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Principles for Stability Operations and State-Building

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Principles have their greatest utility in guiding the formulation of doctrine. Indeed, a measure of the adequacy of good principles is whether they lead to the development of sound doctrine.

There is certainly a need for sound doctrine that addresses how to achieve success in post-conflict settings; efforts to regain security, prosperity, and freedom in ungoverned areas; or assisting territories in recovering after catastrophic disasters—whether they result from natural disasters or malicious human activity. I have grouped the principles needed to build that foundational doctrine into three categories:

- **Principles of Process**—preparing government to undertake complex operations;
- **Principles of Purpose**—organizing for complex activities; and
- **Principles of Peace**—guidelines for the transition to establishing safe, free, and prosperous societies.

These principles derive from a very rich body of data, an appreciation for America's historical successes and failures in undertaking complex contingency activities.

Principles of Process

Regardless of the mission, when the federal government as a whole has to work toward a common purpose, when it needs to team with friends and allies or state and local governments and non-governmental organizations, it needs a doctrine to start with. The larger the scale of the operation and the more decen-

Talking Points

- Historically, the United States has done a very poor job of post-conflict planning before and during conflicts.
- In order to be successful in a post-conflict setting there must be a sound doctrine based on principles of process, principles of purpose, and principles of peace.
- First, post-conflict situations require the federal government agencies to work toward a common purpose, which requires principles which guide efforts to engage in concerted action. These principles are principles of process.
- Second, doctrine must drive leaders toward establishing and sticking to a unifying purpose for activities. The unifying purpose of the doctrine comes from the principles of purpose.
- The principles of peace shift the U.S. from a leading role to a supporting role. The purpose of these activities must be based on ideology that will later create institutions.

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tralization required, the more dire the need for doctrine. The kinds of operations we are talking about certainly fit into this category. So any list of principles ought to start with principles that guide efforts to engage in concerted action.

History really informs meeting this challenge. In *Waltzing into the Cold War*, I wrote about the history of Austria after World War II, where the U.S. participated in an occupation—much like it did in Germany. U.S. forces were supposed to be there for two years. They stayed for ten years.[1]

To put this effort in context, I looked at every U.S. occupation going back to the American Revolution (when we tried to get Canada straight) and one of the things I discovered is that we did them all exactly the same. Every one of them was an *ad hoc* affair, and when we were done we immediately purged any lessons that we might have learned. And then after the next war, when transitioning from war-fighters to peacekeepers, we would reflexively start over all over again as though we had never done it before.

I call this the rhythm of habits. Every time we do this, we basically start from scratch. We always do it the same way, and there are some things that we institutionally always do. For example, we always do a very poor job at interagency operations—getting all the federal agencies to work together. We always use our military in much the same way. We do a very poor job of doing post-conflict planning before and during the conflict. And we take war-fighting military structures, which are not really well suited to post-conflict operations, and we try desperately to adapt them. Eventually we figure out that our forces that fought so well in battle are not well equipped, trained, and organized to win the peace—that using the military that won the war to win the fight for peace creates as many problems as it solves.

Needless to say, though, we always, or at least usually, *ad hoc* our way to victory. As Winston Churchill said, "Americans can always be counted on to do the right thing...after they have exhausted all other possibilities."

Perhaps the best example of America's long tradition of not preparing well for complex contingency operations is the role played by the U.S. military. The Army's experience and knowledge about peace operations have never been incorporated into mainstream military thinking in any major, systematic way. For example, the official report on the U.S. participation in the occupation of the Rhineland after World War I noted that "despite the precedents of military governments in Mexico, California, the Southern States, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Panama, China, the Philippines, and elsewhere, the lesson seemingly has not been learned."[2]

After World War I, the tradition of forgetting continued. The Army's Field Service Regulations of 1923 (doctrinal guidance crafted to capture the lessons of World War I) made no mention of the occupation of the Rhineland or that there might be a need to conduct similar operations in the future. The manual simply affirmed that "the ultimate objective of all military operations is the destruction of the enemy's armed forces in battle."[3] FM 100-5, the Army's capstone field manual for the conduct of operations during World War II, did not mention the conduct of occupation duties.

As the United States prepared to enter World War II, the military discovered it had virtually no capacity to manage the areas it would likely have to occupy. In fact, one of the planners' first acts was to root out the report on lessons learned from the Rhineland occupation. The Army did not even have a field manual on occupation management before 1940. A senior general was not appointed to plan overseas occupation operations until 1942—the same year the Army created staff officer positions for division (and higher) units to advise commanders about civil affairs and established its first military government school.

1. James Jay Carafano, *Waltzing Into the Cold War: The Struggle for Occupied Austria* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2002).
2. U.S. Army, *American Military Government of Occupied Germany, 1918–1920: Report of the Officer in Charge of Civil Affairs, Third Army and American Forces in Germany* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1943) p. 64.
3. U.S. Army, *Field Service Regulations, 1923* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1924), p. 77.

Even then, the military undertook its occupation duties only reluctantly. When President Franklin D. Roosevelt wanted to free up more shipping to ferry civil affairs personnel to Europe for occupation duties, the Pentagon complained about diverting resources from its war-fighting tasks. The best way to prepare for the postwar period, the Joint Chiefs argued, "is to end the war quickly."[4] U.S. military forces remained reluctant occupiers throughout the postwar period.

After World War II, the Pentagon largely forgot about the problem and continued to reinvent solutions each time it faced a new peace operation. Fighting the battles of the Cold War remained the military's overwhelming preoccupation.

Arguably, America's military after the Cold War has a better appreciation for its post-conflict responsibilities. It could not forget these missions entirely because they had become a fact of life in the post-Cold World disorder. On average, the U.S. military has conducted an operation related to peacekeeping, peacemaking, or post-conflict occupation every *two years* since the end of the Cold War. With the Soviet menace gone, there was greater pressure to employ U.S. forces for a range of operations, which the Pentagon termed "military operations other than war."

Yet it is not clear that the military internalized the requirements for post-conflict operations. In 1995, the Pentagon produced its first joint doctrine for military operations other than war. The U.S. Army established a Peacekeeping Institute at its Army War College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. These initiatives left much to be desired. They paid scant specific attention to post-conflict operations—arguably the most difficult and strategically important of all the peace activities that military forces might be called on to undertake.

Even the term "operations other than war" was problematic, implying a range of military tasks less strategically important than war-fighting and grouping post-conflict operations (essentially an extension of the war-fighting mission) in with a plethora of tasks that included everything from peacekeeping to helping out after hurricanes.

There was also little special recognition that the military's two most recent major postwar operations in Panama (after Operation Just Cause) and Kuwait (after the first Iraq War) were both deeply flawed.[5] For example, Lieutenant General John Yeosock, who was given initial responsibility for overseeing operations in Kuwait in 1991, recalled that he received virtually no assets or planning assistance for the task. General Yeosock recalled he had been handed a "dripping bag of manure" that no one else wanted. Operations in Iraq today appear different only in scale and duration.[6] Initial assessments of U.S. military operations in Iraq suggest that the military failed to follow its own doctrine or learn from past experiences.

We can do better. In another book, *Mismanaging Mayhem,* I edited a dozen historical case studies looking at interagency operations going back to World War I, covering everything from the pandemic of 1918 to civil–military operations in Vietnam to the response to Hurricane Katrina.[7] Some consistent themes emerged again and again.

1. Washington habitually fails to invest in its human capital. When a crisis or contingency occurs, Washington plays Russian roulette. By happenstance, the people in charge may or may not have the skills to do the job.

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4. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers: Conferences at Malta and Yalta, 1945* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1955), p. 536. For other examples, see Harry L. Coles and Albert K. Weinberg, *Civil Affairs: Soldiers Become Governors* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, 1992), p. 153, and Daniel Fahey, Jr., "Findings, Conclusions, Recommendations and Analysis Concerning U.S. Civil Affairs/Military Government Operations," February 1951.
5. See John T. Fishel, *The Fog of Peace: Planning and Executing the Restoration of Panama* (Carlisle, Pa.: Strategic Studies Institute, April 1992), and John T. Fishel, *Liberation, Occupation, and Rescue: War Termination and Desert Storm* (Carlisle, Pa.: Strategic Studies Institute, August 1992).
6. Steven Weingartner, ed., *In the Wake of the Storm: Gulf War Commanders Discuss Desert Storm* (Wheaton, Ill.: Cantigny First Division Foundation, 2000), p. 25.
7. James Jay Carafano and Richard Weitz, eds. *Mismanaging Mayhem: How Washington Responds to Crisis* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2008).

2. Washington lacks good doctrine, the "lifeline of a guiding idea" to inform interagency operations.
3. Process cannot replace people. At the highest levels of government, no organizational design, institutional procedures, or legislative remedy proved adequate to overcome poor leadership and combative personalities. Presidential leadership is particularly crucial to the conduct of interagency operations.

Guidelines

Guidelines that address these key shortfalls, the problems that can and should be fixed before the crisis or contingency, should be part of the principles. These should include the following.

Principle 1: Develop Human Capital. Organizing these efforts requires a core of professionals skilled in interagency operations. The professionals that lead the effort must have three essential skills:

- Familiarity with a number of diverse related disciplines (such as health care, law enforcement, immigration, and trade) and practice in interagency operations, working with different government agencies, the private sector, and international partners;
- Competence in crisis action and long-term strategic planning; and,
- A sound understanding of the free-market economy, constitutional rights, and international relations.

Establishing this corps requires a professional development program with the following attributes.

- ***Education.*** A program of education, assignment, and accreditation that cuts across all levels of government and the private sector with national responsibilities has to start with professional schools specifically designed to teach interagency skills.
- ***Assignment.*** Qualification will also require interagency assignments in which individuals can practice and hone their skills. These assignments should be at the "operational" level, at which leaders learn how to make things happen, not just set policies. Identifying the right organizations and assignments and ensuring that they are filled by promising leaders should be a priority.
- ***Accreditation.*** Accreditation and congressional involvement are crucial to ensuring that programs are successful and sustainable. Before leaders are selected for critical (non-politically appointed) positions in national and homeland security, they should be accredited by a board of professionals in accordance with broad guidelines established by Congress.

Principle 2: Create Common Space. It is senseless to talk about "unity of command" among governmental and non-governmental organizations. It is even unreasonable to talk about "unity of effort." It is, however, a reasonable expectation to create a "common space" in which legitimate organizations can have an opportunity to engage in those activities they believe will be helpful in creating a safe, free, and prosperous society.

There is no one-size-fits-all prescription for how to achieve these conditions. Indeed, there are many situations in which security is minimal, infrastructure inadequate, and civil society crippled—where creating the common space will be extremely difficult. However, given the existing situation, U.S. efforts should strive to set the conditions for the common space. Teaching leaders and planners how to create the common space must be a priority.

Principle 3: Fight the Fog of Peace. It is often forgotten that there is a "fog of peace" that is equally as infamous as Clausewitz's "fog of war"—which rejects the notion that outcomes can be precisely predicted or that there is a prescribed rulebook for success that any military can follow.[8] Large-scale operations will inevitably include ambiguous and confusing situations with unclear, contradictory, or incomplete information. Operations should be designed to anticipate and account for the most common elements of the "fog of peace," including:

- ***Convergence.*** The most common problem in crisis intervention is too much—not too little—aid. Well-meaning actors choke the scene with people, equipment, and supplies that create

8. Manfred K. Rotermund, *The Fog of Peace: Finding the End-State of Hostilities* (Carlisle, Pa.: Strategic Studies Institute, November 1999), pp. 47–52.

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security and safety risks, logistical nightmares, and confusion that hinders the delivery of help.

- ***Lack of interagency planning.*** Plans fail not because responders have not planned how to respond, but because they have failed to coordinate and exercise their plans with one another. This problem persists both within jurisdictions and across levels of government and the private sector.
- ***Lack of information and sharing of information.*** Knowing the location and nature of problems, victims, and available assets, as well as conditions in the area, can be extremely difficult. The press for time, chaos, stress, and the inability to deliver vast amounts of data in a usable form can all make the problem of dealing with a problem worse.

Any doctrine which does not incorporate this principle will produce plans that consistently fail to meet the conditions on the ground.

Principles of Purpose

Any doctrine must drive leaders toward establishing and sticking to a unifying purpose for activities. Nation-building, for example, is a terrible goal. History teaches that nations do not build nations. Nations build or rebuild themselves. Europe certainly re-built itself after World War II. The Marshall Plan did not come along until 1948, after legitimate governments had been established in the postwar countries of Western Europe and after basic security had been restored. The Europeans themselves directed how funds available under the Marshall Plan would be spent. We get all the credit. They did all the heavy lifting.

Indeed, nation-building is such a complex phenomenon that even practitioners are unsure how they achieved success. U.S. goals should always be more modest and circumspect. The United States can learn from the past that it has consistently ignored. Lessons from the postwar occupations of Japan, Germany, and Austria suggest why the United States succeeded despite troubled occupations. In each case, after a period of over three years, the United States got the fundamentals right.

World War II planners called this the "disease and unrest" formula. They concluded that an occupation force must perform three tasks before reconstruction or nation-building could begin:

- ***Avert a humanitarian crisis.*** The occupying forces must ensure that the population does not die *en masse* from disease, starvation, or exposure.
- ***Establish, reestablish, or support legitimate government.*** The occupiers need to create a political leadership that people widely perceive as credible to lead the long-term reconstruction effort.
- ***Provide domestic security forces to support the government.*** It is not essential that the nation is free of violence, but the occupiers need to ensure that the new leadership has adequate forces at its disposal to begin to establish a functioning civil society.

Once these tasks have been completed, post-conflict operations are essentially finished. The struggle for safety, growth, security, and liberty is not over, but the nation's fate is largely in the hands of its new leadership. In virtually every case of successful reconstruction following an occupation, nations built or rebuilt themselves. Principles of purpose should focus on implementing the disease-and-unrest formula. These principles should hold for any kind of contingency operation.[9]

Principle 4: Determine Clear, Concise National Objectives. Before deciding to engage in operations, the President must articulate specific, clear, credible national interests and objectives. During the operation, the authority in charge of U.S. operations should continue to measure its actions against those objectives. This is essential both for the efficient allocation of resources and to sustain public support. Throughout operations objectives may change. Measuring success will change as well.

Principle 5: Establish Interagency Coordination. Operations require more than Department of Defense participation. They require that multiple U.S. agencies coordinate their activities, especially in the post-conflict phase of the regime change. Issues

9. See, for example, James Jay Carafano, Ph.D., and Dana R. Dillon, "Winning the Peace: Principles for Post-Conflict Operations," Heritage Foundation *Backgrounder* No. 1859, June 13, 2005, at *www.heritage.org/Research/NationalSecurity/bg1859.cfm*.

include restoring basic public services such as water, power, waste management, and public safety.

Transportation and power generation infrastructure damaged by military operations will need to be rebuilt. Refugees will need to be returned to their homes, prisoners of war repatriated, and members of the old regime tried for their crimes when necessary. For the new regime to become self-sufficient, the economy must be restarted and the country put back to work. All of these tasks will require some degree of coalition participation and interagency coordination.

Principle 6: Ensure Unity of Effort. By their nature, operations are multi-agency tasks and usually involve a coalition of other countries as well. Despite the multiplicity of actors, a single agency or headquarters must command the operations.

Splitting authority for operations in Iraq, for example, between military commanders and a civilian administrator was a mistake and complicated the problems of implementing the disease-and-unrest formula.

In contrast, the post–World War II operations remained under a single command authority, and this decision contributed to their success. Unity of command allowed the occupying forces to learn more quickly from their mistakes and to adapt better to unforeseen circumstances. In future U.S. operations, the military should remain in charge until the disease-and-unrest formula has been accomplished. The decision to make the transfer to civilian authority should be made by the President.

Principles of Peace

The disease-and-unrest formula is a prerequisite for any operation. Moving beyond the simple, but difficult tasks the formula requires is essentially the responsibility of the indigenous population. Here U.S. operations must shift from a lead to a supporting role. While the United States might provide a range of support activities from aid to security assistance, the fundamental purpose of these efforts must be ideological.

The ultimate route to a safe, free, and prosperous nation is building a strong civil society—and that is essentially an ideological struggle: Institutions come from ideas. There are three principles that can be applied to winning the war of ideas.

Principle 7: Understand the Country. An ideological struggle requires knowing the political, social, cultural, economic, demographic, environmental, and geo-spatial factors that affect the operation. An ideological struggle requires knowing how ideas are sent, received, and understood.

Principle 8. Delegitimize Bad Ideas. An ideology offers solutions to political, cultural, security, or economic ills. When that ideology is destructive to the civil society, it has to be effectively combated.

Principle 9. Create Credible Alternative and the Will to Prevail. Winning requires offering ideas that provide the tools for building the institutions that will result in a strong civil society and demonstrating the perseverance to establish these institutions.

These principles should serve as the foundation for all U.S. assistance in rebuilding activities. Together they argue for a simple goal—advance the cause of freedom. Here concerted action means a lot more than just holding elections, though free and fair elections, of course, are an important step in building civil society. These principles must be infused in all U.S. operations, advancing legal and economic institutions, liberties regarding free speech and the practice of religion, justice and reconciliation. All these activities are part of cutting the path to a free, safe, and prosperous society.

Final Thoughts

We have relearned a lesson in Iraq that we have learned a thousand other times: Winning the peace is part of fighting and winning the war. Unless we build institutions, doctrine, organizations, traditions, and practices throughout the federal government, we will relearn that lesson again next time.

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