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APPROACHES TO POST-CONFLICT PEACEBUILDING:

The UK Post-Conflict Reconstruction Unit (PCRU) and

US Office for the Coordinator of Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS)

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Abstract

In 2004, two separate but remarkably similar organizations were founded in the United Kingdom and United States: the British Post-Conflict Reconstruction Unit (PCRU) and American Office for the Coordinator of Reconstruction and Stability (S/CRS). Both represent national strategic-level endeavors to 1) institutionalize humanitarian-military coordination and 2) provide preemptive planning capacity for peacebuilding scenarios. This paper first addresses the conditions which motivated the establishment of these organizations, focusing on the separation between war-fighting and nation-building doctrines and communities which contributed to failure in post-Cold War peacekeeping and suggesting that a new security paradigm revealed by terrorist attacks on September 11th 2001 created an imperative for improved post-conflict peacebuilding. The paper then evaluates prospects for success of the PCRU and S/CRS based upon their respective cultural and institutional histories, and analyzes the merit of national strategic-level peacebuilding capacity in principle, seeking the ideal locus of planning and coordinating functions. It concludes that the need to replace local level *ad hoc* coordination that characterized post-conflict reconstruction operations throughout the 1990s with a more institutionalized framework is legitimate—however, more important than doing *something* is doing the *right thing*, and national strategic-level coordination organizations such as the PCRU and S/CRS must re-align to maximize their effect.

Abstract

In 2004, two separate but remarkably similar organizations were founded in the United Kingdom and United States: the British Post-Conflict Reconstruction Unit (PCRU) and American Office for the Coordinator of Reconstruction and Stability (S/CRS). Both represent national strategic-level endeavors to 1) institutionalize humanitarian-military coordination and 2) provide preemptive planning capacity for peacebuilding scenarios. This paper first addresses the conditions which motivated the establishment of these organizations, focusing on the separation between war-fighting and nation-building doctrines and communities which contributed to failure in post-Cold War peacekeeping and suggesting that a new security paradigm revealed by terrorist attacks on September 11th 2001 created an imperative for improved post-conflict peacebuilding. The paper then evaluates prospects for success of the PCRU and S/CRS based upon their respective cultural and institutional histories, and analyzes the merit of national strategic-level peacebuilding capacity in principle, seeking the ideal locus of planning and coordinating functions. It concludes that the need to replace local level *ad hoc* coordination that characterized post-conflict reconstruction operations throughout the 1990s with a more institutionalized framework is legitimate—however, more important than doing *something* is doing the *right thing*, and national strategic-level coordination organizations such as the PCRU and S/CRS must re-align to maximize their effect.

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I. THEORY

Introduction

During the age of modern warfare, an artificial separation was cultivated between dueling concepts of war-fighting and nation-building: far removed from the days of empire and nationalism in which fighting wars and building nations were inseparable pursuits, modernity split these enterprises into disconnected communities and divergent doctrines. The resulting gap between *military* and *humanitarian* endeavors in part explains the interminably slow learning curve experienced in coordinating international peacekeeping operations and the seemingly thoughtless mistakes made in conflict transitions in Iraq and Afghanistan, as only recently have lines again blurred allowing nation-building to emerge as an element, tactic, and obligation in war-fighting.

Through trial and error, peacekeeping efforts in the 1990's established a rough *modus operendi* for coordinating military and humanitarian efforts in post-conflict reconstruction and stabilization operations. Based largely on personal relationships cultivated at the tactical level, this framework could not be institutionalized or transported to future operations, instead dissolving at the end of each crisis scenario. With little threat to contributory nations from the failure of these 'containment' operations, no serious efforts were made to improve the longevity of military-humanitarian coordination or to institutionalize a planning capacity to better organize subsequent operations. But the terrorist bombings on September 11th 2001 changed the nature of this risk calculus, giving rise to the concept of the 'swamp' from which violence could reach out and strike even wealthy nations. Suddenly, success in post-conflict scenarios became a critical security objective, and failures of military-designed reconstruction and stability operations in Afghanistan and Iraq spurred a variety of coordinating organizations at the national and international level. In particular, the United States and United Kingdom founded similar national strategic-level organizations—the Post-Conflict Reconstruction Unit (PCRU) in the UK and State Department Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stability (S/CRS) in the US—to facilitate planning and executing post-conflict activities in the future.

While operational metrics are not yet firmly available for these two nascent organizations, this paper follows two channels for analyzing the efficacy of the PCRU and S/CRS: one broadly assessing the foundational concept of national strategic-level coordination and the second

evaluating the particular organizations in question. Thus, the first portion of this paper addresses the specific feasibility of the PCRU and S/CRS: how do the American and British approaches to strategic-level coordination of military and humanitarian activities reflect deeper institutional characteristics, and to what extent does that affect their respective prospects for success?

The second portion addresses the fundamental suitability of any national strategic-level coordinating framework for humanitarian-military efforts, attempting to pinpoint the ideal locus for the planning and coordinating aspects of peacebuilding. This discussion is composed of two subsidiary questions. First, does strategic-level coordination of humanitarian and military missions represent an improvement over the local-level, ad hoc, personality-based cooperative structures that worked with relative effectiveness by the end of the 1990s, or is it merely an additional level of red-tape? Second, is it necessary to coordinate efforts at the national level or do the super-structure umbrellas of the United Nations, IFIs, or regional organizations provide sufficient coordination facility that nations can tap into as the situation demands?

Definitions

Before delving into further discussion, it is important to provide a definitional framework for post-conflict peacebuilding. First, though an entire genre of terminology exists to describe international interventions—peacekeeping, peace-making, peace-building, nation-building, to name a few—for the purposes of this paper *post-conflict peacebuilding* will reference the traditional UN definition, encompassing all post-conflict reconstruction, stabilization, and capacity-building activities performed by both military and humanitarian agencies.[1] It can be viewed as the 'intersection between military-led stabilization operations and civilian-led reconstruction activities' in what is generally termed 'phase 4' operations.[2] In practice, this includes a variety of economic, political, civil, and security reforms, ranging from demobilization and disarmament to teacher training. Some might dispute this definition— indeed, the British Department for International Development (DFID) distinguishes between *post-conflict reconstruction* as 'efforts made…to restore essential services' in the aftermath of conflict and *peacebuilding* as 'broader efforts to address the underlying causes of conflict.'[3]

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[1] Ward (1995), p. 1
[2] McNerney (2005-6); HC436 (2005), para. 261
[3] DFID (2006), para. 32

However, as even DFID admits these areas 'must be closely linked,' it is appropriate for this paper to connect the two processes under the term *post-conflict peacebuilding.*[4]

There are several facets to any post-conflict peacebuilding process, from fund-raising and coalition-building to supervision, implementation, and assessment. This paper focuses specifically on the planning and coordination aspects—those facets specifically tasked to the organizations under examination—and does not dispute the fact that each aspect has an ideal locus for execution. For example, fund-raising and coalition-building may be most effective at the national or international strategic level, but implementation is clearly better suited for the local or tactical plane. In addition to its evaluation of existing planning and coordination units, this paper seeks to identify the ideal locus for these peacebuilding facets on the following scales.

International   National   Local

Strategic   Operational   Tactical
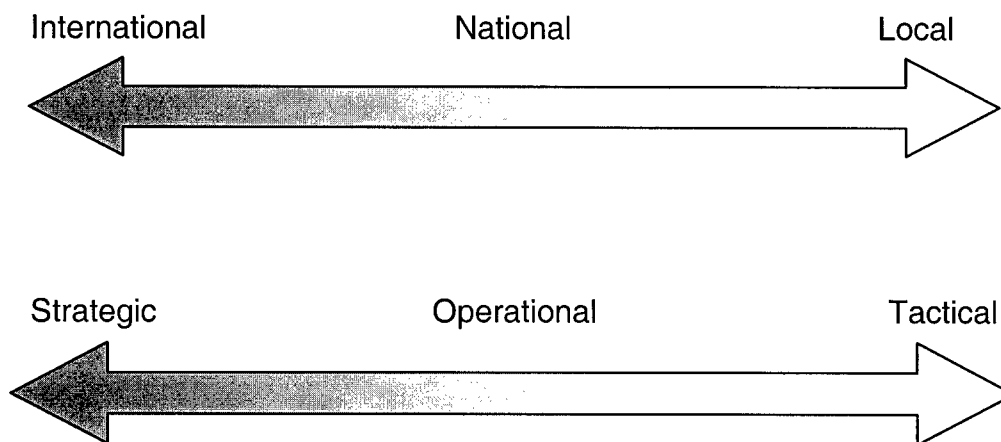
The first scale identifies level of participation—the actors involved ranging from the UN at one end to grassroots programs at the other—and the second describes the level of implementation in the military sense, where strategic relates to the decisions of politicians and diplomats and tactical to the choices of unit commanders in the field. Discussing the optimal loci for the planning and coordination facet of post-conflict peacebuilding operations should allow decision-makers to maximize the effects of the units created to address this critical endeavor.

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[4] Ibid., para. 32

History

United Nations Secretary Dag Hammarskjold's quote, 'Peacekeeping is not a job for soldiers, but only a soldier can do it,' aptly embodies the divide between two doctrinally different communities—civil-humanitarian and military—who viewed their roles as separate, disconnected, and often opposed throughout a century of modern warfare.[5] The over-arching theory in modern warfare dictated 'the fundamental task of the military is to destroy forces in the field' and relegated nation-building—in the form of humanitarian aid, financial support, and good governance investment—to lesser branches of government and independent organizations.[6] In its 1945 naissance, the Charter of the United Nations separated war-fighting and nation-building operationally and organizationally. Authorizations for warfare were confined strictly to the Security Council—independent of even General Assembly interference unless by request—who retained sole responsibility for maintenance of international peace and security.[7] The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), in turn, oversaw UN activities in the realm of 'economic, social, cultural, educational, health, and related matters,' concepts entrenched in nation-building canons but far removed from Chapter VII use of force.[8] The UN was not alone in its codified distinctions: increasingly, the strategic community argued that militaries should not be used for humanitarian purposes. The United States was particularly guilty of this as no single area of US government, military or civilian, viewed 'nation-building as part of its core mission,' an arrangement echoed in national frameworks around the world.[9]

Implications for Peacebuilding

The impact of this civil-military division upon interventions during the Cold War and 1990s was profound: many failures in peacebuilding operations at national and international levels can be attributed to separations between war-fighting and nation-building doctrine and communities. Presumptive divergence in military and humanitarian function and doctrine had several negative implications for post-conflict peacebuilding. Most basically, lack of coordination caused gaps and redundancies in services on the ground. Both Bosnia and Liberia saw the involvement of regional and international security forces, national unilateral

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[5] As quoted in US Army Field Manual on Peace Operations, FM 100-23
[6] Coker (2002), p. 31
[7] UN Charter, Chap. IV, Art. 12
[8] Ibid., Chap. X, Art, 62
[9] Frontline (2003), p. 6

participation (United States and Nigeria, respectively), multiple UN agencies, and a plethora of local, regional, and international NGOs. This massive influx amplified competition, redundancy, and working at cross-purposes. While NGOs themselves are competitive for funding and moral high-ground, the fractious relationship between the military and NGO community only augmented this confusion: historically separate communities steeped in the polemics of 'tree-huggers' and 'baby-killers' found themselves working side-by-side in complex emergencies, leading NGOs to reject the protection offered by security forces in favor of the shield of neutrality, and action-oriented soldiers to unwittingly obstruct the operability of aid workers by correlating aid with force. The gap between military and humanitarian communities prevented both sides from integrating the lessons learned by other players in the field, resulting in an anachronistic mindset on the military side regarding formal, Cold War peacekeeping, and on the humanitarian side regarding the sanctity of humanitarian space. Finally, the false sense of separation generated no imperative to integrate military and humanitarian efforts, and each community pursued its own agenda under already incoherent or non-existent coordination structures, further aggravated by friction between two unreasonably disconnected communities.

Secondly, interventions and post-conflict reconstructions in the 1990s were characterized by lack of planning foresight and ad hoc execution. There are a variety of reasons for this shortfall, including a diplomatic mentality that such activities were side pursuits and did not represent the future of conflict, ill-recognition of the underlying causes of complex emergencies that resulted in superficial responses to telegenic humanitarian emergencies, and little pressure to succeed within western nations and institutions that did not perceive a necessity for military-humanitarian coordination outside the duress of a crisis situation. When intervention was patently necessary, 'governments, in the absence of civilian capabilities, sometimes view their military contingents as the most secure vehicle though which to channel aid or...other aspects of peacebuilding.'[10] Conversely, refusal to commit soldiers to humanitarian duties contributed to abbreviated mission durations (Somalia) or complete lack of response (Rwanda). Without a strong and flexible plan, peacekeeping operations throughout the 1990's were doomed to failure from the start.

If the spotty success record of peacebuilding efforts of the 1990s was in part attributable to lack of coherent planning and poor humanitarian-military coordination, one might

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[10] Wheeler (2006), p. 43

appropriately question why organizations like the PCRU and S/CRS were not constituted earlier to institutionalize the peacebuilding process, particularly as those fragile operations sparked renewed recognition of intersections between nation-building and war-fighting. Unfortunately, the link between peacekeeping in war-torn territories and national self-interest was tenuous— Western nations believed that because conflicts were contained half a world away, there was little to lose but political capital when an intervention failed. Without a catalyst to compel improvement in peacebuilding, the *ad hoc* strategy and indifferent attitude towards failure preserved a damaging status quo.

The Need to Succeed

What has changed to make post-conflict peacebuilding so critical that both the United States and United Kingdom have created mirroring organizations to improve their planning and coordination capabilities? Certainly, peacebuilding theory has expanded. James Dobbins calls nation-building 'the inescapable responsibility' of America and the international community, citing ideology, security, and propensity for intervention as factors contributing to inevitability of involvement.[11] Moral and ethical obligations of Western civil society value peace, freedom, and human rights highly enough to abrogate innate state sovereignty (arguably the international community's second highest value). The widely agreed 'responsibility to protect' principle argues interventions can and should occur to protect the freedoms and security of individuals under threat and the concept of *jus post bellum* is just beginning to explore extension of justice after warfare and long-term obligations incurred for the price of waging war.

Additionally, the concept of humanitarian space has become tenuous: the shield of neutrality that protected humanitarian workers in the past has gradually eroded, and NGOs are now perceived as legitimate targets by violent factions. Former UN Humanitarian Affairs Secretary Eliasson admits, 'additional measures for respect of humanitarian aid and protection of relief personnel are now necessary. The blue ensign of the UN and the symbols of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent...no longer provide sufficient protection.'[12] This is in part due to the nature of 'new wars,' in part to aid provisions becoming conflict currency, and in part to increasing homogeneity of actors in the conflict space: from the perspectives of both

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[11] Dobbins (2003)
[12] Spearin (2001), p. 25

insurgent and victim, there is little differentiation between a Western aid worker and a Western peacekeeper, soldier, or private employee. This emphasizes a need for coordination between armed military and unarmed civilian actors to most effectively distribute aid.

Perhaps most importantly, the terrorist attacks on September 11th and subsequent occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq demonstrated that failure in peacebuilding situations was no longer just a lamentable outcome but rather a true threat to the security of nations everywhere. In Iraq, a brilliant military campaign preceded a dismal military reconstruction: Pentagon-planned peacebuilding resulted in many well-publicized failures including economic stagnation, poor border security, and a rushed political process that contributed to the continuing violence. For example, 'the coalition's early efforts as Security Sector Reform—particularly in the civil policing area—were characterized by short-termism and indecision. Weaknesses in that reform programme came close to undermining the success of the initial military operations.'[13] These events highlighted two fundamental truths: first, that no nation was wholly safe while somewhere in the world conflict, violence, poverty, and inequality created the proverbial 'swamp' of criminals and terrorists capable of striking on the global scale; and second, careful planning and foresight from a integrated civil-military source was required to wage successful post-conflict peacebuilding.

This meant that peacebuilders adopted deeply penetrative strategic aims, a departure from conflict *containment* to conflict *resolution*. Deceptively inconsequential, this evolution fundamentally altered intervention frameworks: rather than controlling, monitoring, or capping violence within the borders of a distant state, contemporary operations attack the roots of conflict, destabilizing societal mores and rebuilding wholly new structures for peace. The post-9/11 strategic agenda is not a band-aid, but true nation-building—a labor intensive process requiring a multiplicity of actors and governmental commitment to establishing the norms and ideals of freedom and democracy.

Certainly there exist strategic reasons to stabilize nations after war-fighting: nations in conflict, without functioning economies or representative governments foster frustration, resentment, and inequality and create space for criminal and terrorist actors, thus posing a threat. Barnett discusses 'shrinking the gap' between the West and the rest, and the central pillar of White House strategy states unstable nations pose a threat and therefore domestic security

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[13] HC436 (2005), para. 22

demands elevating them to the same levels of well-being as the civilized world.[14] Effective peacebuilding has become a strategic obligation, and has created a new imperative for improving Western peacebuilding capabilities, coordinating efforts of war-fighters and nation-builders, and effectively planning peacebuilding endeavors even before the fighting stops. To meet this burden, the United States and United Kingdom created two national organizations: the PCRU and S/CRS.

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[14] Barnett (2004) and White House (2003)

II. The PCRU and S/CRS: Institutional Biases and Prospects for Success

      A brief introduction is necessary to preface analysis of the British Post-Conflict Reconstruction Unit (PCRU) and US's Office for the Coordinator of Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS). Both organizations grew out the growing realization that post-conflict peacebuilding activities were a priority in contemporary national strategy, and that both the US and UK needed improvement in their planning and coordination capabilities for intervention operations. Both organizations also seek to address the dilemma inherent in contemporary peacebuilding: the military is *there* but not *trained*, lacking technical competence to build good governance and the civilians are *trained* but not *there* because they cannot be deployed and are generally risk averse.

      In the US, a consensus developed that while the military was equipped with the training and resources to coordinate post-conflict planning (a debatable point, to be sure), a parallel civilian capacity was necessary to create the same manpower pool, leadership, and institutionalized experience necessary for the political, economic, and social reconstruction processes.[15] The British PCRU had a similar start, stemming from HMG recognition that 'specific areas where improvements are needed include integrated long-term planning, effective coordination between civilian and military elements, and ensuring coherence with the efforts of multilateral organizations and other donors/actors.'[16]

      There are a few baseline differences between the PCRU and S/CRS that, while identified now, will be evaluated later as to impact. First, the S/CRS is mandated to lead post-conflict peacebuilding operations; in contrast, the PCRU is designed as a supporting, not managing, organization.[17] Second, and seemingly incongruent with this first distinction, the PCRU, though jointly owned, is its own agency; the S/CRS, in contrast, is an office within the Department of State, directly subordinate to the Secretary of State. More nominally, the intended timeframes of the organizations differ: the PCRU focuses on the immediate aftermath of conflict and short-term stabilization (3-6 months) while the S/CRS plans for reconstructions extending as long as 2-3 years.

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[15] Council on Foreign Relations Task Force (2005), p. 5
[16] DFID (2006), para. 33
[17] King-Smith (2006)

At this stage it is too early to effectively evaluate the operational capabilities of either the PCRU—which reached full-operating capacity only in July 2006—or the S/CRS. However, it is possible to identify specific cultural and institutional biases derived from each nation's respective peacekeeping history, governmental structure and mentality, and attitude towards peacebuilding. This insight coupled with current goals, feedback processes, funding, structure, and a variety of other metrics make possible a reasonable approximation of each organization's prospects for success and help generate recommendations for enhanced achievement.

Post-Conflict Reconstruction Unit

Founded in 2004, the PCRU 'was created as an inter-departmental unit,' jointly owned by DFID, FCO, and MOD.[18] Its stated purpose is two-fold:

- Develop strategy for post-conflict stabilization, including linking military and civilian planning, and working with the wider international community
- Planning, implementing, and managing the UK contribution to post-conflict stabilization, including practical civilian capabilities needed to stabilize the environment in immediate post-conflict situations[19]

Currently, the PCRU has three functional outputs: conflict environment training courses for a deployable civilian cadre, Joint Stabilization Assessments concocted in conjunction with DFID's Conflict Assessments and designed to facilitate planning for interventions, and generic guidance for post-conflict tasks in a variety of civil and security sectors via computer-based standard planning framework.[20]

The British Context

From the outset, the PCRU enjoys better prospects for success than its American counterpart, based largely on the mentality of the MOD and the UK's unique history of peacekeeping. In his book comparing US and UK approaches to counter-insurgency in Vietnam and Malaya, John Nagl suggests that the British history of policing the Empire created crucial

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[18] *PCRU Revised Aims and Objectives* (2006)
[19] King-Smith (2006)
[20] Ibid.

military flexibility and ingrained coordination with civil counterparts.[21] Military officers and their Foreign Office counterparts were similarly educated, indoctrinated, and deployed in isolated outposts, and thus cultivated cooperative relationships. Nagl concludes that this cooperation, coupled with bottom-up receptivity to suggestions from the field, greatly benefited the British counter-insurgency operation in Malaya—a benefit that extended to post-conflict operations as well.

The opportunity to cultivate this attitude of cooperation reached beyond the British experience in Malaya. Robert Cassidy argues the regimental structure and intensive experience with policing activities made the British Army uniquely suited to peacekeeping interventions throughout the 1990s, focusing particularly on their role in the Balkan conflicts.[22] Certainly, more than four decades in Northern Ireland yielded vast quantities of 'lessons learned' data as well as an imperative to institutionalize the move beyond traditional war-fighting mentalities and improve peacebuilding skills within the military. This coordination paid dividends: recently, the House of Commons International Development Committee noted the 'high degree of cohesion and coordination' in 2000 in Sierra Leone, where there existed a 'joint plan of campaign' for stabilization.[23] According to the Secretary of State for International Development, 'in Sierra Leone I think it would be hard to find a better example of more joined-up activity between the different bits of government.'[24] The British PRTs in Afghanistan have been labeled far superior in coordination and relationship-building to any other contributory nation, including the United States: the 'UK-led PRT in Mazar-e Sharif, by comparison, trained and deployed together and understood that their mission was to support both military and civilian objectives,' and 'was particularly effective in building relationships.'[25]

Beyond a history of effective civil-military coordination and joint post-conflict planning, the nature of the British governmental structure also contributes to a facility for coordination not seen in the tightly-managed US command tree. In the UK, DFID is an independent government organization with the same power and representation as the MOD, FCO, or Treasury. This differs from the United States' development organization, USAID, which is a subordinate office under the US Department of State. The effect of this separation and equality is two-fold. First,

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[21] Nagl, (2005)
[22] Cassidy (2003)
[23] HC923-VI (2006), Q326
[24] Ibid.
[25] McNerney (2005-6), p. 39-41

DFID has cultivated relationships with independent NGOs that respect their autonomy and neutrality while convincing them that working with the government (or at least using government money) contributes to the greater good. This carefully earned trust has potential to generate a wealth of NGO support for pools like the PCRU's responder database and facilitating cooperation despite NGO skepticism of working with the MOD. Second, unlike the US arrangement where the DOD, DOS, and USAID are radically unbalanced in terms of power and funding, DFID's equality grants equal footing with the FCO and MOD, allowing a cross-departmental, joined-up management strategy like that of the PCRU some potential to actually work.

The United Kingdom has also developed a variety of facilities over the last decade seeking improved response capacity in conflict and post-conflict scenarios. On the military side, the inception of the Operational Training and Advisory Group (OPTAG)—a military training facility designed to offer practical scenarios based upon intelligent engagement with the population rather than outright use of force—was conceived out of policing experiences in Northern Ireland and has been adapted to train units heading to Afghanistan and Iraq. The center has proved its merit, expanding beyond British units to foreign, regional, and international forces deploying into 'phase four' scenarios; in 2003, OPTAG trainers visited US units stationed in Iraq to provide sensitivity training and countermand the conception of force protection as guns, vests, and sunglasses.[26]

Outside the MOD, several structures exist to support post-conflict peacebuilding and development aims. The African and Global Conflict Prevention Pools (CPPs) were created in 2001 to finance and coordinate policy between FCO, MOD, and DFID, enhancing the UK's effectiveness in conflict prevention; they were answerable to separate sub-cabinet committees which have since been combined.[27] The Prime Minister's Strategy Unit is developing a cross-departmental planning capability to 'develop long-term preventative approaches for stabilizing unstable states.'[28] DFID is creating positions as 'Civil-Humanitarian Advisers' (HUMADs) and Development Advisers (DAs) to 'support the senior British military commander in the field, and to advise military civil affairs/CIMIC staff officers,' which despite being appointed late in the

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[26] *Defend America* (2006)
[27] DFID (2006), para 14
[28] Wheeler (2006), p. 41

process have achieved general success.[29] A UK NGO-Military Contact Group seeks to educate both sides on their respective perspectives.[30] All this amounts to a great deal of coordination, integration, planning, and support mechanisms between civil, military, and humanitarian communities—whether this provides excellent support for the PCRU or merely makes it duplicative remains to be seen.

In sum, the United Kingdom possesses three positive institutional characteristics which differentiate it from the United States and provide a unique foundation for the PCRU: extensive experience with coordinating civil-military actors in peacebuilding situations originating in imperial policing duties; flexibility and independence within government and the MOD that encourages bottom-up revisions and preserves competing agendas; and a wide variety of institutions derived from an institutionalized imperative to improve peacebuilding capacity rather than ignore it. The corresponding drawbacks of this cultural grounding will be addressed next, but reflect an excess of these strengths: disproportionate territoriality and independence within government and superfluous layers of planning and coordination.

Prospects for Success

The remarkable history and cultural intuition contributed by both British military and development communities represents a double-edged sword regarding the specific merits of the PCRU. Beneficially, this experience and flexibility with humanitarian-military coordination and commitment to learning from and succeeding in post-conflict peacebuilding activities sets the PCRU several steps ahead of its American counterpart from the moment of inception—despite natural territoriality, cooperation is far more intrinsic in the British system than the American one. Unfortunately, it also increases the potentially duplicative nature of the organization, as one may legitimately question with institutions like the CPPs and OPTAG devoted to coordinating civil and military activities within a broader government strategy and successful coordination of post-conflict activities pre-PCRU (as mentioned in Sierra Leone in 2000) whether the PCRU is truly a valuable addition to the UK's planning/coordination capacity. The concern of duplication has been somewhat rectified with the establishment of the sub-Cabinet committee on post-conflict reconstruction, which replaced two separate committees (one for each CPP) and instead

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[29] Ibid., p. 40
[30] Ibid., p. 42

brought the PCRU and both CPPs together under one oversight umbrella.[31] The new committee met for the first time in March 2006, and it remains to be seen whether their oversight will reduce the duplicative efforts of these various institutions.

The strengths of the PCRU are clear: the ability to shorten lag-time between conflict end and intervention, capitalizing on that 'golden hour' with considerable foresight and pre-planning are the antithesis of the *ad hoc* efforts that generally led to failure and death on the pointy end of the operation. The integration of civilian and military actors in training and exercises offers perspective to both communities regarding the concerns of security and good governance. For example, former head of the PCRU, Col Gil Baldwin, related an incident where a military commander neglected to secure a building containing criminal records while occupying a city despite the harping of his PCRU advisor. His rationale was that the building did not pose a threat. Upon completing the exercise he learned the building had been ransacked and all the records destroyed—the impact was utter lawlessness because incoming judicial workers had no means of identifying criminals within the population.[32] This cross-departmental education is critical even in the peacebuilding-minded MOD, and the lessons translate both ways, diminishing humanitarian resistance to security as much as military resistance to wasted effort.

The structure of the PCRU yields considerable strengths and weaknesses. Essentially, 'team management and the financial resources fall very largely to DFID, but the Ministry of Defense and the Foreign Office are involved in trying to help set the overall direction.'[33] While the interdepartmental structure of the PCRU facilitates coordination and conversation between military, FCO, and DFID actors, it raises a variety of concerns as to efficacy, funding, and allegiance. First and foremost, there is a question of chain of command: housed within DFID and reporting to the DFID chain of command on administrative matters, the PCRU is responsible to the Cabinet Office and all three parent departments on policy (via a steering committee populated by members of the MOD, FCO, and DFID) and, more broadly, to the Cabinet sub-committee on post-conflict reconstruction chaired by the Foreign Secretary.[34] The benefit of such high-level accountability is that the PCRU will not be lost in the bureaucracy that inevitably characterizes government, but the drawback is that the channel for oversight is ambiguous,

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[31] HC923-II (2006), Q58-61
[32] Baldwin (2005)
[33] HC923-II, Q64
[34] HC436 (2005), para. 263

complicated, and unclear. For example, the tasks for the PCRU have not yet been agreed across government—a Whitehall report quotes an FCO expert hedging on whether the PCRU should assume responsibility for deploying civilian police, saying 'it is not yet immediately clear whether responsibility…will eventually transfer to them [the PCRU] or remain within the Foreign Office….it may be that it is better that it stay within the Foreign Office…'—and though the joint steering committee has been able to navigate the treacherous waters of interdepartmental territoriality thus far, it remains to be seen how it will fare when funding is low and tempers are high.[35]

The second issue regards resources, posing two dilemmas with a single solution. First, the PCRU requires a pool of money to establish itself and fund future deployments. This ready reserve is critical for an organization whose stated mission is to reduce lag-time in post-conflict response and capitalize on the 'golden hour' immediately following the signing of a ceasefire or treaty—many peacebuilding missions have stalled while governments scrounged for funds. More importantly, interdepartmental cooperation stutters when the first question in the meeting is 'who is going to sacrifice a portion of their budget to fund this endeavor?' Having a ready reserve of money available forestalls territorialism and allows all departmental actors to focus on how they can best contribute to the mission at hand.

Secondly, the interdepartmental approach raises questions of allegiance: because 'the resources for the PCRU come from DFID, so that almost all of the staff salaries are paid from DFID and the accommodation is provided by DFID,' there is a perception that the PCRU may be merely an extension of DFID's priorities and aims rather than being genuinely cross-departmental.[36] Conversely, NGOs worry that DFID's money is being surreptitiously siphoned to fund MOD activities and support the Foreign Office, and question whether DFID is truly suited to address security-type concerns.[37] Though the success of the jointly managed Conflict Prevention Pools—started with contributions from existing MOD, DFID, and FCO budgets— creates optimism for cross-government funding cooperation, even this process has changed and the funds now bid directly for money from the Treasury. The bottom-line solution to both funding issues is providing ready access to a funding reserve. This can be accomplished by allowing the PCRU to draw upon the CPP for deployment funding if necessary, or by

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[35] Ibid., para. 267
[36] HC923-II (2006), Q64
[37] HC923-I (2006), Q2

constituting a separate fund earmarked for the PCRU. Either way, a standing pool of funding is necessary to grease the wheels of cooperation and avoid any concerns over allegiance and authority.

Another touted strategic strength of the PCRU is its development of Joint Stabilization Assessments (JSA), a feeder into the Strategic Conflict Assessments authored by DFID and provided to government to help formulate overarching strategy. An off-shoot of this framework development are generic guidance modules for 'priority sectors' such as Law Enforcement, Health, and Local Governance.[38] There is a very real danger in buying into the concept of generic, one-size-fits-all planning tools and checklists, just as the concept of 'routinizing' post-conflict planning echoes the failed attempts at cookie-cutter peacekeeping of the 1990s. The key to making these assessments and planning tools viable is preserving them as living documents: 'ongoing conflict analysis at all levels, because the situation keeps on changing and dynamics keep on changing,' and ensuring that those updates reach the decision-making level.

While the strategic level aspects of the PCRU represent its greatest potential weakness, the rapidly developing operational capacity presents a great source of strength and expanding effect. The expanding British contribution to ISAF in Afghanistan provided the first test of the nascent PCRU, requiring it to demonstrate its usefulness even before reaching full operating capacity. Feedback on the trial supports the conclusions drawn above: strategic-level assessments and reports, while dutifully hitting the Prime Minister's desk, failed to generate the kind of discussion necessary for a comprehensive peacebuilding approach, and the strategic delivery unit in Kabul had a coordinating function reporting to the Ambassador that was insufficiently utilized.[39] However, the deployment of operational teams to Helmand province has been duly praised: teams in Kandahar 'facilitated and led an assessment and planning process' with MOD, FCO, and DFID officials in-country, 'helped define a common set of aims and objectives for the UK *on the ground* (emphasis added)…to have an implementation plan to go with the strategy', and is 'providing core capability' to the PRT in Helmand.[40]

In sum, the institutional structures and perspectives which ground the PCRU place it well ahead of its American counterpart, but a plethora of similarly mandated organizations increases

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[38] King-Smith (2006)

[39] For example, all protestations that a regional perspective was required to ensure a comprehensive strategic approach to the deployment were ignored at the political level; a similar response met perspectives on the counter-drug initiative; King-Smith (2006)

[40] HC923-II (2006), Q62

the risk of duplicative analysis and threatens the value of the organization. Issues such as funding and oversight ambiguity must be resolved quickly for the PCRU to achieve its full potential as a viable solution to the *ad hoc* interventions of the past. Additionally, the strategic component of the organization is useful only so long as careful measures are undertaken to preserve it—making conflict assessment and joint planning a living document rather than a static solution, ensuring it reaches decision-makers rather than populating bookshelves in DFID—and represents more liability than benefit in the grand scheme; the true value of the PCRU lies in its growing operational capability, in training and deploying integration teams in-theatre to facilitate coordination and operational-level planning. That, not strategic integration, is the gap in UK post-conflict peacebuilding capabilities.

Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization

In July 2004, Congress authorized funding to create the S/CRS within the US Department of State. Its mission, to 'lead, coordinate, and institutionalize US Government civilian capacity to prevent or prepare for post-conflict situations, and to help stabilize and reconstruct societies in transition from conflict...' is broken down into five core functions: monitor and plan, mobilize and deploy, prepare skills and resources, and learn from experience, and coordinate with international partners.[41] This ambitious undertaking has resulted in production of the following products: processes to identify potential states where a US peacebuilding response may be required; a matrix delineating critical tasks to be executed in reconstruction operations, and who is best suited to implement them; development of interagency agreements and infrastructures capable of facilitating a rapid and effective response; and building the capacity to ensure that any peacebuilding effort is unified and well-planned.[42] Staffed by roughly 30 members of USAID, OSD, CIA, Army Corps of Engineers, Joint Forces Command, Treasury, and the State Department, the S/CRS reports directly to the Secretary of State and operates under the funding umbrella of the State Department.

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[41] NSPD-44 (2005), p. 4
[42] Partnership for Effective Peacekeeping (2005)

The American Context

The American institutional foundation can be evaluated using similar metrics as its British equivalent: peacekeeping history, attitude toward 'operations other than war,' and departmental structure and interplay. Historically, the US has led two successful largely unilateral peacebuilding missions—West Germany and Japan in the aftermath of WWII—but these operations are not representative of the complicated maelstrom that characterizes post-conflict peacebuilding in the contemporary context: in the aftermath of WWII, both Germany and Japan were exhausted, summarily defeated, and had surrendered *before* nation-building began. This time-gap between surrender and reconstruction did not pose the same threatening environment to either soldiers or humanitarians that forms the status quo today. Moreover, Germany and Japan were both industrialized nations with strong infrastructure and a history of civil society, and thus did not require the same degree of stabilization in conjunction with the reconstruction effort.

Despite its reputation as the 'world police,' the US has little long-term peacebuilding experience. This is in part due to an intrinsic isolationist tendency that runs through American history—dating back to Washington's farewell address and Jefferson's warning of 'entangling alliances,' the US has retreated to non-intervention whenever domestic matters were paramount or its interests were not in play. This is markedly different from the British perspective, whose experience as an Empire and now in the cooperative community of the European Union is predisposed towards ideas like the global commons, responsibility to protect, and interventionism in general. The United States has often been accused of being overly isolationist by the world community and this label has significant purchase in the roots of American history.

The US reluctance to intervene in post-conflict situations is also in part due to the disparaging label for peacebuilding as a form of *mission creep*: 'an old concept many experts used to describe...the military's incremental assumption of tasks in the Vietnam War that were—by most soldiers' standards—beyond their normal purview.' Because of this perception, neither the military nor the government engaged in deliberate institutionalization of lessons learned from the peacekeeping missions in which it participated; quite to the contrary, America's well-known failure in Somalia resulted not in focused discussion of how to improve peacekeeping performance, but rather rejection of future operations entirely.[43] This antipathy

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[43] Barnett (2004), p. 81

was reflected throughout the government apparatus: Dobbins describes the 'institutional resistance in the departments of State and Defense, neither of which regards nation-building among their core missions.' [44] US military thinkers discussed the divergence of a European capability better suited for nation-building than the sharp-edged US war machine, and advocated cultivating those differences in order to concoct the perfect 'one-two punch' for conflict scenarios. In its early months, the George W. Bush administration was famously against the use of troops for nation-building actions: then National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice was quoted, "Carrying out civil administration and police functions is simply going to degrade the American capability to do the things America has to do. We don't need to have the 82nd Airborne escorting kids to kindergarten."[45]

While a clear antipathy towards peacebuilding activities permeated the military and diplomatic communities, a second institutional bias colored opinions within the US military. Always considered the paramount 'alpha male' organization, the US military has been big-war focused and technologically dependent since its naissance. Cassidy argues that American admiration of French and Prussian military models coupled with experiences in both world wars so inculcated 'the use of overwhelming force, the resistance to political oversight and the uncompromising reliance on technology' that Pentagon intuition is incapable of shifting mindsets.[46] Nagl echoes this conclusion in his analysis of US efforts in Vietnam, emphasizing the top-down authoritarianism of the 'big army': lessons-learned reports were ignored and 'the vigorous "can do" mentality...discouraged the review of failure' and proved resistant to ground-level innovation.[47] This is not to say that the US military cannot be innovative in small war situations, but rather that when pressured by budget cuts, media glare, or high casualties it reverts to its intuitional wisdom of 'sending the bullet instead of the man.'[48]

Another important component grounding the S/CRS is the relationships and relative strengths of the integrating organizations: Department of Defense, Department of State, and USAID. Interactions between the Departments of State and Defense are traditionally fraught with tension, as hard-nosed soldiers clash with diplomats over resources, power, and national strategic policy. Colloquially called 'tribal warfare,' this friction is partially personality based—

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[44] Wheeler (2006), p. 40
[45] Chesterman (2004), p. 27
[46] Mackinlay (2005), p.89
[47] Ibid. p. 89
[48] Ibid. p. 89

the DOS indoctrinates its people to encourage ambiguity and promote loopholes, sharp contrast to a military famous for blunt attitudes and committed to reducing the fog of war—and partially inherent to the adversarial governing system where opposing viewpoints are cultivated to provide the broadest perspective for an executive decision-maker, and funding and power are allocated on comparative merit.[49] To demonstrate this point, one need only look at the President's Fiscal Year 2007 budget: the DOS receives nearly $32 billion, of which $679 million are apportioned to USAID for operating costs; the DOD, in contrast, is allocated more than $504 billion, almost 16 times the budget for State.[50]

Adding to this tension, the Pentagon wields enormous clout in Washington: perpetually well-funded and rarely out of favor with Congress, the DOD does not require a strong and charismatic Secretary to exert its power. On the contrary, the occupation of Iraq has demonstrated that even a Secretary of Defense who is vilified by Congress and mistrusted by the public is still capable of securing massive funding for the military and playing a powerful role in policy-making. The DOS, however, has always required a strong and charismatic leader to merit Congressional recognition—Kissinger and Albright provide excellent examples, and the strong relationship between Rice and President Bush boosted State's status in recent years. Finally, while the DOD devotes a large percentage of its budget to its planning division, the State Department has no planning capacity at all. This was the initial reason the military was tasked with post-conflict planning for Afghanistan and Iraq: State was offered the job and turned it down because of self-admitted insufficient resources. The fact that USAID is subordinate to the DOS further muddles the integration picture: unlike DFID, the US Agency for International Development is entirely dependent on the State Department for funding, office space, and policy direction. Its equivalent rank to the S/CRS within State causes difficulties which will be addressed later.

Clearly, integration at the strategic level is a complicated web of interdepartmental tensions and superior-subordinate relationships, but this entanglement and territoriality is repeated at lower levels of operations as well. McNerney relates that US PRTs, arguably the peak of coordination between military and civilian actors in US operations, were shambles compared to their British counterparts:

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[49] The author worked for several months in 2005 as a military member in the Department of State, and these conclusions are based upon personal experience and extensive mentoring
[50] US Government Printing Office (2006), p. 76 , 213

'Regarding the US-led PRTs, military units deployed with limited preparation for working with civilian government officials. Civilians deployed in an ad hoc manner, with only a few meetings at the Pentagon and around Washington, D.C., for their preparation....while the [British] Mazar PRT made it a priority to support civilian-led missions like police training, disarmament, and judicial reform efforts, the PRT in Gardez initially resisted State Department requests for police training assistance.'[51]

While the military has a designated civil affairs career field and developed Civil-Military Operations Centers (CMOCs) among other structures to help mainstream the coordination mechanism, in operation they largely mimic the old personality-based connections of the 1990s or act merely as information conduits for risk assessments and security updates, rather than offering genuine cooperation or integration.[52] The lack of coordination between military and civilian actors in the United States permeates every level, from Cabinet Secretaries to tactical teams on the ground. This indicates both a desperate need for an organization like the S/CRS and an immensely inhospitable environment in which to start one.

The S/CRS was created in an institutional environment characterized by tension and imbalance between partnering departments, a military geared to fight the 'big war' and permeated with antipathy towards 'operations other than war.' Confronted with the contemporary imperative to do peacebuilding well, the US constructs a 'fix' with the same top-down approach it uses in war: creating a new civilian department to parallel the existing military apparatus, mandating hugely ambitious tasks, and placing it under the purview of an ostensibly capable department that in reality has little capacity to effect any planning and coordinating mechanism.

Prospects for Success

The bleak picture painted above impacts tremendously on the prospects for success of the new S/CRS, as breaking ground within the US government apparatus is a difficult undertaking. But because the S/CRS does not enjoy the same head start as its sister organization in the United Kingdom, its impact on US operational mentality and ability to do effective peacebuilding will be much more significant if it can overcome the institutional biases and logistical stumbling blocks outlined below.

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[51] McNerney (2005), p. 39-40
[52] Wheeler (2006), p 41

In keeping with the American mentality, the S/CRS is a hugely ambitious program, designed to solve all the problems of post-conflict peacebuilding in a single entity. To fulfill the responsibilities outlined above, it requires an intelligence and analysis function (to monitor and identify potential states where intervention is needed), a planning function (to generate strategies to address these or any new crises), an interagency coordinating function (to create effective interagency agreements and structures for cooperation), and an operational function (to identify, train, and deploy personnel in the form of an Active Response Corps). In addition, there are individual expectations of the S/CRS: a member of the task force developing the S/CRS commented, 'a lot of this is working with other nations to form coalitions. It is diplomacy. It is holding donors' conferences to raise money,' indicating a grand diplomatic function as well.[53]

While pursuit of the 'silver bullet' is not new to the American mentality, it presents a mixed message for prospects for success. On the positive side, such whole-hearted ambition sends a clear message that the US government is committed to participating in and improving its capability to execute post-conflict reconstruction; its location in the State Department also indicates dawning recognition that the military, as flexible and powerful as it is, is not the right leader of such a process. The mere existence of the S/CRS adds coherence to the peacebuilding process, attempting to create a vertical chain of command reaching the strategic level thereby replacing a decision-making process too slow and fractured to be viable.[54] Unlike the supportive PCRU, the S/CRS is a manager of post-conflict peacebuilding, and thus theoretically is the coordination authority for any local humanitarian actors on the ground. These seemingly insignificant factors are truly breakthroughs in the rigid opinion held by military and executive decision-makers that peacebuilding is not a valuable commitment of resources; in this sense, the ambitions of the S/CRS represent progress.

However, the authorized scope of the S/CRS is disadvantageous to future success, as lack of focus and resources deteriorate its ability to excel at any one aspect of its broad mission. Tasked to pursue peacebuilding across the entire strategic-to-tactical range, and told to do so with only (currently) 30 staff, the program is hugely under-resourced and incapable of doing it all. Moreover, many of its tasks are not essential components of peacebuilding: for example, the US government possesses a vast array of intelligence agencies constantly monitoring and

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[53] Council on Foreign Relations Task Force (2005), p. 8
[54] Baldwin (2005)

analyzing developments around the world, so maintaining a monitoring division within the S/CRS specifically for potential interventions is superfluous—either the CIA will be aware long before the S/CRS, or everyone will be surprised and scrambling, like the recent case of Lebanon.

Lack of focus and specificity at the implementation level is aptly demonstrated in one recent S/CRS product. In April 2005, the S/CRS drafted an interagency planning tool called the Essential Tasks list, outlining every task comprising post-conflict peacebuilding in five sectors (Security, Governance and Participation, Humanitarian Assistance and Social Well-Being, Economic Stabilization and Infrastructure, and Justice and Reconciliation) and in three time-frames (*Initial Response* or short-term, *Transformation* or mid-term, and *Fostering Responsibility* or long-term). Examples of tasks listed range from strategic tasks like *Cessation of Hostilities* and *National Dialogue* to tactical ones like *Civil Service Staffing* and *Mine Clearance.*[55] While there is some attempt to cross-reference tasks—for example, *Reintegration of Combatants* under Security depends greatly on *Employment Generation* in Economic Stabilization—the authors accurately point out that the scope of the document would make true cross-referencing impossible, rendering it too complicated to use. However, at more than 50 pages the Essential Task list aptly demonstrates the over-ambition and lack of strategic-operational-tactical focus haunting the S/CRS: too broad, too generic, too convoluted, and with no attempt to sequence the tasks in reference to one another, the list is of limited use as a planning document and is exceptionally unwieldy without some culling for a specific operational level scenario.

The structure of the S/CRS is also in question. The task force gave significant thought to which department was best suited to house the S/CRS capacity. Many humanitarians recommended elevating USAID to a cabinet-level agency, much like DFID, which would have the dual benefit of giving responsibility to a more experienced operational agency and further emphasizing executive commitment to all development activities. According to the task force, this idea was rejected because 'ultimately, we decided that AID should be the feet on the ground…that really in order to wield the kind of influence in interagency structure [the] State Department was more suited…'.[56] The converse suggestion was to house the planning and coordination facet of peacebuilding in the National Security Council, an organization that

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[55] S/CRS (2005)
[56] Council on Foreign Relations Task Force (2005), p. 8

already possessed the authority and structure both to plan and coordinate, but this too was rejected because it would 'turn the NSC into an operational organization.'[57] Again, the ambition of the S/CRS mission makes it sprawl across the scale, encompassing both strategic and operational activities, and therefore made placement within the US government difficult. The solution, housed as a sub-unit of the State Department, has significant flaws: DOS is largely a policy organization with no in-house planning capability, conducting what Brown calls 'track one' or government-government diplomacy, and pure inertia inhibits its ability to transition to an operational mindset or create planning capacity.[58] Additionally, the current set-up engenders command and control conflicts in a way that echoes the PCRU, yielding an 'undersecretary of state in effect running an interagency organization' and the S/CRS coordinating the activities of USAID while both are equally ranked under DOS.[59] This confusion may not be debilitating, and may be a workable solution: as former National Security Advisor, Samuel Berger says, 'this may not be optimal, but I think it's coherent and I think what we have now is incoherent.'[60]

How has the S/CRS fared within the frictions of interdepartmental politics? From the outset it is clear that a strong and charismatic leader is necessary to resolve the bickering and turf wars that characterize Washington politics. The central challenge is that an office *within* the State Department has insufficient clout to corral the various entities required to plan and execute an effective peacebuilding response. Such an effort must involve nearly every part of the State Department, USAID, defense agencies, intelligence services, and the humanitarian community. According to the Partnership for Peacekeeping, 'while most people in these offices recognize that the US government needs to move away from *ad hoc* response…to a better coordinated and managed response, turf wars and budgeting concerns have seemed to preempt a productive response to and relationship with S/CRS.'[61]

The inter-agency squabbling has proved detrimental to securing funding from Congress—though support is wide-spread and bi-partisan, it is lukewarm at best. Interestingly, the military has been one of the strongest advocates of the S/CRS, lobbying Congress for increased funding and resource allocations since its establishment. Indeed, when the President's funding request for the S/CRS was rejected in late 2005, the DOD volunteered to transfer up to

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[57] Ibid., p. 9
[58] HC923-I (2006), Q38
[59] Council on Foreign Relations Task Force (2005), p. 8
[60] Ibid.
[61] Partnership for Effective Peacekeeping (2005), p. 3

$200 million to the State Department earmarked for the S/CRS.[62] Funding remains an issue: the FY06 budget request for $124 million dollars was not approved by Congress, and the Senate amendment authorizing the DOD-to-DOS transfer described above failed as well. The Partnership for Effective Peacekeeping estimates at least $400 million annual costs for post-conflict peacebuilding capability, including a $200 million Conflict Response Fund (akin to the British CCPs) deemed critical to overcome budgetary concerns and provide incentive for cooperation.[63] There is some serious question as to whether the S/CRS can fulfill its core functions with such limited resources.

One solution to the difficulties listed above is elevating the S/CRS to a self-contained, cabinet-level Department of government. Just as the Department of Homeland Security was stood-up following the attacks on September 11th, so too should a Department for International Development and Stability to oversee all aspects of peacebuilding and other development/intervention activities.[64] This department would encompass all of USAID, parts of the DOD and DOS, Treasury, Justice, and intelligence entities, and would posses the clout to lobby for resources, coordinate inter-agency efforts, and perform the ambitious tasks set for the S/CRS. Despite think tank support, it is unlikely that such an agency will be created any time soon—even with outward commitment to peacebuilding as the future of security strategy, the isolationist tenets still hold strong in American society and founding such a department would be admitting that intervention is the future.

In sum, US peacekeeping history, institutional biases against 'operations other than war,' unbalanced departmental structure, and non-existent coordination capacity mean it is starting from zero (or worse) in post-conflict peacebuilding capability. The S/CRS is overly ambitious and under-resourced, running the risk that lack of focus or funding will diminish its ability to perform any peacebuilding function well. It tries to straddle the entire strategic-tactical spectrum and has taken on responsibilities, like intelligence monitoring, better suited to existing organizations. It is awkwardly structured and lacks independence, possessing an uncertain chain of command and housed under a comparatively ill-suited player in the US government apparatus. Despite its flaws, the S/CRS represents an improvement over the current incoherence or military-led reconstruction. It is indicative of a breakthrough mentality in the military and executive

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[62] Partnership for Effective Peacekeeping (2005), p. 2
[63] Partnership for Effective Peacekeeping (2006), p. 2
[64] Partnership for Effective Peacekeeping (2005), p. 3

branch which values peacebuilding as a valid commitment of resources. It manages, rather than supports, peacebuilding and thus provides a vertical chain of command from actors on the ground to strategic planners. And it represents a mechanism for interagency cooperation and coordination that has never previously existed. Given current US involvement in Afghanistan and Iraq and probable future engagements elsewhere, the S/CRS provides a rudimentary platform for developing planning and coordination capacity. However, in order to be fully effective the S/CRS must either reduce its ambitions and focus on the operational component of its mission—training and fielding teams, creating scenario-specific plans—abandoning the grand diplomatic and strategic foci, or it must expand its organizational capacity and be elevated to its own Department for International Development and Stability. More fundamentally, it must be funded and led sufficiently to overcome the institutional biases and interdepartmental frictions inherent in American history, mentality, and government system.

III. The Merits of National and Strategic: Identifying the Ideal Locus

Having evaluated the foundations and prospects for the PCRU and S/CRS, two national strategic planning and coordination agencies, it is clear that neither is a perfect solution to the critical imperative of improving post-conflict peacebuilding. Since identifying the optimal locus for the planning and coordination facet of peacebuilding is a central aim in this paper and the wider world, it is important to strip away the particulars of existing organizations and analyze the generic aspects of *national* and *strategic*.

The National Approach

International   National   Local

Planning and Coordination
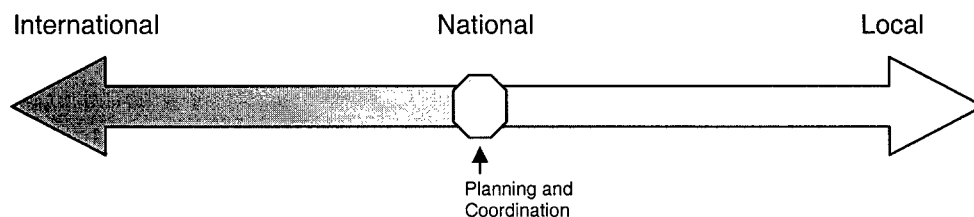
In evaluating the efficacy of a national post-conflict peacebuilding capacity, it is important to question whether planning and integration is best done at the **national** level? While contemporary thinking dismisses unilateral action as destined to fail, history appears to affirm unilateralism as successful in nation-building endeavors: imperial expansion, the first incidence of international intervention combining conflict and reconstruction, was a campaign entirely planned, funded, and staffed by a single state entity. Indeed, far from having the support of the international community, wars of Empire and their subsequent periphery state development were conducted in opposition to other international interests; in the naissance of *realpolitik* imperial nation-building was the antithesis of a collaborative effort. More recently, the peacebuilding activities undertaken in Germany and Japan, though garnering widespread international approval, were largely a unilateral US effort. Garrisoned by US troops, supported through US supply depots, and mentored by US diplomats—for example, General (then Supreme Commander)

MacArthur's staff literally wrote the text for the 1947 Japanese Constitution[65]—both Germany and Japan were fundamentally unilateral post-conflict operations with nominal international go-ahead.

Interventions of the chaotic 90's perhaps provide inverse support for the national-level approach: in these operations, the multiplicity of national and international actors contributed to confusion and disorganization without any commiserate commitment of manpower and resources. Moreover, the consensus building necessary to deploy troops and relief workers to crisis areas often delayed or diluted peacebuilding efforts—UNSOM in Somalia provides an excellent example where differing national strategies with regard to interaction with warlords resulted in the tragedy in Mogudishu and subsequent failure of the mission.

The new security paradigm which highlights 'coalitions of the willing' over international or regional actors further supports the necessity of national-level peacebuilding capacity. In Afghanistan, while ISAF represented an international actor as an arm of NATO, it was a small operation compared to the US-led Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF 180) which partnered 79 nations under a 'supremely American' military structure and *modus operandi*. 'The influence of the US as framework providing nation is pervasive and overwhelming; only the US could have achieved a response so powerful, but also so complicated.'[66] The reconstruction effort has evolved significantly since CJTF 180's inception, but while ISAF expanded from Kabul into 13 provinces of northern and western Afghanistan, and as of 31 July 2006, assumed command of the southern region as well, it remains largely segmented by national contribution, further underlining the importance of a national planning and coordination capacity even within an international operation. Given a total absence of international organizational commitment and utter reliance on national forces and contracted companies, it should be clear without elaboration that the post-invasion operation in Iraq argues for effective national peacebuilding capacity.

Finally, recent national security policy and liberal idealism necessitate national post-conflict capability. The United States recognizes a compelling security need to do peacebuilding well, identifying states emerging from conflict as sources of instability capable of touching the American people and thus becoming a manifest national security threat. The new security mandate states 'the United States must have the capacity to manage, together with its

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[65] Japanese officials accepted the American draft with only minor revisions.
[66] Mackinlay (2002), p. 34

international partners, two to three concurrent stabilization and reconstruction operations at a given time.'[67] According to a policy memorandum authored by DFID, the UK perceives a role for itself as a 'direct actor in peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction' activities; further, according to the Select Committee on Defense, British resources will be 'regularly engaged in stabilization and post-conflict efforts for the foreseeable future.'[68] Whether for unilateral operations or contributions to international efforts, the current global environment has created a compelling need for *national* post-conflict peacebuilding capacity reflected in policy, history, and current operations.

Despite the compelling case for peacebuilding operations to be perfected by national actors, it is equally important to turn the previous question around: is national capacity a worthy investment given the wealth and variety of international and regional peacebuilding organizations, local projects, and private interests? Indeed, is it advisable to funnel government resources into organizations which may be duplicative of existing and future post-conflict coordination entities with no guarantee of better success? For example, since 2003 the United Kingdom has funded a cross-governmental action plan designed to strengthen UN peacekeeping and peacebuilding, focused on 'better leadership and training' and 'integrated mission planning—joining up the planning processes for military and civilian components of peace-support operations.'[69] This mission is remarkably similar to the national PCRU, indicating funding going to duplicative organizations with little tangible result. Unless this is development done with the expectation of eventually standing-down the PCRU once an operational UN equivalent stands-up, it appears to be an illogical expenditure of resources.

Recognizing the relative benefits of *national* post-conflict peacebuilding capacity, there are a variety of alternatives ranging from existing international structures to nascent private companies and non-profit organizations. Two primary substitutes which represent varying levels of scope, competency, and experience are outlined briefly below.

International Institutions and Regional Organizations

International organizations like the United Nations, financial institutions such as the World Bank, and regional entities like NATO and the European Union offer the most

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[67] S/CRS (2006), p 1
[68] DFID (2006), para. 62; HC436 (2005) para. 270
[69] DFID (2006), para 65

experienced alternative to national-level post-conflict capacity, some having been involved for decades. Their most appealing quality is familiarity with complex post-conflict scenarios: despite a spotty success record, four decades of lessons learned offer *some* advantage over nascent national programs. In 1995, the UN first articulated the need for a 'post-conflict, peacebuilding strategic framework' organization that would act as an 'umbrella which could encompass the contribution, not only of the UN donors but also of all the other international donors, thus providing an integrated international response to a country's needs which would minimize duplication.'[70] The Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), founded in 1992, combines civilian and military elements to plan, coordinate, and manage peacekeeping operations in recognition of critical needs to integrate efforts; more recently, the 2005 Peacebuilding Commission was established specifically to help post-conflict nations manage the transition from war to peace through reconstruction and stabilization activities.[71] Coupled with experience, international organizations (IOs) offer longevity: despite discussions regarding the future of NATO or usefulness of the UN, no serious policymaker suspects the impending demise of these establishments. History, occasional success, and the expectations of an increasingly global community will keep IOs in business long into the foreseeable future.

In addition to experience, IOs gather the broadest pool of contributors. This pool includes both states—processes to join regional alliances such as NATO and the EU are deliberately arduous in part to shorten the queue, and UN membership is viewed as a critical definition of sovereignty—and humanitarian organizations. This offers the benefit (and drawback) of multiple perspectives and a wealth of resources to be tapped. And a common pool for monetary and human resources is always an appealing alternative to a single nation attempting to fund a commiserate capacity. Indeed, the immense resource requirements in men and money prevent all but the wealthiest nations from pursuing their own peacebuilding capacity, and even these nations must seek coalitions and strike out alone sparingly.

International organizations also offer an element of trust unavailable to national actors. The liberal values underpinning many cooperative organizations are more palatable to NGOs fiercely defensive of their independence and impartiality, and skeptical of acting in concert with national strategic objectives. This trust extends to the target nation: with few exceptions,

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[70] Ward (1995), p. 2
[71] Ibid.

conflicted nations welcome international peacekeepers when a unilateral operation would be rejected.[72] As Paul Collier comments, 'the more that [peacebuilding] is internationalized the more that role is usually welcomed.'[73]

There is, of course, an array of drawbacks inherent in international and regional coordination efforts. As previously discussed, the delay and dilution caused by consensus-driven decision-making often creates shortcomings in execution. Free of an encumbering national polity and strategic agenda, IOs are sometimes more able to intervene where need is greatest; more often, however, disagreements among member nations prevent interventions on behalf of those in need—thirty years of Cold War stalemated interventions provide a convincing precedent. Finally, the incoherence and *ad hoc* nature of international efforts are the very impetus for creating these national capacities—the question remains whether peacebuilding would be better served by channeling national resources into improving international capacity or bypassing it entirely in favor of national organizations.

Private Organizations

Easily the youngest player developing post-conflict capacity, private industry presents simultaneously the most undeveloped and promising source for peacebuilding planning and coordination. Private military companies, think-tanks, and non-profit NGOs represent three areas of private industry which are expanding to fill a planning/coordination role for post-conflict operations.

The explosion of private military industry is a well-documented—and heavily debated—fact of contemporary intervention operations. While private military companies first came to international attention in the chaotic intra-state warfare of the 1990s, the post-conflict stabilization effort in Iraq has caused an explosion in the industry as it fills a variety of roles usually reserved for national forces: military to contractor ratios in 2004 were 10 to 1, as compared to the 1991 Gulf War ratio of 50 to 1.[74] The industry has expanded into every corner of peacebuilding—production and maintenance, education and training, soldiers and services—and is constantly seeking the next resource gap to fill: 'it is also not inconceivable that military

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[72] NATO expansion in Afghanistan and recent ceasefire in Lebanon represent the norm, where international control is more acceptable than US- or Israeli-led operations
[73] HC923-III (2006), Q129
[74] Singer (2001-2), p. 1, 18

functions presently regarded as sacrosanct could in future be privatised, for example civil-military affairs.'[75] Without entering the highly-charged debate about the legal, ethical, and practical uses of the private military industry, it is accurate to say that international, national, and internal industry regulation is increasing parallel to the expansion of the companies themselves, and their appeal as a security tool in a limited-resource environment is well-established.

Recently, these private firms are expanding into the province of planning and coordinating post-conflict reconstruction: 'a handful of private security contractors have begun to offer services aiming to meet broad state-building or development criteria that go well beyond the security dimension.'[76] This new provision should not be confused with providing protective services for clients engaged in overseas development work, which has been going on for decades, but rather represents deeper integration into good governance projects, and strategic partnerships with UN agencies, international NGOs, and overseas development institutions. While it is important to note that the 'degree to which private security contractors are presently equipped to provide such services remains at best questionable,' the bottom-line appeal of a private organization capable of encompassing all aspects of peace-building for a fixed contractual price is undeniable—not only does a private company offer internally institutionalized cooperation and feedback, a contracted intervention would not pull resources or staff from already strapped State, Treasury, Agriculture, Defense, and Development offices.[77] This is not intended as an endorsement for privatizing post-conflict operations as yet—certainly, there are monumental concerns regarding, for example, the education and training of civil society (military, police, judges and journalists, to name a few) which may best be performed by Western professional equivalents, since these roles are critical in democratic society to ensure preservation of good governance—but the private sector can be counted on to perfect its product more quickly and effectively than any government bureaucracy.

Think-tanks provide another, albeit limited, source of planning and coordinating capacity. As an example, the US government is increasingly relying on independent reports, commissions, and work groups to analyze performance gaps in a wide variety of national security genres. Even the S/CRS, itself the result of an independent, bi-partisan task force, has indicated a need to reach out to ' think tanks, the private sector, academics, and operational experts to tap their

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[75] McCarthy (2006), p. 10
[76] Ibid., p. 13
[77] Ibid., p. 13

country and technical experience, learn fro their experiences, identify gaps in coordination,' planning, monitoring, and assessment programs.[78]

Finally, non-profit organizations are entering the arena of peacebuilding coordination. The number of what Hugo Slim terms ' multi-mandate NGOs'—humanitarian organizations who have expanded beyond single-issue needs provision and adopted socio-political aims, desiring to 'ameliorate immediate suffering but also to campaign against its causes and transform society towards a particular vision of liberal peace and prosperity'—is steadily increasing.[79] A feasibility study conducted by the Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP), a newly founded unarmed civilian peacekeeping force based in the US but boasting international membership and governance, concluded that on a small scale and under certain conditions 'there is a need for purely civilian missions, meaning missions without a military component to provide security.'[80] The Peaceforce maintains a stand-alone capacity for training, planning, and coordination much like the national and international peacebuilding organizations, and has claimed success in the deployment of a 30-member field team to three precarious districts of Sri Lanka in 2005.[81] While the self-admitted conditions under which an unarmed, stand-alone force like the NP can be effective are restrictive and arguably anachronistic in most conflict environments—for example, 'all parties have a real stake in achieving peace,' an improbability in the age of resource wars and greed-fueled warlordism—a growing number of similar organizations indicates the development of an altruistic private sector interested in offering an alternative to both national and international peacekeeping operations.[82]

While it is clear that a requirement exists for national post-conflict peacebuilding capacity—whether for unilateral operations or as a contributory element in coalition efforts—it is also clear that funding this capacity is duplicative of international bodies and may be less effective than private entities. However, until international efforts and private offers become more effective and reliable, a national capacity is a reasonable response to the imperative to improve peacebuilding capacity.

A further question must be asked in the post-September 11th operational environment: provided the increasingly crowded post-conflict operational space, now teeming with

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[78] S/CRS (2006), p. 2
[79] Slim (2004), p. 4
[80] Howard (2001), p. 3
[81] Nonviolent Peaceforce (2006), p. 1
[82] Howard (2001), p. 4

international, regional, national, local, and private actors, how beneficial is even perfect coordination by a single national actor when there is so little coordination in the mishmash of other players? Put another way, in the absence of an almost imperial centralization of power in the hands of a single national player, how useful is even the best planning and coordination if it is only done at a national level and excludes the remaining in-theater actors? The answer here is perhaps a bit more nuanced: nations *do* require post-conflict capacity, but only at an operational level; strategic-level planning and coordination should be the primary province of international foundations and organizations, who can best provide the umbrella under which all post-conflict actors find their niche.

The Strategic-Level Approach

Both the PCRU and S/CRS reveal their strength in operational capacities and their weakness in strategic aims; therefore, it is helpful to analyze the merit of a generic **strategic-level** planning and coordinating capability for post-conflict operations. Such capability has become a new imperative for national and international players in peacebuilding but its overall value is questionable. This section addresses the merit of a strategic locus for post-conflict planning and coordination and summarizes the benefits and drawbacks for alternative loci.

Strategic   Operational   Tactical

Planning and
Coordination
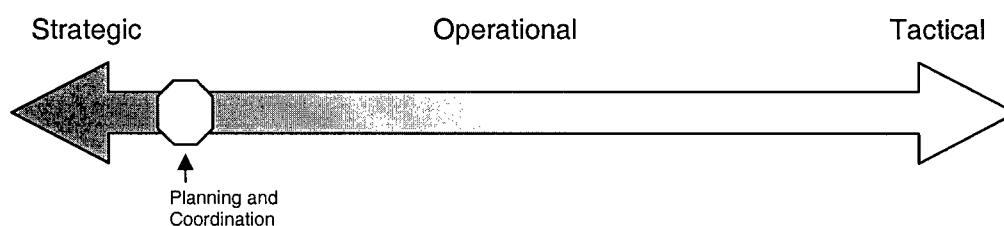
There are a variety of benefits advertised for strategic-level coordination and planning facilities. In particular, the commitment to doing peacebuilding well symbolized by a permanent structural entity is invaluable: in an age where the distinction between war-fighting and nation-building is wavering and there is increasing recognition that peacebuilding comprises an integral task in future war, a strategic-level commitment to improving performance in 'other-than-war' operations represents significant progress.

Another authentic benefit is institutionalizing cooperation and recognition of each community's role in post-conflict activities. Advancing from the personality-based, local level cooperation of 1990s peacekeeping is critical: as described earlier, that approach was unpredictable, unreliable, and not transferable to subsequent operations. It is irresponsible to continue gambling the success or failure of a peacebuilding operation on the uncertain wager of personal relationships between soldiers and humanitarians on the ground. That said, strategic level coordination capacity is not an ideal vehicle for surmounting this archaic *modus operendi*.

One of the primary arguments for developing a strategic-level capacity is to bring the civil and military bodies together earlier, thereby building relationships and formulating plans removed from the urgency of an impending operation. This appears to decrease the *ad hoc* component of implementation schemes and permit more measured sequencing of post-conflict peacebuilding activities. The problem with early coordination is three-fold: first, removed from the imperative of on-the-ground cooperation, the military, government, and humanitarian communities struggle to reconcile their differences; second, generic peace-planning is an exercise in futility; and third, there is a genuine danger of becoming simply bureaucratic red-tape.

Decades of artificial separation have created a very real gap between the perceptions and mentalities of civil and military actors. Under the life-or-death pressure of a humanitarian crisis or the critical eye of an impatient international polity, this gap is surmountable—just as rival sports players will cooperate in an all-star game, so to will soldiers and humanitarians when the greater good is at stake. Unfortunately, removed from the pressure-cooker the disparity in approaches and aims becomes intractable and quibbling begins. Humanitarian organizations in general thrive on competition in a way unfamiliar to the cooperation-bred military: 'they survive and flourish by successfully outstripping their rivals,' value independence and self-sufficiency, and garner donations by claiming 'to be alone in having sufficient determination and resourcefulness to reach a particular threatened community which no other agencies can reach.'[83] This industry standard has resulted in the familiar euphemism 'herding cats' to describe efforts to coordinate these stove-piped organizations, and is indicative of the immense challenge posed at the out-set by strategic-level cooperation.

The competitiveness of the humanitarian community is hardly improved by the nouveau military attitude exemplified by Colin Powel's infamous assurance, 'I am serious about making

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[83] Mackinlay (2002), p. 29

sure we have the best relationship with the NGOs who are such a force multiplier for us, such an important part of our combat team.'[84] This faintly exploitative perception has gained popularity particularly in the wake of the 'hearts and minds' campaign in Iraq, as military planners and government officials see a ready-made expansion force designed to supplement soldiers and tanks. Not surprisingly, humanitarians resist this blurring of mandates, fearing that it compromises their principles of independence and neutrality, hence reducing their ability to secure host government support to insinuate into highly contentious situations and shrinking humanitarian space by making aid workers into targets. While the counter-argument is clear and compelling—that aid agencies are increasingly unable and unwilling to risk insertion in insecure areas anyway, and that humanitarian space no longer exists and the best protection for aid provision is cooperation with security forces—it does not alleviate their resistance to any mechanism or framework which seeks to integrate civil and military forces.

The second hazard inherent to strategic-level frameworks is an increased likelihood of generating generic assessments and plans. The capacity—and frankly, usefulness—of an organization like the PCRU or S/CRS to generate analysis and planning documents for the wide spectrum of ongoing and future post-conflict situations is highly in doubt considering funding and staffing limitations. The July-August 2006 situation in Lebanon provides an excellent example: both organizations scrambled to assemble a conflict assessment and plan for what was universally considered a surprise invasion in which international forces will intervene post-conflict.[85]

Even if a post-conflict planning agency could generate a Pentagon-like library of engagement plans for every potential conflict scenario, the favored military truism, 'no plan survives first contact with the enemy,' holds true across the spectrum of peacebuilding operations as well. The single overarching lesson of international interventions in the 1990s was that cookie-cutter approaches to peacebuilding were ineffectual; rather, any chance of facilitating success relied on deep understanding of the roots of conflict, stabilization sequencing tailored to the specific scenario (for example, educating combatants to be tradesmen might work in a relatively developed economy like the Balkans but is a recipe for conflict resumption in a nation like Liberia where dearth of capital has made the job market nonexistent), policies predicated on

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[84] Slim (2004), p. 12
[85] PCRU Correspondence

cultural norms (like the importance of personal weapons as status symbols in Afghanistan), and comprehensive engagement of regional players. The danger of strategic-level planning is that it rarely penetrates deeply enough to achieve the specificity necessary to achieve success. This can be mitigated with input from area experts and on-the-ground advisors, but requires great caution and self-knowledge to avoid completely.

A corollary to this planning pitfall is that even top-quality analysis can be ill-used if ignored at the executive level or used as shelf-references rather than living documents. The benefit of strategic planning is its close proximity to strategic decision-makers, but this boon only exists if the appropriate mechanisms are in place to ensure full utilization of the assessments: 'if it is to be of any practical use whatsoever rather than simply be an exercise in abstract intellectual analysis and paper shifting' it must have access to and impact on those individuals who write, fund, and contribute to peacebuilding strategy.

Finally, the risk in developing any strategic-level planning or coordinating framework is becoming another source of 'red-tape,' an extra step in the bureaucracy that must first be hurdled before true peacebuilding can begin. Oli Brown, project manager at the International Institute for Sustainable Development, worries that, 'as these things become a bit more engrained and mainstreamed they become a bit more formulaic and that they are another hurdle to go through....'[86] The UN Peacebuilding Commission provides an excellent example of admirable strategic-level theory which as yet seems destined to descend into unhelpful bureaucracy. The Commission and associated Peacebuilding Support Office were suggested in December 2004 and had its inaugural meeting on 23 June 2006.[87] Its purpose is ostensibly to 'advise and propose integrated strategies for post-conflict recovery' and 'improve coordination both within and beyond the UN system' by uniting all actors behind a common strategy.[88] As such, it reflects quite closely the goals of the national-level PCRU and S/CRS, simply on the international scale. Yet the Peacebuilding Commission has already demonstrated a tendency towards the pedantic: the original charter contained no mention of civil society engagement and significant delays occurred due to disagreement on constituent membership. The fundamental issue, however, is that, 'inevitably, the UN is about Track 1 diplomacy...government to government diplomacy, whereas peacebuilding is not about government to government peacebuilding, it is about civil

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[86] HC923-I (2006), Q10
[87] UN Peacebuilding Commission (2006)
[88] Ibid.

society engagement.' While the head of the Commission reassured, 'the aim should not be to create an additional layer of coordination at Headquarters level, but rather to support and reinforce local coordination at the country-level,' the level of representation (national representatives, not development experts) makes its reputation as a ground-breaking advance questionable: fundamentally, 'the Peacebuilding Commission cannot be effective as a New York body; it has to relate to both UN and donor bodies on the ground.'[89] If this brand new international post-conflict capacity is ineffective and irrelevant when wielded at the strategic level, can a national capacity with less funding and experience achieve greater success at strategic post-conflict coordination?

Alternative Loci

There are only two alternatives to strategic-level post-conflict capacity: local (or tactical) level interaction and theater (or operational) level management. The local level cooperation which characterized post-Cold War peacekeeping has already been dismissed as a viable forum for coordination and planning—though beneficially needs-based and tailored to meet the requirements of the individual village, county, or sector, its reliance on personal relationships and sheer luck make it un-transferable and impossible to institutionalize. A similar style of coordination is operative today in Iraq: British Major General Stewart relates that as commander in Basra he was allocated funds for 'Quick Impact Projects' designed to influence the local situation by helping local Iraqis and hence boosting force protection. His interaction with the humanitarian community, however, was definitively *ad hoc*: 'I spoke daily to the head of the CPA who was in the region from the Foreign Office, alongside whom were members of DFID....we would have weekly arguments...on how we could make these mesh together better.'[90] Though DFID would 'quite often provide advice into the military on what the best quick impact project might be and how that might link in with the longer term development issues,' this interaction was predicated solely upon the enlightenment of the local military commander and the cooperative nature of NGO personnel on the ground.[91] The continued existence of this type of inconsistent coordination today is a caricature of the enhanced understanding of peacebuilding we are purportedly developing.

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[89] HC923-I (2006), Q36
[90] HC923-II (2006), Q90
[91] Ibid., Q91

However, institutionalized tactical-level coordination has evolved in the form of Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) fielded in Afghanistan which may offer a local coordinating capacity superior to anything observed in the 1990s. Director of International Policy and Capabilities, Michael McNerney, completed an initial assessment of PRTs in Afghanistan, outlining their evolution from uncoordinated military units with a temporary token junior diplomat to fully functional integrated peacebuilding tools, and measuring their success based upon the metrics of tactical-level coordination, relationship-building, and capacity-building. He identifies civil-military coordination and 'balancing carrots and sticks' as challenges facing PRTs, but praises relationship-building efforts in their target communities and dispels NGO criticism that capacity-building projects were 'unsustainable and lacking community input' calling such condemnation hugely overstated.[92] Overall, McNerney comments that

> 'the Provincial Reconstruction Teams have been one of the few efforts in Afghanistan to approach civil and military S&R tasks in a coordinated fashion at the tactical level....Integration among national, functional, and civil-military stovepipes generally occurs only in the host-nation's capital, at best. PRTs, however, have achieved at least some unity of effort in the field by serving as a hub for both military and civilian activities and by closely aligning their efforts with the Afghan central government.'[93]

His recommendations include an imperative for increasing the number of PRTs and suggestions that training and education must be adopted for military personnel and civilians alike to prepare them for the cooperative situation of stability and reconstruction operations.

One of the paramount qualities of PRTs is the flexibility that makes them adaptable in the dynamic and insecure environment of post-conflict operations, capitalizing on local eyes-on problems and stretching their nature—multinational, civil-military, multi-functional—to its greatest effectiveness. However, a more negative analysis suggests that lack of big-picture oversight condemns PRTs to ineffectiveness. Conventional criticism goes something like this: the PRT comes to a village where the school has been destroyed; the villagers ask for a school so the PRT builds it, but there are no teachers, nor any government or NGO professionals to run it.[94] To rectify this big-picture disadvantage, new measures are being enacted to exert a measure of

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[92] McNerney (2005), p. 42
[93] Ibid., p. 40
[94] HC923-IV (2006), Q182

planning and oversight: the PRT Executive Steering Committee will join the theatre military commander in providing big-picture aims, coordination and assessment, and NATO has developed a PRT training course (non-mandatory for contributing nations) and lessons-learned exercise after a PRT conference held in November 2005.[95] This additional level of control perhaps indicates that the planning piece cannot be effectively executed at the tactical level and instead must be exerted at an operational or strategic height. However, PRTs represent a viable peacebuilding alternative, a positive extension of local-level coordination, and 'have the potential to serve as a showcase for tactical interagency jointness.'[96]

Operational-level planning/coordinating offers an ideal intermediate by exercising big-picture coordination and planning capability without losing connection with on-the-ground requirements, both historically and in current operations. In the 1990s, the most successful intervention and reconstruction operations were conducted under the auspices of a 'benign dictator'—an internationally designated authority in whose hands rested sole power for planning, integrating, and coordinating the sundry civil, humanitarian, and military actors working in the operational space. Taking the form of an international administrator or trustee, this approach was increasingly useful in bringing structure to peacebuilding operations: Bosnia, Kosovo, and East Timor all represent late-1990s interventions that reflect growing reliance on trustees' ability to provide institutional executive capacity, increased coordination and administration, flexibility in response, and long term sustainability.

Operational-level administration was not always successful; in fact, the more complicated and intense the conflict, the more power necessary for an administrator: 'a transitional administration in possession of full executive, as opposed to supervisory, authority is better equipped to meet the manifold challenges of these operations.'[97] This type of executive authority is critical, as a trusteeship can be as uncoordinated and chaotic as traditional complex peacekeeping: in Bosnia, the supervisory role of the UN High Representative was merely to coordinate (not direct) the numerous institutions operating autonomously in accordance with their own objectives and strategies, utterly handicapping peace-building progress. This lesson was learned in Kosovo and East Timor, where all actors were brought under one authoritative official, the Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG). More importantly,

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[95] NATO (2006)
[96] McNerney (2005), p. 45
[97] Caplan (2002), p. 10

international administrations must be backed by solid military force to ensure timely and effective enforcement of civil authority and hence relieve the insecurity plaguing the population. The SRSG in East Timor united civil and military authority in one office, giving teeth to decrees of the international administrator and reestablishing the link between the state and monopoly of force.[98] Taking a lesson from Empire, the ability of one office to control, direct, and plan both civil and military reconstruction efforts is critical in eliminating redundancy and incoherence, and comprehensively planning for future development.

Post-conflict Iraq offers a contemporary case-study of primarily operational-level planning and coordination, demonstrating both positive and negative aspects of mid-level management. There are certainly risks involving operational-level empowerment: Paul Bremer's decisions as Administrator of the Coalition Provisional Authority in Iraq—disbanding the Army, removing tariffs, and allowing foreign companies to remove 100% of their profits with the scandalous Foreign Direct Investment Law—have been widely attributed as causing many of the economic and security problems now facing peacekeepers. However, the House of Commons Initial Assessment of Post-Conflict Operations in Iraq commends the theatre level cooperation and integration of UK military and civilian operators, stating 'an increasingly close working relationship in-theatre (there are, for example, DFID personnel working in the UK military headquarters)…has meant that we are able to make real progress with reconstruction tasks.'[99]

Where, then, is the planning and coordination component of post-conflict peacebuilding best located on the tactical-to-strategic spectrum? The answer is that it depends: while strategic level coordination signifies commitment to improving post-conflict capability, the potential usefulness is very slight; past operational coordination proved successful in the form of a benign administrator, but a similar system in Iraq failed; *ad hoc* local level coordination is clearly passé, but when institutionalized and linked by training and assessment like the Afghanistan PRTs, appears an effective solution. Perhaps the ideal answer is that of an operational-level planner/coordinator who directs local-level implementers—such a scenario could be loosely reflected in ISAF, but only time will tell the ultimate efficacy of such a program.

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[98] Ibid., p. 26
[99] HC436 (2005), p. 13

IV. Conclusions and Recommendations

A variety of conclusions and recommendations can be drawn from the discussion above, both with respect to the specific organizations of the PCRU and S/CRS, and for identifying the correct locus of planning and coordinating capabilities in the local/international and tactical/strategic scales. First and foremost, it is abundantly clear that national and international actors are recognizing the need to foster the intrinsic relationship between military and humanitarian doctrines and communities, particularly for purposes of succeeding in the complex and multi-faceted task of post-conflict peacebuilding. This realization was a long time in coming, and efforts to improve this capacity have the author's whole-hearted support.

In this context, the following commendations, criticisms, and recommendations are offered regarding the British PCRU and American S/CRS:

- The institutional structures and perspectives which ground the PCRU place it well ahead of its American counterpart, but a plethora of similarly mandated organizations increases the risk of superfluity and threatens the value of the organization
- The strategic component of the organization is useful only so long as careful measures are undertaken to preserve it and may ultimately offer more liability than benefit; the true value of the PCRU lies in its operational capability—in training and deploying integration teams in-theatre to facilitate coordination and operational-level planning
- Logistical issues such as funding and oversight ambiguity must be resolved quickly in order for the PCRU to live up to its full potential as a viable solution to the *ad hoc* interventions of the past
- The S/CRS sprouts from a less auspicious framework than the PCRU, confronted by historical antipathy, a government and military skeptical of the value of peacebuilding, and interagency tension. However, for this very reason the success of the S/CRS is more important to the US because it represents a commitment to improving performance in post-conflict peacebuilding
- The S/CRS is overly ambitious and under-resourced, diminishing its ability to perform any peacebuilding function well. It tries to engage the entire strategic-tactical spectrum and assumes responsibilities better suited to existing organizations. It is awkwardly

structured, lacks independence, and possesses an uncertain chain of command; the Dept of State is comparatively ill-suited player to house the S/CRS, having no planning capability, less clout, and more entanglements than a stand-alone agency would have

- Despite its flaws, the S/CRS is improving upon the current incoherence and military-led reconstruction efforts. It indicates a breakthrough in military and executive mentality which values peacebuilding as a valid commitment of resources. It manages, rather than supports, peacebuilding and thus provides a vertical chain of command from actors on the ground to strategic planners. It also provides foundation in interagency cooperation and coordination.

- To be fully effective the S/CRS must either reduce its ambitions and focus on the operational component of its mission—training and fielding teams, creating scenario-specific plans—abandoning the grand diplomatic and strategic foci, or it must expand its organizational capacity and be elevated into its own cabinet-level department. In either scenario, it must be adequately funded and powerfully led to overcome institutional biases and interdepartmental frictions.

- The S/CRS, though beginning with a greater handicap, is more important to the future of US peacebuilding than the PCRU, though starting significantly farther ahead, is to the United Kingdom

The PCRU and S/CRS have value in the areas outlined above, but there is still significant refinement required to maximize our planning and coordination ability: more important than doing *something* to improve our peacebuilding capacity is doing the *right thing*, and the following are conclusions and recommendations designed to help identify the ideal loci for future efforts:

- National-level planning and coordination for post-conflict peacebuilding is necessary in the current threat environment. However, such capacity should be considered interim, existing only while the international community and private sector remain insufficiently developed

- Moreover, the national-level is not appropriate for strategic-level planning and coordination, as even unilateral interventions attract a plethora of actors and even perfect

deployment of national resources is of little use when local and international deployments are not part of the picture

- Strategic-level planning and coordination is not useful except as a symbol of government commitment to improving the peacebuilding process and as a means to clarify the chain of command from boots on the ground to decision-makers in Washington, New York, or London

- The strategic-level is not the appropriate locus for real planning and coordination, as it is often generic or out-of-touch with real-time data; nor is the local-level appropriate, as it does not have sufficient elevation to see the whole picture. Rather, planning and coordination should be theatre- or scenario-specific, referencing real-time information from local actors, but maintaining a big-picture perspective, and thus may be best performed at the operational-level.

The PCRU and S/CRS represent landmarks in the evolution of post-conflict thinking, and despite the challenges facing them should be considered an excellent first-generation effort in peacebuilding capacity. As Paul Collier comments, 'the essence of post-conflict work is to get joined-up thinking across military and security interventions, governance interventions, aid, and…trade.'[100] Only when these facets are coordinated at the right level, with the right resources and the right mentality, can the work downstream be truly successful.

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[100] HC923-III (2006), Q130

APPENDIX A: Acronyms and Affiliations

CIA	Central Intelligence Agency	(US)
CPP	Conflict Prevention Pool	(UK)
DFID	Department for International Development	(UK)
DOD	Department of Defense (also *Pentagon, Defense Dept*)	(US)
DOS	Department of State (also *State, State Department*)	(US)
FCO	Foreign Commonwealth Office	(UK)
HMG	Her Majesty's Government	(UK)
IFI	International Financial Institution	
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force	
IO	International Organization	
MOD	Ministry of Defense	(UK)
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization	
NGO	Non-Government Organization	
OPTAG	Operational Training and Advisory Group	(UK)
OSD	Office of the Secretary of Defense	(US)
PCRU	Post-Conflict Reconstruction Unit	(UK)
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team	
S/CRS	Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stability	(US)
SGO	Supra-Government Organization	
TGO	Trans-Government Organization	
UN	United Nations	
USAID	United States Agency for International Development	(US)

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