

U.S. Air Force (Cecilio M. Ricardo, Jr.)



U.S. forces, rather than engaging in peacekeeping in Afghanistan, have trained the country's police and army to take responsibility for their country's security

# Organizing for Victory

BY JAMES DOBBINS

Since the end of the Korean War, all of America's conventional campaigns have ended in a matter of weeks, sometimes even days, with overwhelming victories and few if any friendly casualties. Nation-building, counterinsurgency, and postconflict reconstruction, on the other hand, have always proved much more time-consuming, expensive, and problematic. One reason for this disjunction is that the U.S. Government is well structured for peace or war, but ill adapted for missions that fall in between. In both peace and conventional war, each agency knows its place. Coordination among them, while demanding, does not call for endless improvisation. By contrast, nation-building, stability operations, counterinsurgency, and irregular warfare all require that agencies collaborate in ways they are not accustomed to. These missions are consequently among the most difficult for any President to direct precisely because administrations are not structured for that purpose.

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Recent commentary has largely focused on the difficulty in fielding adequate numbers of competent, appropriately experienced civilians willing to live in military caserns, travel in military convoys, wear helmets and flak vests to work, and complement the efforts of their military colleagues in conditions of considerable hardship and danger. Yet historically the more

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serious problems have been in Washington, where civilian and military expertise must be blended across multiple agencies, where the responsibilities among agencies for carrying out interlocking and often overlapping responsibilities must be worked out, and where policy is set and funding allocated. When stability and counterinsurgency operations have faltered or failed, as they have in Somalia, Afghanistan, and Iraq, the causes can largely be traced to flawed decisionmaking in Washington.

### Identifying Critical Lessons

Observing the American occupation of Iraq, one might be forgiven for thinking it is the first time the United States has embarked on such an enterprise. Throughout that first year, one unanticipated challenge after another occasioned one improvised response after another. This was, however, not the first, but rather the seventh occasion in little more than a decade that the United States helped liberate a society and then tried to rebuild it, beginning with Kuwait in 1991, and followed by Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, and finally Iraq.

Six of those seven societies are predominantly Muslim. Thus, by 2003, there was no country in the world more experienced in nation-building than America, and no Western army with more modern experience operating with a Muslim society. How could the United States perform this mission so frequently, yet do it so poorly? The answer was that in 2003, neither the U.S. military nor any of the relevant civilian agencies regarded postconflict stabilization and reconstruction as a core function to be adequately funded, regularly practiced, and routinely executed. Instead, the United States had tended to treat each of these successive missions as if it were the first ever encountered, sending new people with new ideas to face what should have been familiar challenges. Worse yet, it treated each mission as if it were the last such it would ever have to conduct. No organization was taking steps to harvest and sustain the expertise gained. No one was establishing an evolving doctrine for the conduct of these operations or building a cadre of experts available to go from one mission to the next.

There was, nevertheless, some improvement in American performance through the 1990s. During his 8 years in office, President Bill Clinton oversaw four successive efforts at stabilization and postconflict reconstruction. Beginning with an unqualified failure in Somalia, followed by a largely wasted effort in Haiti, his administration was eventually able to achieve more enduring results in Bosnia and Kosovo. None of these efforts was perfect, but each successive operation was better conceived, more abundantly resourced, and more competently conducted, as the same officials repeatedly performed comparable tasks.

The Clinton administration derived three large policy lessons from its experience: employ overwhelming force, provide public security,

and engage neighboring and regional states, particularly those behaving most irresponsibly.

**Employ Overwhelming Force.** In Somalia, President George H.W. Bush originally sent a large U.S. force to perform a limited task, protecting humanitarian food and medicine shipments. President Clinton reduced that presence from 20,000 Soldiers and Marines to 2,000, and gave this residual force the mission of supporting a United Nations (UN)-led, grass roots democratization campaign that was bound to antagonize every warlord in the country. Capabilities plummeted even as ambitions soared. The weakened American force was soon challenged. The encounter, chronicled in the book and movie *Black Hawk Down*, resulted in a firestorm of domestic criticism and caused the administration to withdraw American troops from Somalia.

From then on, the Clinton administration embraced the doctrine espoused by outgoing Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Colin Powell of applying overwhelming force, choosing to supersize each of its subsequent interventions, going in heavy, and then scaling back once a secure environment was established and potential adversaries were deterred from mounting violent resistance.

**Provide Public Security.** In Somalia, Haiti, and Kosovo, the United States arrived to find local security forces incompetent, abusive, or entirely nonexistent. Building new institutions and reforming existing ones took many years. In the interim, responsibility for public security devolved to the United States and its coalition partners. For a long time, the U.S. military resisted this mission, but to no avail.

Finally by 1999, when they went into Kosovo, U.S. and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) military authorities accepted that responsibility for public safety would be a *military* task until international

and local police could be mobilized in sufficient numbers.

**Engage Neighboring and Regional States.** Adjoining states played a major role in fomenting the conflicts in Somalia, Bosnia, and Kosovo. This problem was largely ignored in Somalia but faced squarely in Bosnia. The presidents of Serbia and Croatia, both of whom bore heavy responsibility for the ethnic cleansing that NATO was trying to stop, were invited by the United States to the peace conference in Dayton, Ohio. Both leaders were given privileged places in that process and continued to be engaged in the subsequent peace implementation. Both won subsequent elections in their own countries, their domestic stature having been enhanced by this elevated international role. Had Washington treated them as pariahs, the war in Bosnia might be under way still.

By 1999, that same Serbian leader, Slobodan Milosevic, had actually been indicted by the international tribunal in The Hague for genocide and other war crimes. Yet NATO and the Clinton administration still negotiated with his regime to end the conflict in Kosovo.

## Unlearned Lessons

Each of these large lessons was rejected by a successor administration that was initially determined to avoid nation-building altogether, and that subsequently insisted on doing it entirely differently, and especially more economically.

Ironically, the Powell doctrine of overwhelming force was embraced only after General Colin Powell left office in 1993, and was abandoned as soon as he returned as Secretary of State in 2001. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld's views were diametrically opposed. He argued in speeches and op-ed articles that by flooding Bosnia and Kosovo with military manpower and economic assistance, the United States and its

allies turned these societies into permanent wards of the international community. By stinting on such commitments, the Bush administration would ensure that Afghanistan and Iraq would more quickly become self-sufficient. This line of thinking transposed the American domestic debate over welfare reform to the international arena. The analogy could not have proven less

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apt. By making minimal initial efforts at stabilization in Afghanistan and Iraq, and reinforcing troop and financial commitments only once challenged, the administration failed to deter the emergence of organized resistance in either country. The Rumsfeld vision of “defense transformation” may have been well suited to conventional combat against vastly inferior adversaries, but it became a much more expensive approach to postconflict stabilization and reconstruction than the then-out-of-fashion Powell doctrine.

During the 2000 Presidential campaign, Condoleezza Rice wrote dismissively of stability operations, declaring that “we don’t need to have the 82<sup>d</sup> Airborne escorting kids to kindergarten.” Consistent with this view, the Bush administration, having overthrown the Taliban and installed a new government in Kabul, determined that American troops would do no peacekeeping and that peacekeepers from other countries would not be allowed to venture beyond the Kabul city limits. Public security throughout the rest of the country would be left entirely to the Afghans, despite the fact that Afghanistan had no army and no police force. A year later,

President Bush was asking his advisors irritably why the reconstruction that had occurred was largely limited to the capital.

The same attitude toward public security informed U.S. plans for postwar Iraq. Washington assumed that the Iraqi police and military would continue to maintain public order once Saddam Hussein’s regime was removed. The fact that this arrangement had already proven impractical not only in Afghanistan just a year earlier, but also in Somalia, Haiti, and Kosovo, was ignored. In the weeks leading up to the invasion, Pentagon leadership cut the number of Military Police proposed by military authorities for the operation, while the White House cut even more drastically the number of international civilian police proposed by the Department of State. The White House also directed that any civilian police sent to Iraq should be unarmed. For the next several years, as Iraq descended into civil war, American authorities declined to collect data on the number of Iraqis getting killed. Secretary Rumsfeld maintained that such statistics were not a relevant indicator of the success or failure of the American military mission. Only with the arrival of General David Petraeus in 2007 did the number of civilian casualties become the chief metric for measuring the progress of the campaign.

America’s quick success in overthrowing the Taliban and replacing it with a broadly based successor regime owed much to the assistance received from nearby states, to include such long-term opponents of the Taliban as Iran, Russia, and India. Yet no sooner had the Hamid Karzai government been installed than Washington rebuffed offers of further assistance from Iran and relaxed the pressure on Pakistan to sever its remaining ties with violent extremist groups. The broad regional strategy, so

critical to both Washington's initial military victory and political achievement, was effectively abandoned.

Such a strategy was not even attempted with respect to Iraq. The invasion was conducted not only against the advice of several of Washington's most important allies, but also contrary to the wishes of most regional states. With the exception of Kuwait, none of Iraq's neighbors supported the intervention. Even Kuwait could not have been enthusiastic about the announced American intention to make Iraq a democratic model for the region in the hopes of inspiring similar changes in the form of government of all its neighbors. Not surprisingly, neighborly interference quickly became a significant factor in stoking Iraq's sectarian passions.

In his second term, President Bush worked hard to recover from these early mistakes. In the process, his administration embraced the mission of postconflict stabilization with the fervor of a new convert. The President issued a directive setting out an interagency structure for managing such operations. Secretary of State Rice recanted her earlier dismissal of nation-building. The State Department established the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization, charged with establishing a doctrine for the civilian conduct of such missions and building a cadre of experts ready to man them. The Department of Defense (DOD) issued a directive making stability operations a core function of the U.S. military.

In Iraq, more forces and money were committed, public security was embraced as the heart of a new counterinsurgency strategy, and efforts were made to better engage neighboring states, not even excepting Iran. The lessons of the 1990s had been *relearned*. Iraq pulled back from the abyss.

## Retaining Hard Won Lessons

Both the Clinton and Bush administrations began poorly and gradually improved their management of nation-building operations. President Barack Obama's election offered every prospect of this pattern being repeated, as a new administration of a different party took office, intent on doing things differently from its predecessor. Fortunately, and rather remarkably, Obama chose to keep Robert Gates as Secretary of Defense, General David Petraeus as commander of U.S. Central Command, and Lieutenant General Douglas Lute, along with a team of professional military, diplomatic, and intelligence officers, in the White House, advising him and organizing the interagency management of both wars. The result has been a degree of continuity that leaves some Democrats uneasy but that offers hope that the lessons of the past two decades will not be shed once again in the transition from one administration and governing party to the next.

The Obama strategy for Afghanistan is an effort to replicate the success achieved in Iraq in 2007 by employing many of the same

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elements in a different environment. These elements include a counterinsurgency doctrine focused on public security, an increase in U.S. and Afghan military manpower, financial incentives to economically motivated insurgents to change sides, enlistment of local defense forces, intensified regional diplomacy (particularly with Pakistan, as well as with

India, Iran, and Russia), and a willingness to envisage accommodation with some elements of the insurgency. President Obama has sought to distinguish his approach rhetorically from that of his predecessor by downplaying democratization and focusing instead on counterterrorism as the reason for being in Afghanistan. Yet he accompanied this apparent narrowing of the American mission with an increase in the manpower and money devoted to it. Furthermore, the President's immediate

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rationale for an increase in American troop strength was the need to secure the upcoming Afghan elections. Nation-building thus remains at the core of the American strategy for Afghanistan and Iraq, even though counterterrorism is the rationale.

Whether the new administration's strategy for Afghanistan can succeed depends more on its execution than its articulation. Adequate civilian capacity to conduct reconstruction and development activities will be one factor determining success. But once again, the most critical variable seems to be troop numbers—American, allied, and Afghan. The President and his advisors are clearly reluctant to send yet more forces, the allies claim to be tapped out, and increasing the size of the Afghan army and police forces will take time. National Security Advisor James Jones and other administration officials have sought to deflect calls for more

American troops by arguing for a focus on economic development and governmental capacity-building. Those programs are likely to have limited utility in the most contested parts of the country. If the past is any guide, no amount of additional money and civilian manpower will offset an inadequate military effort.

## Options for Institutional Reform

Early setbacks in Iraq and Afghanistan have already caused significant changes in the way the United States approaches these missions. The U.S. military has been given a good deal of money for development and humanitarian-type activities, such as the Commander's Emergency Response Program. Commanders have more flexibility in the use of these funds than do any of the civilian agencies. The U.S. military has also acquired a good deal of civilian expertise through detailees from other agencies and contracting with individuals and private organizations. The Department of State, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and, to a lesser extent, other departments have shifted resources toward these two operations. The State Department is building a reserve corps of government and private individuals ready to man current and future nation-building missions. These various initiatives have greatly increased civilian capacity in the field, albeit at the cost of substantial overlap among the three major agencies involved. Most of these reforms represent temporary expedients, however, explicitly designed to be shed once the current demand recedes.

The hardest fought interagency battles are usually over who pays for what. Issues of this nature can seldom be resolved in the field, whatever the authority delegated to a local supremo, for no local proconsul can exercise real control over anyone's budget except his

own. Indeed, these funding disputes can only be overcome in Washington with great difficulty. The President has sufficient authority to adjudicate policy differences among agencies, but even he cannot normally shift money from one agency to another, nor can he compel agencies to perform activities for which they lack congressional authorization. In recent years, workarounds have been employed to deal with this lack of flexibility. Congress has granted limited permission to shift money from Defense to State, and authorities from State to Defense. The result has been a better alignment of resources and strategy, but at the cost of large-scale duplication of functions and capabilities, and total confusion over longer term roles and missions.

Whether further institutional adjustments are needed (as opposed to more money and people) is a matter of some debate. Experience of the past 20 years suggests that the main problem is not inadequate civilian capacity in the field, but rather the failure at the Washington headquarters level to retain acquired expertise, formulate realistically resourced plans, and successfully integrate the various elements of American power and international influence. If this is an accurate diagnosis, prescriptions for change should be directed primarily to fixing the problem in Washington, and only secondarily in the field.

Fixing the interagency problem in Washington requires both increasing continuity in expertise from one administration to the next, and rationalizing a durable division of labor among the relevant agencies, principally DOD, State, and USAID.

### **Promoting Continuity of Expertise**

As noted, the Obama administration basically picked up where its predecessor left off

in the conduct of operations in both Iraq and Afghanistan, retaining a number of senior officials and key staffers in both the White House and DOD, and thereby avoiding the abrupt drop-off in competence that plagued both of its immediate predecessors. This was, unfortunately, an aberration rather than the norm. We cannot and should not count on future Presidents to behave likewise.

Gyrations in governing capacity reflect not only the personalities of different chief executives but also the nature of the American spoils system, which replaces thousands of senior and mid-level officials every 4 to 8 years. The U.S. military, intelligence, and law enforcement agencies are largely insulated from these periodic purges, on the grounds that security is too important to be politicized. But State, USAID, civilian elements of DOD, and the entire national security apparatus within the White House are not. If civilian expertise is important to success in nation-building, counterinsurgency, and irregular warfare, then there is a case for treating these repositories of that expertise similarly to the Nation's military, intelligence, and law enforcement establishments. Legislation reserving some proportion of Presidentially appointed positions in State, USAID, and DOD, and some number of National Security Council staff positions for career professionals, would have such an effect.

### **Establishing an Enduring Division of Labor**

In the 1990s, the division of labor among national security agencies was pretty clear-cut. The Congress did not like nation-building, and this reinforced the military's own aversion to taking on functions associated with it. Thus, in the Balkans, U.S. and NATO forces confined themselves almost exclusively to peacekeeping,

fairly narrowly defined, leaving civilian agencies to work the underlying political, social, and bureaucratic changes that would make the interventions worthwhile. It was State, not DOD, that organized military training, rebuilt police forces, and arranged protection for local leaders. It was USAID that built schools, dug wells, and improved roads.

In the Bush administration's first foray into nation-building, this allocation of responsibility was turned on its head. In 2002, American forces did no peacekeeping in Afghanistan, but they did train the local military and police, protect Hamid Karzai, build schools, and dig wells. Thus, one administration where the American military did nothing but peacekeeping was succeeded by another administration where the military did everything except peacekeeping. In 2003, this redistribution of portfolios was taken even further, when DOD was given responsibility for overseeing all civilian as well as military activity in Iraq, to include organizing elections, promoting a free press, encouraging civil society, writing a constitution, and expanding the economy.

Beyond the immediate confusion occasioned by these changes, the longer term effect was to promote large-scale duplication in expertise and activity and to create deep uncertainty about agency roles and missions, thus diminishing the incentive of all the agencies to make long-term investments in these areas of overlap. Why spend now to become better at a given task 10 or 20 years hence if there is no reason to be confident that an agency will retain the function? A great deal of supplemental money is going into deploying civilian expertise in Afghanistan and Iraq, but regular funding is not being devoted to long-term development of such institutional capacity.

There is debate over where such capacity ought to be located. Congress, based on its

record of funding, would seem to prefer DOD. The Secretary of Defense has argued that civilian capacity ought to be centered in State and USAID. Others have suggested creating a new agency especially to handle the reconstruction in conflict or postconflict environments and/or beefing up the Executive Office of the President.

To evaluate these proposals, it helps to have some understanding of the various levels of responsibility within the executive branch. They are:

- ❖ setting national policy and ensuring all agencies adhere to it
- ❖ integrating various agency programs to maximize achievement of national policy in a given country
- ❖ executing the programs.

The first of these responsibilities can be fulfilled only by the President and his staff. Cabinet agencies with independent budgets, responsible to different congressional oversight committees, cannot be effectively subordinated one to another.

The second level of responsibility for coordinating program design and execution in a given country is normally performed by the State Department, through its resident chiefs of mission, or occasionally by a Washington-based

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“special envoy.” In 2003, the function was transferred, for Iraq, to DOD. The experiment was not deemed a success. Setting up and managing branch offices of the U.S. Government all over





President Obama's retention of GEN David Petraeus and Defense Secretary Robert Gates has promoted continuity of expertise

the world is a core mission of the State Department. Creating such a capacity in DOD would be difficult and expensive. Creating yet another new agency to perform such a function in conflict and postconflict areas would simply introduce a third player alongside the other two. The new agency would not likely be given authority over military operations or the conduct of diplomacy, so instead of two lead agencies, there would be three.

It is in the area of program execution that most of the current confusion regarding roles and missions resides, as key functions such as police training are continually passed back and forth from one agency to another. This is the area where some rationalization would be most helpful, ideally in the form of legislation laying out a more enduring division of labor among agencies.

To recapitulate, responsibility for setting national policy and keeping all agencies on task should continue to reside in the White House. Responsibility for ensuring the integration of nonmilitary activities in support of that policy within a given country should continue to be exercised by the State Department. Responsibility for conducting those activities should be allocated among a number of agencies based on some judgment of their capabilities. To the extent that other agencies do not have an obvious comparative advantage, reconstruction and development programs should be assigned to USAID. This division of labor should be established in law, leaving the President some leeway to reassign functions, but not to the degree experienced over the past decade.

### **Bolstering Authority and Capacity**

The three layers of responsibility laid out above are how the executive branch is designed to function, and how it does so most of the time. To the extent that it fails to function satisfactorily,

the fault lies at one or more of these levels. In 2003, for instance, President Bush and his staff failed to exercise their responsibility for setting national policy regarding the occupation of Iraq and ensuring that all agencies adhered to it. Instead, responsibility for interagency coordination was delegated to the Secretary of Defense and then to the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) administrator in Iraq, neither of whom was equipped to perform the function.

Often, the State Department is in a weak position to design and oversee implementation of a multiagency strategy for the achievement of national objectives in a given country because it lacks control over the funding. A strong

private contractors. But that phenomenon is by no means limited to USAID. The larger cause of USAID decline is the number of functions that have been stripped out of it and allocated elsewhere. Police training and refugee assistance went long ago to State. Much economic assistance funding has gone to the Millennium Development Challenge Corporation. Combating AIDS in Africa has gone to yet another new independent agency. The Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization has been located in the State Department, and so has the new reserve corps of civilian development experts being organized to man such missions. In Iraq, most heavy infrastructure development was done (badly) by the Army Corps of Engineers because USAID was not thought up to the task.

USAID could be brought back to its former size and capacity by returning these functions, staffs, and budgets to that agency. To signify the agency's enlarged responsibilities, the term *reconstruction* might usefully be added to its title, making it the U.S. Agency for Reconstruction and Development. The enlarged and restored agency might even be given Cabinet status, becoming the Department of Reconstruction and Development. But Congress should continue to provide the funding for all nonmilitary activities in conflict and postconflict environments to State, allowing that department to design the overall approach to civilian implementation, and dole out the money to the agencies best able to meet the resultant demands.

This is how responsibilities for stabilization and reconstruction were allocated in the Balkans in the late 1990s. The President set policy, and his staff kept all agencies on task. DOD confined itself to essentially military tasks and resisted efforts to expand its mission. Funding for nonmilitary activities went

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Ambassador or special envoy can prevent other agencies from doing something stupid with their money, but he cannot make them do something smart. If, on the other hand, State controls the funding, it can always find an agency to conduct the desired program. In conflict and postconflict environments, therefore, Congress should provide the funding for all nonmilitary activities to State, with the intention that State, via the resident Ambassador or Washington-based special envoy, should design and oversee a complex of USAID, Treasury, Agriculture, Drug Enforcement Administration, and agency activities in support of national policy.

USAID today is a shadow of the agency that could send over a thousand officers to Vietnam in support of rural pacification. Some of this decline is due to an increased reliance on

to State, which allocated money to USAID, Treasury, Justice, and other agencies to carry out specified functions. The Bosnia and Kosovo operations were far from perfect, but they remain the most successful such efforts of the past 20 years. The machinery employed then and described herein thus represents a good place to start in considering how to organize government for this mission.

## Conclusion

Modern generals are fond of alleging that there is no military solution to the conflicts they are engaged in. This usually means that they are losing. And they are usually losing because the military, not the civilian, efforts have been inadequate. This was certainly the case in Iraq until 2007 and in Afghanistan until much more recently. That is not to say that the civilian contribution to those two campaigns was adequate. It was not. But the decisive variables in both cases were inappropriate tactics and inadequate troop numbers, not a paucity of diplomats and development experts. The increased quantity and quality of State and USAID staff assigned to Iraq in 2007 contributed to the turnaround, but even the most ardent State Department loyalists would acknowledge that the surge in troop strength and the introduction of more sophisticated counterinsurgency tactics were more important factors.

The occupation of Iraq and the performance of the CPA are often cited as the most egregious example of critical failure on the civilian side of the ledger. “Can’t Provide Anything” was a frequently heard translation of the initials. The CPA was certainly inadequately staffed, poorly supported, and, for its first 6 months, largely unsupervised. Yet despite these deficiencies, that scratch organization managed, during its brief 14-month lifespan, to restore Iraq’s

essential public services to near—or in some cases better than—their prewar level, reform the Iraqi judiciary and penal systems, dramatically reduce inflation, promote rapid economic growth, help broker the largest debt relief package in history, put in place institutional barriers to corruption, begin to reform the civil service, promote development of the most liberal constitution in the Middle East, and set the stage for a series of free elections. Economic growth in Iraq in 2004 was 46.3 percent, the second highest economic expansion in any U.S., UN-, and European-led reconstruction efforts since World War II. By the end of the CPA’s brief reign, unemployment in Iraq was down significantly, spending on health care was up 3,500 percent over prewar levels, and a reformed court system was adjudicating a higher caseload than at any time in Iraqi history. All this was accomplished without the benefit of prior planning

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or major infusions of U.S. aid (American and other foreign assistance to Iraq began to flow in large amounts only after the closure of the CPA) and despite Washington’s inability to fill more than half the CPA’s positions at any time. Measured against progress registered over a similar period in 20 other American-, NATO-, and UN-led postconflict reconstruction missions of the past 60 years, the CPA’s accomplishments in most of these fields bear respectable, in some cases quite favorable, comparison.

What the CPA did not do is halt Iraq’s descent into civil war. With respect to security,

arguably the most important aspect of any postconflict mission, Iraq comes near the bottom in any ranking of modern postwar reconstruction efforts. The CPA shares responsibility for this failure. Different approaches to demobilization of the army and purging of the bureaucracy might have produced better results. But security in Iraq was primarily a military, not civilian, responsibility. And it was officials in Washington, not those in the field, who thought Iraq could be secured by a few thousand American soldiers and governed by a few hundred American officials. Nothing the CPA did or failed to do could have remedied this fundamental misjudgment or compensate for the lack of plans, money, and military manpower initially devoted to the task of securing the country the United States had just conquered.

Modern generals are right to insist on the need for more effective application of nonmilitary expertise and capacity to stability operations, nation-building, counterinsurgency, and irregular warfare. A review of American experience over the 20 years since the end of the Cold War suggests that in all such cases the civilian component was slow to arrive, and seldom sufficient in size or capability. Yet if agencies are working well together in Washington, if defense, diplomatic, and development expertise is being blended at the headquarters level to make well-conceived policy, and if programs across agencies are being meshed for maximum effect, then the experience of the past 20 years, across half a dozen stabilization and counterinsurgency operations, suggests that American civilians and soldiers will also collaborate effectively in the field, despite occasional differences of temperament and shortages of capacity.<sup>1</sup> **PRISM**

## Note

<sup>1</sup> The record of the Coalition Provisional Authority is examined in James Dobbins et al., *Occupying Iraq: A History of the Coalition Provisional Authority* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2009). The record of previous efforts at postconflict stabilization and reconstruction is examined in three volumes of RAND case studies: James Dobbins et al., *America's Role in Nation Building: From Germany to Iraq* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2003); James Dobbins et al., *The UN's Role in Nation Building: From the Congo to Iraq* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2005); and James Dobbins et al., *Europe's Role in Nation Building: From the Balkans to the Congo* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2008).