Inevitable Conflicts, Avoidable Failures

Preparing for the Third Generation of Conflict, Stabilization, and Reconstruction Operations

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Foreign internal conflicts clearly remain a permanent feature of the U.S. foreign policy landscape, especially since the United States regularly participates in efforts to stabilize countries affected by conflict and then helps them recover afterwards. Yet U.S. government officials and the American public in general have difficulty accepting the inevitability of U.S. involvement in such efforts.

To ensure lasting progress and security in post-conflict situations, the United States must adjust its approach from a focus on large military operations to preparing adequately for small-scale, long-term interventions. Most U.S. military deployments since the end of the Cold War have been in "small wars" or what the Department of Defense once called "military operations other than war."[1] Yet the military has usually been more prepared to fight large, technologically advanced wars than smaller contingencies that require greater integration with civilian capacities. As a consequence, each time the U.S. military is deployed to a complex–but "small"–emergency, it has had to relearn lessons on the ground about the best way to manage these types of contingencies. Civilian participation in stabilization and reconstruction efforts is likewise inevitable, but civilian institutions are even less prepared for such work than the military. Lessons learned over the last decade are only recently being institutionalized, through offices like Department of State's Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations (CSO) and the U.S. Agency for International Development's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI). In part this is due to bureaucratic politics. But in large part it is because government officials, Congress, and

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the American public do not acknowledge that the civilian expertise and resources needed to do this work is inadequate relative to the demand.

The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have colored perceptions about whether and how the United States should operate in conflict and post-conflict environments. In many ways, those wars were exceptional: the scale of effort, the number of troops deployed, the number of U.S. casualties, and the amount of money were all far higher than any other U.S. intervention since the war in Vietnam. Many in Washington have concluded that U.S. interventions will not come close to that size any time in the near future, and so the capabilities developed to participate in those conflicts need not be emphasized in future strategic decisions.

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In other ways, however, those conflicts brought to light the key challenges facing the United States as it participates in foreign internal conflicts at any scale. Problems have included civilian-military coordination, international civilian coordination, the inability of civilians to move freely and interact with populations in conflict zones, the inability to measure progress, the difficulty of translating tactical and operational success into strategic success, the desire to do for foreign partners what they should be doing for themselves, and the tendency to take shortcuts. In other words, the pathologies that exist in the U.S. response to the smallest conflicts were shown in high relief in these large-scale conflicts in a way that, in the popular imagination, has reflected poorly on the institutions and

individuals involved in conflict, reconstruction, and stabilization operations.

There is danger, however, to overstating how pervasive these pathologies are. In truth, those institutions and individuals had many successes and made many improvements within Afghanistan and Iraq and in smaller, less-visible conflicts outside of those theaters. In Afghanistan, for example, there has been a 43% reduction of enemy attacks over the past year; Afghan security forces, up 31% from 2010, now lead half of all combat operations; and school attendance rates for girls have increased 67% since 2001.[2] In Iraq, there has been progress in transforming the security sector, and the decline in attacks on civilians has been noted by the United Nations report on the country situation. Long-term stability, of course, will depend on the government's ability to ensure that these new forces remain part of the governance solution, and not an obstacle to development.[3]

Still, after nearly two decades of experience in stabilization operations, civilian and military planners continue to face critical questions. Are lessons focused on more efficient engagement? How can incentives be altered so that the United States is prepared for ongoing small-scale crises so that they do not explode into larger, more complex operations that require far more costly military engagement?

This paper highlights the history of U.S. involvement in these activities, the risks of not being sufficiently prepared, and the basic requirements for effective engagement. The first two sections of this report briefly review the first two generations of U.S. engagement in what was then called "post-conflict reconstruction" and later termed "stabilization and reconstruction." The first generation, from the end of the Cold War to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, was characterized by strong interplay

between the United States and multilateral organizations in coordinating to help countries in conflict. The second generation, from 9/11 to the end of the "surges" in Iraq and Afghanistan, was influenced by the Post-Conflict Reconstruction Commission's work on the essential tasks needed for reconstruction and, later, by new doctrine for counterinsurgency.

After combat operations in Iraq and the end of the "surge" in Afghanistan, we have entered a third generation in which skepticism about the value of and capabilities for doing this work is on the upswing. After a decade of conflict, the public is tired and resources are declining. The report's third section, therefore, considers the current state of the field in light of the political and economic mood of the United States today. The conclusion section provides broad recommendations based on the lessons of the past decade.[4]

The First Generation: 1989–2001

By the end of the Cold War, the United States had been involved in a significant number of military interventions. A tremendous amount of military activities and civilian efforts were allocated to "catching up" with the frequency of these interventions. During this time frame, the United States was engaged in a rapid-fire series of events, including the unraveling of Somalia in the early 1990s, the overthrow of a democratically elected government in Haiti, a full-fledged hot war in the Balkans, and genocide in Rwanda. The interventions were first characterized as humanitarian ones that were authorized by the UN Security Council, where the United States provided military and civilian support to multilateral operations. The United States was engaged in some overseas operations, then referred to as humanitarian interventions, almost every other year during this decade; lessons learned from one conflict or crisis were rarely applied to the

next. From Central America to the Balkans, the common thread was that eventual peace agreements provided a roadmap for reconstruction. This first generation post-conflict reconstruction efforts were also models of partnerships among the United States, the United Nations, and other international donors, including for reconstruction operations on the ground.

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During the 1990s, Western donors began a convening process to review the types of challenges that arose from conflicts in weak and fragile states. International development agencies started to focus their attention on how to work in countries where violence threatened to destabilize the status quo. Loss of Soviet support led to the implosion of many African countries that had served as Cold War proxies, with deeper implications for foreign assistance. In Central America, the wars that had plagued El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua were ending due to the discontinuation of Soviet resources to insurgencies. Eastern Europe's demise also left a funding vacuum, but more importantly, an apparent need to help demobilize militaries, reform the security sector, and integrate former Soviet satellite states into the mainstream of Western Europe. Early humanitarian interventions raised further questions about how to sustain a more stable environment after the initial crisis was subdued. Elections were often used as an exit strategy for military operations, and donors interpreted them as signaling the end of post-conflict efforts.

The World Bank created a Post-Conflict Unit to support both research and short-term funding to help countries overwhelmed by new forms of instability in the absence of former hegemons.

The unit sponsored ground-breaking research by analysts including Paul Collier who created new paradigms for understanding conflict drivers and indicators for potential conflict, which captured the thinking of governments seeking solutions to the challenges of stabilization and rebuilding. Collier's research also found that more than half of the conflicts returned to active fighting within five years, despite reconstruction efforts.[5]

The U.S. government was especially interested in finding a way forward in managing the threat of weak states in a world that had overnight been transformed from a bipolar political environment to one where the United States was the dominant global actor. U.S. government officials began to explore what it would take to equip all relevant government agencies–civilian and military alike–with the necessary tools to transform a society from war to peace, from chaos to a capable state. During this period there was a hope that working with the prevention concept would help the international community to identify the necessary tools to avoid fighting. This rethinking of conflict in the post–Cold War era resulted in a report of the Carnegie Commission on the Prevention of Deadly Conflict in 1996. It opened the way for understanding how the United Nations would become a necessary partner with the large Western donor states in bringing together the operational tools to prevent war.

In the development arena, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) was also caught up in the challenge of how to provide humanitarian assistance in countries emerging from conflict that would be quick, effective, and targeted for immediate political needs. Ordinary tools that USAID had for putting in place programs to support development were considered too long term to help places that were coming apart. In 1993, the creation of the Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) in the Bureau

Two UN Police Officers of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) assist National Police Officers at a checkpoint.

for Humanitarian Response (now the Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance, or DCHA) marked a departure from conventional approaches to development. OTI's mission was to integrate the immediate needs for political transformation with the tools of development to produce tangible results. The office helped to quickly develop programs and disburse resources in places in transition. OTI's ability to integrate its rapid-response model into the mainstream of development programming, however, remained an ongoing challenge in an agency whose culture was more accustomed to working on long-range development.

Throughout the first generation, approaches to societies emerging from conflict were more of a tactical exercise than the result of any strategic thinking about the field. In spite of some important efforts in the Balkans, Kosovo, East Timor, Haiti, Guatemala, El Salvador, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Rwanda, and Burundi, the tendency of the U.S. government was to throw resources at a problem rather than create a government-wide strategy to address specific needs. This began to change in the Bill Clinton administration with the publication of Presidential Decision Directive 56 (PDD-56), which attempted to codify an interagency framework for coordinating

the U.S. response to post-conflict emergencies.[6] The immediate result of this effort was a better operational program in the case of Kosovo. On the military side, the increased mission focus on reconstruction projects was creating tension in an institution that was moving away from the traditional war-fighting role towards a broader integration of stabilization projects. This change was not at first embraced by our soldiers. The so-called military operations other than war became a transformative effort for the U.S. military as the evolving nature of warfare led to a growing role for military support in such activities as community development, elections, and police training. This tension would become quite clear after the invasion of Iraq in 2003.

The Second Generation: 2001–2011

In 2001, the Center of Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) and the Association of the U.S. Army began a project to explore a new framework for post-conflict reconstruction that built on the interagency focus of PDD-56. The goal was to layout a set of recommendations based on lessons from the first generation of rebuilding. The Commission on Post-Conflict Reconstruction included important leaders in the field from Congress, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), scholars, and other international agencies. Based on lessons from first-generation efforts in this field, the project team formulated specific recommendations for the field, including a reconstruction task framework based around four pillars: security, justice and human rights, socioeconomic well-being, and governance. Project leaders recognized how difficult it was to implement the framework due to the dispersion of U.S. capabilities across so many government agencies, both military and civilian. The CSIS project research sought to inform a new policy directive that the recently elected administration

of George W. Bush had promised to put in place on reconstruction. But the timing of the work coincided with the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the beginning of a new phase in U.S. nation-building efforts.[7]

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The 9/11 attacks on the United States transformed the U.S. approach to dealing with fragile states. In Afghanistan, government institutions had been greatly damaged by decades of conflict. The Taliban had taken control of the country, allowing al Qaeda forces to grow and Osama bin Laden to plan the 2001 attacks.

At the outset of hostilities, it was apparent that civilian agencies of government were ill-prepared to manage reconstruction work in a conflict-affected environment. In 2002, as the United States prepared for an invasion of Iraq, and with a war ongoing in Afghanistan, the Pentagon argued that in the absence of an agreed-upon framework for nation building, it should become the U.S. government's focal point for reconstruction activities. By January 2003, President Bush issued National Security Directive 24, formally giving DoD primacy in the post-invasion effort in Iraq.[8] This directive granted the department authority to assert leadership in planning of operations, in spite of misgivings that Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld had expressed about nation building. While there were important bureaucratic reasons that DoD wanted the upper hand in planning, the department in practice was at a disadvantage. It lacked the institutional knowledge and capacity to perform many of the essential tasks in any reconstruction program; had no

experience helping build local government; did not have good relationships with either international or local NGOs, except in terms of humanitarian assistance; and lacked a coordinating mechanism for actions with the United Nations and international financial institutions. While DoD sought an advantage in communication and messaging, it was not very successful in competing for Iraqi hearts and minds.

In 2005, the transfer of authority from the Department of State to the Department of Defense for the management of reconstruction efforts was completed when Defense Directive 3000.05 was issued.[9] This policy committed the Pentagon to develop robust stability operations doctrine, resources, and capacities and defined stability operations in terms of military and civilian activities. While a civilian coordinator for reconstruction and stabilization (S/CRS) had already been created at the State Department a year earlier, in 2004, it was not until 2008 that S/CRS actually engaged in supporting stability operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The U.S. approach to stabilization and reconstruction efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan was at that point firmly established as a military mission. The Pentagon had significant resources for reconstruction activities, but it was also apparent that there would be no short-term fix for stabilizing governance in either Iraq or Afghanistan. This worried military officials who saw their mission as a short-term project.

At the same time that the United States was engaged in Iraq and Afghanistan, other countries were also destabilizing. These situations were being managed by the United Nations, which was conducting its own stability operations, but simultaneously undertaking its own review of how it would continue to work with fragile states in a changed political environment. By 2005, the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and

Change came forward with a set of recommendations that included creating a Peacebuilding Commission among a group of states to support the ongoing needs of fragile states after the immediate security and humanitarian needs had been met. It identified a need for the United Nations to address the prevention of mass atrocities as part of its future work. It published its findings in a report by the Secretary General of the United Nations explaining why new, borderless threats were as problematic to security as threats caused by rivalries between states.[10]

The 2008 elections brought a change to U.S. policy. The Barack Obama administration, with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in the lead, reasserted civilian leadership in the area of reconstruction. With the war in Iraq almost over, and the war in Afghanistan still unresolved, Clinton undertook a whole-of-government review of how the U.S. government could improve stabilization and reconstruction operations, arguing that a diplomacy, development, and defense (or 3-D) approach was essential. Clinton, however, noted that coordination had still lagged behind, in spite of the growing expertise and capacity that existed inside the government to respond to the rebuilding needs. A Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR), which finally appeared in 2010, marked the culmination of thinking on the civilian side for how best to provide policymakers with a means for speaking with one voice in managing the reconstruction and stabilization agenda.[11] This review, however, was more a roadmap than an operational framework for civilian leadership.

The Third Generation?

Now, with U.S. troops withdrawn from Iraq and a departure date of 2014 set for Afghanistan, U.S. conflict and stabilization operations may be entering a third generation.[12] The United States is likely
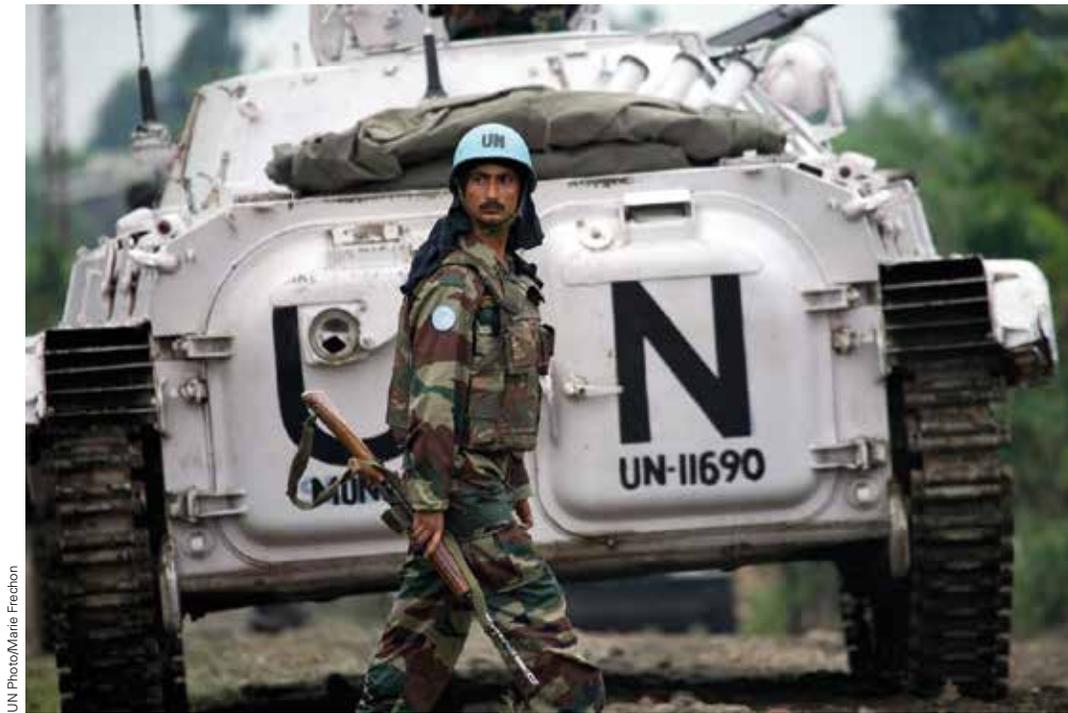
UN Photo/Marie Frechon

A member of the Indian battalion of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic of the Congo (MONUC)

(based on historical experience) to find itself involved in a foreign internal conflict at some point in the near future, and when it does, that involvement will likely trigger a renewed desire to learn and institutionalize the lessons of the past. At the moment, however, this third generation is marked mainly by skepticism including by members of Congress, who fund these activities, and from civilian and military planners, who are still unclear whether the metrics to determine success have reflected the real situation on the ground.

U.S. and international policies and interventions have certainly evolved with mixed results in terms of helping war-torn countries rebuild. Much of this work has not been institutionalized, and the case has not been made to the American public that most U.S. efforts going forward are unlikely to follow the Afghanistan and Iraq model. Nor has the case been successfully made

that the demand for this kind of work is not likely to subside, although the complexity of addressing instability in the future will challenge U.S. military and civilian capacities. Since 1993, the United States has responded in some way to as many as 20 foreign internal conflicts, and twice as many humanitarian responses, every year.[13] The U.S. capacity for conflict and stabilization operations simply cannot meet this level of demand. If limits cannot be placed on the frequency of intervention, then either the capacity for intervention needs to be increased, or the capacity for prevention needs to be increased. As demand continues, the United States has shown that is not always able to balance this trade-off.

Aside from the regional bureaus at the State Department, which have overall responsibility for U.S. policy in particular countries, and USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives, which was created

U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Christopher Hammond/Released

Afghan girls pose for a photo in their school classroom during a humanitarian aid supply operation conducted by Afghan soldiers with the 9th Commando Kandak and coalition special operation forces in Nizam-e Shahid district, Herat province, Afghanistan, Nov. 25, 2011.

specifically to address short-term stabilization needs, the key civilian institutions for stabilization and reconstruction are USAID's Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance (DCHA) and the State Department's new Bureau for Conflict and Stabilization Operations (CSO), which has subsumed S/CRS. DCHA faces institutional constraints as a result of congressional skepticism toward USAID. CSO is a new institution and inherits S/CRS, which was barely given a chance to succeed, limited both by the regional bureaus and available resources.

Outside of the United States, many other bilateral and multilateral institutions are involved in this work. U.S. agencies have not always succeeded in coordinating with them at the strategic level or in the field. But given the declining resources any individual country is willing to contribute to these efforts, burden sharing in

the future will be essential in many parts of the world. The United Nations has acquired enormous experience in this work in the past decades. The Peace Support Office in the Secretariat has been an added complement to the Peacebuilding Commission, functioning as a coordination arm that integrates the operational components of peacebuilding with the planning and strategies needed for UN agency field activities. But individual states have at times relied on the United Nations to take on missions they themselves have wanted to avoid, and UN capacity is limited as well. Opportunities exist not only to improve coordination with these traditional partners, but also to increase engagement with regional organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union; with developing countries who are increasingly organizing themselves through

mechanisms such as the G7+ group of fragile states; and with emerging powers such as Brazil, Turkey, and China, who have demonstrated a willingness to participate in these efforts–but who sometimes have global objectives related to conflict-affected states that do not align with U.S. interests.[14]

Aside from questions about when to intervene and possible partners for cooperation, experts and practitioners have identified many remaining opportunities for *how* to improve engagement in conflict and stabilization operations. There is a growing recognition of the need to move from a sole emphasis on state building and institution building toward a more pragmatic engagement with de facto authority structures, including non-state actors and hybrid political institutions on the ground. This is particularly relevant in conflict-affected countries, where significant territory is often controlled by a non-state actor or a rogue government official. Local and local-national politics in violent and conflict-affected countries, however, are notoriously difficult for outsiders to understand. These types of situations do not lend themselves to military solutions, but require a greater need for police, improved local institutions that manage justice and community-based development opportunities that address fundamental structural needs.

Because civilian development budgets are being reduced, there is also an immediate need to identify strategies and approaches that can do more with less. Experts participating in the CSIS workshops suggested improved engagement with veterans returning from Afghanistan and Iraq; increased participation of private-sector actors; and better utilization of experts in local environments. And almost all experts cite the need for improved interagency coordination in this work. Over the last decade, new security assistance authorities and programs have been created

there will need to be a more integrated approach to security and development that includes both civilian and military actors

under authorities of the Department of Defense rather than the Department of State, and this "has altered the relationship between the two departments with respect to design, implementation, and direction of U.S. security assistance programming."[15] Clearly, new tools are needed to manage the structural issues that affect instability in the countries in question, and those tools that already exist must be fully employed in a way that supports the development of weak states.

Recommendations for the Next Generation:

As this brief review demonstrates, the demand for conflict and stabilization operations is likely to remain a constant for the foreseeable future. The transnational nature of many threats to peace and stability will continue to increase the complexity of these operations, and the United States will need to understand the conditions under which intervention can be successful. Whether to prevent conflicts or to respond to them, there will need to be a more integrated approach to security and development that includes both civilian and military actors. Addressing crises in an ad hoc manner all but guarantees that interventions, whether preventative or reactive, will be more expensive in lives and dollars than they need to be. Six recommendations for building upon our knowledge and our current capacity suggest a way forward.

1: Design planning processes around a set of objectives that are commensurate with existing capabilities and resources. Realistic expectations are essential for the future of conflict and stabilization

operations. Being honest up front about what U.S. institutions are capable of achieving and what recipient-country institutions are capable of absorbing is necessary to avoid raising expectations that cannot be met. Realistic planning will improve the likelihood that objectives are met and that Congress, in turn, will approve resources for future operations. Planning for the "army we have" (as it were) rather than the "army we wish we had" is critical for success. The U.S. government should also fulfill the vision articulated in the QDDR–to ensure that civilian capacity for this type of complex work is developed in a way that supports local country needs. This means building up a strong civilian force from government and the private sector that can be rapidly deployed to help sustain security gains. Planning based not mainly on a country's supposed needs, but on an understanding of that country's capacity to absorb the assistance, is equally critical. Real success is likely to come in avoiding catastrophes rather than creating great societies.

2: Create a plan to build institutional capabilities for prevention and reconstruction. If the short-term focus is on planning around what is achievable, the long-term focus should be on building U.S. institutions with the capacity for preventing conflict, which would reduce the likelihood of future interventions. But success at reconstruction will be determined not only by what the United States can contribute to the immediate needs, but also by the on-the-ground capacity it leaves behind for rebuilding. State-level institutional reforms are important but insufficient. State building has focused too much on capacity and not enough on stability and local legitimacy. The countries in which the United States is operating face serious sovereignty concerns in a way that was not the case two decades ago. The United States must engage

fragile states carefully, supporting actors that are agents of change instead of trying to be the central agent of change. Serious progress must be made in engaging legitimate local ownership. It is also important to expand the base of partners on the ground to include more local talent. Local leaders not only have better knowledge of the environment, the stakes of mission success are also higher for them.

3: Engage emerging global powers on reconstruction and stabilization. Several emerging powers, including Brazil, Turkey, India, and China, have already expanded their investments in countries emerging from conflict. Their approach to assisting countries in transition may not always coincide with that of the United States, but these rising powers can help support and sustain gains that were made through their own resources and knowledge of different regions. For example, India and Turkey can provide valuable development options for helping to prevent places like Afghanistan from falling back into conflict. Similarly, Brazil has been an invaluable partner in helping to train police and provide security in countries such as Haiti. Its use of trilateral cooperation projects has helped leverage its limited resources with U.S. programs in many parts of Africa. China has also been using its own resources to promote economic development in many unstable regions of Africa, while also sending peacekeepers and police to UN missions. While U.S. leadership is still highly valued, burden sharing can mean more effective engagements.

4: Make the private sector a partner from the outset to promote a more sustainable future. The 40 poorest countries are also the most resource rich. Yet U.S. use of loan guarantees through the Overseas Private Investment Corporation

(OPIC), or the way Treasury Department officials help promote credible financial systems, have often exacerbated the economic challenges these countries face. There is a growing recognition that the United States needs to look to partnerships with the private sector in countries that are fragile, but that could potentially emerge as viable nations if technical assistance were coupled with strong incentives for investment. It has taken far too long for this awareness to enter into the planning of many reconstruction efforts, but the presence of the private sector in the early phases of reconstruction planning is now a given. A better understanding of the private-sector role remains to be developed.[16]

Greater focus on local capacity for entrepreneurial endeavors has also led many donors to consider working not only with micro-lending in post-conflict environments, but also in fostering small and medium enterprises (SMEs) as a means of providing jobs and sustainable economic growth.[17] The use of new resources to help local businesses rather than international contractors would be an enormous and constructive change in many weak and fragile countries. The private sector can lead not only with resources, but also in respect for rule of law and good governance. The challenge will be for donors to help balance the needs of local investors with the ongoing requirements for security that enable commerce and industry to flourish.

5: Improve civilian-military cooperation to respond to complex operations that arise not only from traditional conflicts but from crime and violence as well. Urban conflict arising from transnational criminal activity accounts for 88% of the lethal violence that countries experience today.[18] Whether it is the gangs of Central America and Mexico, or the *favelas* (slums) of Rio, or the violence associated with trafficking of drugs and

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people, these types of problems require improved internal security forces–especially policing skills and stronger connections with economic development programs that address job creation and access to education. New types of instability demand a rethinking of how best to prevent conflict through structural changes in the economy and in governance. Lessons learned about rebuilding after war may also help bring local expertise and local voices into the process. Each new problem demands country-specific solutions, and U.S. government officials will need to work effectively with local actors, other donor partners, and international organizations.

6: Operationalize the lessons from Busan and the World Development Report. In 2011, the Busan Conference on Aid Effectiveness, held in South Korea, produced a "New Deal for Fragile States." This initiative, led by 19 of the 40 states categorized as fragile, recommends that institutions such as the World Bank acknowledge that the development of these countries is a critical means for preventing them from falling back into conflict and chaos. The New Deal endorses a common fragility assessment in affected countries; assistance strategies that are locally designed and led; mutual accountability between aid donors and recipients; transparent revenue management by fragile states; and multi-stakeholder dialogue on development priorities in fragile states. It also recognizes the growing voice of the G7+ country ministers, who are now asserting their own demands for development assistance that addresses the specific needs of these poor countries, rather than allowing assistance to be imposed from the outside without adequate regard to individual country needs.[19]

U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Eric C. Tretter/Released

United Nations police guard the main gate at a medical site in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, during Continuing Promise, August 21, 2011.

The 2011 World Development Report, in considering the particular challenges of development in fragile and conflict-affected states, concludes that development actors must mobilize around a coherent, inclusive plan, rather than focus on various parts of the technical institutional reform process. It will be important to invest in citizen security, justice, and jobs, and to address issues such as crime reduction or civilian protection, rather than only emphasizing issues that are seen as directly affecting U.S. national security, like counternarcotics or counterterrorism.[20]

These efforts are not the final word on conflict, stabilization, and reconstruction operations, but they are useful for providing two important focal points for efforts to improve practice. The challenge for the United States and other international donors will be to translate their lessons into operational capabilities. The United Kingdom, France, Canada, and other donors, for example, have been working together to operationalize the World Development Report, and moves such as this should be encouraged among other donors as well.

Conclusion

Since the end of the Cold War, it has become increasingly clear that nation building imposed from the outside is unlikely to create the social capital on the ground necessary for stable institutions. Local leadership, coupled with citizen engagement, has proven the only way to ensure that international investment in stability and reconstruction helps to catalyze sustainable change. Security provision alone is insufficient for rebuilding–the private sector, religious

networks, women's groups, and the international community must all be engaged in creating the foundations for long-term stability. U.S. leadership will continue to be required in the future, particularly when weak and fragile states pose risks to U.S. security. But the future of U.S. efforts in this field may well be focused on addressing new forms of violence, not from wars, but from criminal elements and transnational actors who count on the weakness of states to impose their will on the most vulnerable of citizens in some of the world's poorest places. The recently created interagency Atrocities Prevention Board recognizes the U.S. obligation to prevent nations from committing mass atrocities against their own citizens.[21] Civilian and military agencies will need to develop new tools to address violence and hopefully prevent it. Continued development of U.S. institutional frameworks, and prioritization of international coordination in these efforts, will make possible successful future engagements. PRISM

Notes

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