providing support towards the accomplishment of a strategic goal. The fact that it can be used does not of course mean that it *should* be used in every given case.

Good strategy cannot simply define what it is we are trying to remove. It has to be grounded within a sound foundation and clear articulation of what it is we aim to produce. It also needs to be as flexible as possible to account for the inevitably shifting conditions on the ground. Democratic governance is not enough in this regard; we also have to define what that means, and how it is felt and experienced by the population, such as the delivery of basic services, or inclusive planning and decision-making. It will be felt

in public accountability and transparency of security services. It will be felt in the trust that each segment of the population has in other segments of the population, and that they are all working towards mutual goals of peace, security and prosperity.

Battlefield perspectives suggest battlefield solutions, and R&S operations do not fit into that mold. While security is of course a pre-requisite—or at least a co-requisite—of peace, development and good governance, its nature and priorities are quite different and often contradictory to those longer-term goals. Ultimately, reconstruction—like war—must be entered into only with a picture firmly in mind of the end-state.

Reconstruction requires institution-building more than it requires training, equipment or resources. Building institutions also implies building the trust of the local population to work with those institutions and each other. Trust takes a great deal of time. Although time is of the essence, interveners should be extremely skeptical of the urge to just do something, as action without thorough prior analysis can be a grave error. That analysis should encompass not just the situation faced on the ground, but also include an examination about our own intent, motives and desired end-states, and those of any partners.

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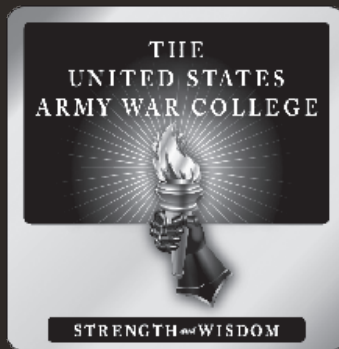**Mr. R. Christopher Browne**

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