

DEALING WITH ANARCHY

By FREDERICK L. WETTERING and JOHN N. PETRIE

Today historic forces are destroying or subdividing post-colonial and other nation-states for various reasons. In the 1960s the emergence of nation-states through decolonization gave rise in the United Nations to what became known as the *right* of self-determination.¹ The process drew the rights of the sovereign, in this case those of the colonial master, into question in a manner not envisioned by the drafters of the U.N. Charter.² These new nation-states emerged during the Cold War. The stability provided by the superpowers enabled them to accept responsibilities and receive benefits under the mantle of what is called the Westphalian system.

While the nation-state system can be traced to the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, the modern structure was imposed by the victors of World War II and codified in vari-



U.S. Air Force (James Mossman)

Escorting Somalis to medical care.

ous agreements, of which Yalta³ and the U.N. Charter are the best known. The result was a system of borders and states that had not met objective criteria in the past but that were now recognized. Regimes were installed with the protection of the great powers;

Summary

Removing the element of superpower coercion from the affairs of certain nation-states has brought about the collapse of many contrived boundaries drawn after World War II. The resulting demise of ill-conceived nation-states has fast become a trend. The United States risks being bogged down if it attempts to prop up disintegrating states. Yet policymakers as well as the public seem reluctant to watch has-been states unravel. The plight of these states also appeals to humanitarian instincts, suggesting that the cost of reordering the political map of the world could be high. Though future involvement is likely to be carried out by coalitions, inevitably the United States will be the senior partner. Politico-military options on where, when, and to what extent to intervene will require both military planners and commanders to come up with the right force mixes for the new world disorder.

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Felling the Berlin Wall
in November 1989.

U.S. Air Force (Cokran)

pseudo-states with no claim to internal political legitimacy were maintained directly or indirectly by threats of intervention. In addition, historical realities were often ignored vis-à-vis the representative nature of the regimes and the delimitation of national boundaries. Some states have recently collapsed because the long-accepted definition of a nation-state—an identified population, recognized boundaries, and the authority to exercise power over enclosed territory—was not rigorously applied by the international community on admitting them to the system. Such pseudo-states are unable to confront internal contradictions of conflicting religious, ethnic, or racial identities.

Three factors that suppressed internal contradictions until recently disappeared. The most important was the Cold War during

which the superpowers recognized new claimants to statehood to quickly gain influence over *de facto* regimes that sought legitimacy. A second, less important but still vital factor was the concurrent loss of influence of metropole countries over their former colonies.⁴ The third was support from the international system which was essential to the internal stability of governments and economies in the new states, support that derived from the first two factors. Also, the international consensus for maintaining the *status quo* under rubrics of territorial integrity and no external intervention was severely eroded. While the international community has not abandoned them, exceptions to these rules of conduct have markedly increased.

International Security and Coalitions

The implications of the sea change in the nation-state system for national security strategy are profound. Current world affairs suggest that any American attempt to maintain the *status quo* or *status quo ante* given the accelerated collapse of many nonviable states and regimes is likely to be ineffective and even quixotic. The breakdown in the old order of nation-state legitimacy creates opportunities for mischief and aggrandizement by those states with a penchant for such behavior. States with a power projection capability will be able to take more opportunistic actions. Even a narrow view of national interests leads to the conclusion that American leaders will eventually be forced to authorize further interventions.

As problems arising from state delegitimization threaten other nation-states—such as civil war, genocide, starvation, and the internationalization of conflict as well as external intervention—the world will expect the United States to provide the necessary leadership and resources to resolve the problems. Experience indicates that such expectations can easily be translated by America into a mandate for action. Leaders of both political parties call for continuing the U.S. leadership role in the world. Once seized by foreign humanitarian concerns, public opinion almost demands that national leaders intervene to rectify the problems. However, there are serious limitations on such exercises of power. There are resource constraints and international legal and political limitations caused by a lack of consensus and willingness to use and abide by conflict resolution procedures. And when the potential cost of such involvement becomes real, public enthusiasm for action can rapidly turn into a call for withdrawal and thereby define a policy failure.

To minimize the lack of consensus, of the infrastructure for peacekeeping and peacemaking in international organizations, and of dedicated resources, the United States must build coalitions in response to crises. Including forces from other nations not only creates international acceptance, it also can reduce overall costs. The efficacy of coalitions suggests using international organizations like the United Nations. But there should be no illusion that U.N. action is *the*

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answer in all or even in most situations. U.N. action requires consent, or at least acquiescence, of all permanent members of the Security Council. The nature of some issues simply will not permit this course of action. While a veto may not have been evoked of late, that does not mean it will not, or should not, be used. Furthermore, certain situations—especially self-defense or collective self-defense—must be dealt with immediately and can be endangered if military action is delayed by putting it on the Security Council's agenda. The Charter recognizes and accommodates this reality. Coalition-building, at least for now, must be an *ad hoc* diplomatic tool which if increasingly desirable is not always available. The United States will have to plan the response and bring its coalition partners along if diplomacy permits.

Resource constraints and the escalating cost of intervention can be met and ameliorated only in part through diplomacy. The more than \$40 billion raised by the Bush administration to finance Desert Shield/Desert Storm, albeit a skillful accomplishment, is an

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exception. More commonly the United States has failed to meet its U.N. obligations on time. Thus the Secretary General is forced to juggle the books and pass the hat to pay for peace

operations. National priorities are inescapable and may well limit the frequency and extent of participation in coalition and unilateral operations. This demands significantly greater scrutiny of situations calling for U.S. involvement.

Strategy and Missions

Domestic and international pressures may shape the situation, but they need not be adverse or impossible. The answer is bringing appropriate resources to bear where they can succeed and, at the same time, enjoying and sustaining domestic and international support. Where that is not possible, intervention will not improve the situation in the long term. Some capabilities earmarked for funding have a demonstrable utility for these circumstances, including maintenance of highly-skilled core forces; forward deployed land, sea, and air forces;

improved skills and equipment for rapid deployment; more flexible and fungible forces; and high-tech and general purpose force supremacy over any adversary.

It is extremely difficult to discern measures of effectiveness for the unknown, especially if planners cannot establish a credible worst case and the budget militates against such methodology. One approach is to measure the utility of available military capabilities against the most likely types of missions when categorized in terms of response timeliness, that is, operations in which success requires rapid response by combat forces, rapid response and sustained support of combat forces, or commitment and support of forces over a protracted period.

Rapid response operations are measured in hours or days and have objectives which can be accomplished by surprise or overwhelming force. Recent operations in Grenada (1983), the drop of airborne forces into Honduras to dissuade the Sandinistas from violating Honduran sovereignty (1987), and Panama (1989) meet such a definition, as would noncombatant evacuation operations (NEOs) like evacuating American embassy and other noncombatant personnel from both Monrovia and Mogadishu (1991). Another example is the Franco-Zairian combined air drop on Kolwezi to rescue hostages during the Shaba II incursion of rebel Katangan forces from Angola (1978).

The Armed Forces have a successful track record in recent rapid response operations which suggests that their planning and tactical capabilities are generally sound. Other prerequisites for success are important. Such operations require good intelligence about the situation on the ground. They also require objectives located on terrain and geography which accommodate access and are suitable for the forces tasked. In addition, these operations must strive for simplicity of execution; that is, the objectives must be limited in number and easily understood and attained.

Prerequisites are obvious when they are ignored. One incomplete intelligence prerequisite was the American raid on the Song Te prison in North Vietnam (1970). Geographic prerequisites are likewise important. Objectives have to be within tactical reach of air

or sea forces and located on reasonable terrain capable of landing helicopters or C-130s. The aborted Iranian hostage rescue mission (1980) stretched—or even exceeded—reasonable geographic constraints.

Dragon Rouge was an operation which violated simplicity. Americans supported Belgian paratroopers in a drop in the Congolese (Zairian) city of Stanleyville (Kisangani). The objective was to rescue hostages held by some particularly savage rebels. The airdrop was combined with a ground force column of allegedly CIA-supported mercenaries, V Commando Brigade under Mike Hoare. The drop was not close enough to where the hostages were being held and the mercenaries did not arrive in time at the target area. Some hostages were executed by their rebel captors while others, including U.S. diplomats, escaped in the confusion.⁵

Operations requiring sustained support, particularly in the Third World, are subject

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to the same constraints, but there may be flexibility in longer operations. The geographic factor remains vital. American campaigns

in Italy and Korea demonstrate the challenges of terrain, and Indochina serves as a reminder of the challenges inherent in jungles and tropical rain forests. These historical cases indicate that stiff resistance can extract a tremendous toll, take up valuable time, and negate many advantages of general purpose forces (such as the relative speed of deployment, mobility, air superiority, and superior firepower). When reduced to the same tactics which indigenous forces use, such operations involve costs no rational commander can seriously entertain without extreme consequences arising from a failure to undertake them.

The importance of terrain and geography was proven at Gallipoli in World War I. More recently, in the British campaign in the Falklands conflict (1982) geography negated most British advantages and—without the benefits of extraordinary levels of foreign support and Argentine bad luck—could well have doomed the expedition.

While complex missions can be carried out, objectives nonetheless must be made explicit rather than implied. The Somalia mission fails this test. While it initially had a simple objective of creating a secure environment for famine relief, the mission incurred a number of implied tasks to include eliminating hostile threats, disarming or deterring combatants, breaking up tribal militias, and even the obligation of providing or establishing police, judicial, and administrative functions once the area was pacified. Further, these tasks cannot be achieved without resolving internecine struggles which are part of the Somali culture. Many of these tasks eventually were made explicit. Finally, the mission lacked a well defined, broadly agreed on end game and was undertaken with the assumption of a time line of two months to which only the United States had agreed in terms of an endpoint. The consequences of the Battle of Mogadishu in October 1993—over nine months after the initially anticipated departure of U.S. troops—and the subsequent congressional mandate for an early pullout demonstrate the challenges of sustaining domestic consensus for humanitarian missions where no broadly understood national interest is involved.

The Somalia situation called for a *new*, or in fact rediscovered, set of military roles in the American inventory. These roles will undoubtedly be needed for protracted operations in Third World delegitimized areas. For missions of duration the military must develop what can be called *restabilization* skills—in concert with civilian agencies and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs)—to create constabularies, judiciaries, and governments made up of indigenous personnel. Earlier in this century the Armed Forces had extensive experience in conducting such missions. Then it was called colonial, or more accurately, military occupation. Such operations are defined in law⁶ that indicate responsibilities assumed by nations that place military forces in the position of acting for a sovereign in his territory. Marines did this in Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Nicaragua as did the Army in the Philippines. The Armed Forces also performed similar missions in liberated Germany, Austria, and Japan, and more recently took on the same kind of missions, albeit briefly, in Grenada and Panama. Military police dealt



U.S. Air Force (Dean Wagner)

Military police securing Arraijan, Panama.

with an anarchic situation in Operation Hawkeye to restore order on St. Croix after hurricane Hugo.⁷ Special Operations Forces (SOF) in Panama used psychological operations (PSYOP) and civil affairs (CA) units to reconstitute the government and establish a police force under civilian control during Operation Promote Liberty.⁸

In past military occupations local populations have been screened (as in de-nazification) and undesirables barred from recruitment. U.S. military police, judge advocate general, civil affairs, administrative, and support personnel have organized, trained, and supervised new infrastructures while combat forces provided the requisite stability to permit less glamorous but essential military nation-building functions to be carried out.

While the Armed Forces have the skills, their capabilities are no guarantee of success. That might require tasking forces and a degree of authority which is difficult to obtain under law. Forces employed under the aegis of the United Nations tend to be constrained to fulfill only those missions which can command an international political consensus (the Security Council mandate expressed in a resolution). Indeed, Somalia raises serious questions about the role of the military in anarchic situations. The sight of heavily armed Marines being confronted by swarms of Somali boys intent on mischief points to the fact that sometimes there are too many shooters and too few nation-builders. Military police are trained and equipped to handle

such situations. Beyond doubt, graduates of the U.S. Army Military Police School are better suited than Marines for patrolling the streets of Mogadishu and recreating a Somali constabulary.

This is not to say that the Marines were not the best qualified force in the world to cross the beach and provide the necessary guarantees for military police to go about their duties. In fact U.S. forces in Somalia succeeded at almost every turn. But the mission was prolonged and also evolved to a point where the expertise needed was not found among the forces originally deployed. Nonetheless, remarkable accomplishments were recorded by those lacking a clear policy mandate, leaving them with an incomplete plan, and potentially without the most capable forces to carry out the tasks. It is fortunate that general purpose forces have proven to be so adaptable.

Why then are the experts not there? Obvious political and mission-planning lessons can be learned from the Somali case of state delegitimization and collapse. They include defining political tasks as thoroughly as possible prior to setting out; providing military police in urban areas as soon as areas are secured; and deploying SOF, intelligence, engineer, medical, legal, logistic, and other combat support and combat service support personnel immediately after an anarchic situation. If specialists from the Department of State, Agency for International Development, U.S. Information Agency, and Central Intelligence Agency are required, they should be introduced under the aegis of the appropriate unified command if the CINC takes control of the area in question.

Unfortunately, forward deployment, mobility, and rapid response produce situations where bias exists towards dispatching and retaining shooters at the expense of combat support elements. Shooters alone cannot establish the appropriate level of control or the environment necessary for a mission which remains successful even after their withdrawal. Further, their flexibility and—in the case of the Marines—their broad range of capabilities at the organizational level tempts military and civilian decision-makers to have Marines handle short-term operations on their own. Deploying a greater

number of more diverse or specialized units involves considerable expense and potential domestic and international political costs. Consequently, balancing talent among the forces on the scene—especially the so-called tooth-to-tail ratio—can quickly become inappropriate if missions require or evolve into entirely different situations.



Caring for victim of mortar attack in Sarajevo.

Combat Camera Imagery (Efrain Gonzalez)

Inappropriate force structure is even more likely in U.N.-led or sanctioned situations. The initial tasking in such instances is generally the lowest common denominator of the various political assessments and political wills that come to bear on a Security Council decision to act or authorize action. The idea of accepting responsibility for what constitutes a military occupation of a member state will be very hard to sell indeed. Domestic response will not be receptive either. Nonetheless, this is becoming clear to planners. One report suggests the lesson may have been learned from the plan for an unexecuted intervention that provided for “engineers, military police, and medical units . . . to improve Haiti’s military, police force, medical services, and communications.”⁹ But in that case a lack of shooters to kick in the door made the action both tactically impossible and politically unthinkable (albeit at the eleventh hour).

There remains the problem of the availability of such anarchy-appropriate forces. Much of the capability for such vital specialties lies in the Reserve components. Right-sizing will threaten to increase that balance. It is

very difficult for the National Command Authorities to recover these specialists in Somalia-type situations where there is no domestic political consensus to support the call-up of Reserve and Guard units, which is always a politically risky move for a President.

To illustrate this problem it should be noted that over 75 percent of PSYOP and 97 percent of CA capabilities, 50 percent of the military police assets, and 50 percent of the Seabees are in the Reserve components.¹⁰ Air National Guard C-130s demonstrated an ability to support the original feeding operation in Somalia and the U.N. demobilization effort in Angola, both in 1992. The effort during Desert Storm to solicit volunteers was an inspired attempt to ease this problem, but in the last analysis the solution lies in the composition of forces available for contingencies.

A logical rejoinder to the above strategy might be why not leave it to the United Nations or some other transnational body to set up and administer such territories; recruit police, judicial, and administrative supervisory personnel; and take responsibility for such a program. There are two reasons why the American military must rediscover this capability: the professed policy of working with and through the United Nations by exercising leadership in these situations means that the Armed Forces will frequently form the leading elements of such organizations. Further, the U.N. track record on administration of such operations is generally poor. In any case, such operations under U.N. authority require Chinese and Russian agreement or acquiescence (surely no one can expect the level of concurrence from the Russians and Chinese developed in the Gulf and Somalia operations to continue indefinitely).

Another possible argument against these proposals might be that any force so established by the United States may be resented by local inhabitants and possibly overthrown upon departure of U.S. forces. To overcome this possibility better use must be made of traditional restabilization skills. On the other hand consider the unfortunately far more likely consequence of the entire U.S. intervention effort being undermined upon the departure of U.S. forces should such a strategy not be employed. To argue that many foreign forces or a collection of U.N. forces from smaller states can assume this responsibility is unrealistic.

The initial forces which enter someone else's territory should have unit cohesion, common tactics, ease of communication, good mobility, and available air and sealift. Further, lift must be responsive to tasking and be able to support both opposed and administrative insertions of forces. Today those capabilities—coupled with the political will to become involved—do not exist in many places outside of the United States. Political will here depends heavily upon public opinion

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and is exceptionally difficult to sustain in the face of unanticipated costs or losses.

Each reversal during one of these situations moves

the threshold for consensus further away. Activating the Reserve components to deploy a successful force also becomes more difficult politically. This is not a design for success. When the national interest is engaged decisionmakers clearly have a better argument but the center of gravity for these operations has obviously shifted to U.S. public opinion.

Anarchy created by breakdowns in nation-state sovereignty is likely to compel intervention to implement U.N. decisions, sometimes by force. This will probably be done by coalitions, albeit with the United States in the lead. Current military strategy is well suited for such contingencies. In anarchic situations the Armed Forces must conduct restabilization operations with skill. While combat forces may establish temporary order, without the addition of combat support and combat service support personnel like military police, order will vanish as combat forces are withdrawn. This will almost assuredly be the case in Somalia. It is unlikely that the United Nations or other international organizations can provide such restabilization skills in a timely or effective manner unless they build on the structure already possessed by the U.S. military.

It is imperative that cadres involved in restabilization, many of whom are Reservists, be available on short notice. Current law inhibits the National Command Authorities from calling up Reservists with vital restabilization skills in less than brigade size-units or in numbers over 1,000.

Regrettably, the state of the world is such that many of these arguments will soon be put to the test. National and military strategy underscore the importance of regional stability to American interests. Recent calls for U.S. involvement have been judged as not related to those interests. Nevertheless, they demonstrate the importance of sending the right force with the right support to similar situations when national interests are at stake. Such situations lie ahead. Now is the time to prepare those forces which will be needed for future missions and to streamline the requisite support to carry them to success.

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NOTES

¹ General Assembly Resolution 2200 (XI session) of December 16, 1966; see *General Assembly Official Record*, vol. 23, supp. 16 (A/6316), pp. 49–52.

² The U.N. Charter, and annexed Statute of the International Court of Justice, entered into force on October 24, 1945.

³ For the Declaration on Liberated Europe and related matters, see communique signed at the Yalta Conference (February 11, 1945), in U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, Diplomatic Papers, The Conference at Malta and Yalta* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1945), pp. 968–87 (especially, pp. 977–78).

⁴ For example, see Francis Terry McNamara, *France in Black Africa* (Washington: National Defense University Press, 1989), pp. 207–08, on French retrenchment from Africa beginning in 1984.

⁵ Fred E. Wagoner, *Dragon Rouge: The Rescue of the Hostages in the Congo* (Washington: National Defense University Press, 1980).

⁶ It is argued that the law of war requires the United States to administer territory which its forces enter absent a government capable or willing to exercise the sovereign's responsibilities—or when operational exigencies do not allow local government to meet them. Restabilizing any territory after intervening where anarchy might otherwise reign implies moral and legal as well as pragmatic considerations. Such situations create similar responsibilities which face an occupying force once it defeats or otherwise bars indigenous authority from providing for civil order and the requisite infrastructure. See chapter 6 of Department of the Army Field Manual 27–10, *The Law of Land Warfare*.

⁷ Briefing by MG Charles A. Hines, Commandant, U.S. Army Military Police School, Fort McClellan, Alabama, August 10, 1992.

⁸ U.S. Department of Defense, Special Operations Command, "United States Special Operations Forces: Posture Statement, 1993."

⁹ See, for example, *Inside the Pentagon*, April 8, 1993, p. 1.

¹⁰ John M. Collins, "Roles and Functions of U.S. Combat Forces: Past, Present, and Prospects" (Washington: Congressional Research Service, January 21, 1993).