



Afghanistan National Army Military Police Guard Command (ANA MPGC) personnel conduct training on riot and crowd control techniques 17 January 2017 at the Afghanistan National Detention Facility Prison, Parwan Province, Afghanistan. The ANA MPGC conducted an emergency action drill at the detention facility to test response capabilities inside the prison as well as all necessary external support. (Photo by Bob Harrison, U.S. Forces Afghanistan Public Affairs)

Recruiting, Vetting, and Training Police Forces in Postconflict Environments

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Recently, Chief of the Russian General Staff Gen. Valery Gerasimov sent a letter to Chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Joseph Dunford. The letter, in essence, called upon the United States and Russia to cooperate with respect to beginning the process of rebuilding Syria.¹ One of the proposals was to assist refugees as they begin to return to their homes. The initial questions regarding this endeavor were, “What are the key aspects to undertake such a project?” and “Where do you begin?”

Stability operations in postconflict environments (PCEs) can best be defined as efforts to bring peace and security to a region or country. There are a variety of ways to do this. However, it should be recognized that each nation, international organization, or nongovernmental organization that donates funding, personnel, or logistics has its own objectives and vision as to how the instability in a PCE should be resolved. Based on their particular interests, those who contribute will often provide insights from their respective vantage points on how to resolve the problem. Regardless, a safe and secure environment provides the basis for the establishment of law and order, which is the precursor for a government to provide other essential services to the public. Maintaining or reestablishing a safe and secure environment will pave the way for the host nation to provide essential governmental services, emergency infrastructure reconstruction, and humanitarian relief to those trying to cope in a PCE. This article contends that successful stability operations in PCEs begin with security provided by a democratically trained and functional police force.

Initial Considerations for Establishing Security

The U.S. military has a vast amount of experience operating in PCEs, and those who have such experience realize that it is crucial to establish the rule of law in a country coming out of a conflict along with the security necessary to restore the confidence of the population in its government. Security is fundamentally important in a PCE, and the termination of hostilities hinges upon a host nation’s ability to establish security. Although every PCE is different, there is one constant: the indigenous population desires and needs security that is dependent on some form of local law and order. If a host nation fails to meet the security

needs of the population, it will be problematic at best if the United States and the international community decide to intervene later. For purposes of this article, the international community will be defined as “all countries with international influence—that is, any country whose identity and sovereignty is recognized, and that chooses to participate in global discussions and decision-making,” and collective actions.²

Security can best be established by the rule of law. Unless comprehensive security needs are considered and planned for, nefarious actors, to include transnational organizational criminals (TOCs) and potential terrorists acting within the region, will find and exploit potential “brown zones.”

For purposes of this article, a TOC is defined as an organized crime element acting across international borders that involves groups or networks of individuals conducting illegal business ventures. TOCs will employ systematic violence and corruption to further their empires and achieve their goals.³ Brown zones can best be defined as specific neighborhoods or geographic areas where state governments are reluctant to intervene.⁴ One may consider these areas to be “no-man zones,” and leaders must anticipate that personnel operating within these areas will likely encounter a failed, broken, destroyed, or simply nonexistent justice apparatus (i.e., a lack of effective police, judiciary, and detention operations).

It is likely that such a situation will require immediate attention to protect the indigenous population, their property, and their economic livelihood, and the only alternative to providing security may be military personnel who are present within the borders. While this may be a necessary initial step to fill the *security gap* (defined as the “void after the fighting has ceased and prior to the intervention of a trained police force to restore and provide public order”), one must consider

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that military personnel lack the necessary training and experience to conduct civilian law enforcement within a civilian population.⁵ Military forces that are used to fill the security gap are often utilized to prevent an escalation of civil war and disorder, but they lack the mandate or the ability to enforce the local rule of law either by law-enforcement-specific training or experience.

police may be the most critical institution of the state. This is particularly true in PCEs that have experienced prolonged violence.

Members of the international community who wish to assist in a PCE must enhance their capability to deploy and support civilian police to address the temporary needs of the people with an emphasis on

“ ... the ability to restore law and order and treat the population humanely instead of reacting reflexively to provocations that arise with immediate recourse to violence, is key to long-term security and stability. ”

Successful planning and execution of a security plan by the military, other government agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and international organizations are essential to create the conditions necessary for a host nation to achieve initial stability. However, employing military forces to conduct civilian policing is not optimal. Combat soldiers, who by training and experience are taught to achieve goals by using aggressive violence, may not respond like qualified police officers to nuanced situations that require a range of different personal relations and investigative skills. A functioning police force with such skills and training, which gives them the ability to restore law and order and treat the population humanely instead of reacting reflexively to provocations that arise with immediate recourse to violence, is key to long-term security and stability. It is, therefore, incumbent upon the host nation and international community to plan for and develop a highly functional police force with the requisite law enforcement skills from the indigenous population that will enable the host government to establish security on its own.⁶

Police Operations in Postconflict Environments

The United Nations' Department for Peacekeeping Operations has recognized that democratic policing is a responsive and accountable police force that defends basic human rights and is essential for successful transition and long-term sustainable security.⁷ At the end of a conflict, the

security. In many instances, those who are sent to a PCE may be unfamiliar with the concepts of security and police operations, at least as they pertain to that specific region or culture. Such unfamiliarity may negate their ability to assist or train potential police recruits. Additionally, those members of the U.S. military or international community may not understand or appreciate the indigenous perception of how law enforcement ought to operate in relation to the cultural aspects of the county or region in which they are operating. For example, those operating in foreign areas often bring with them an ethnocentric bias that could complicate the establishment of a police force. Often, the international actors serving in a security role will train and model police forces based upon principles that are derived from their own cultural perceptions of what is proper and efficient as opposed to what may be perceived as appropriate in the culture of the population among whom they are serving.

For citizens who live in these troubled areas, a police officer is the symbolic representation of the government in charge; a positive popular opinion of the government as reflected by the police force that represents that government is paramount to establishing both security and the rule of law. Additionally, experience has shown that the success of police forces appears universally linked to a perception of law enforcement that is applied fairly and equally without regard for status, tribal or ethnic affiliation, or personal gain.

It follows that properly trained civilian police, as part of large-scale postconflict reconstruction, have



become much more relevant today. In the context of postconflict reconstruction, the role of the police should focus on “securing of basic law and order operations immediately after the end of the conflict.”⁸ Police should be transparent and accountable for their actions, and they must be seen as legitimate by the elected officials and the population that they serve. Additionally, police at all levels must view themselves as serving the entire population and not merely the government, a select few, or themselves.

Common Components of Police Training

In a nation emerging from conflict, those in power must strive to develop a legitimate police force in the eyes of the population, and this is accomplished through proper police training. Those responsible for developing police training must initially focus on the three areas in particular: investigation, adjudication, and detention while in police custody.

First, police training should focus on investigative techniques that encourage police officers to conduct prompt and impartial criminal investigations. The

Afghan police cadets graduate from training 5 January 2017 at the Sivas Police Training Academy in Sivas, Turkey. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is supporting the Afghan government by training more female police to help women have easier access to justice. As of March 2018, the Afghan female police force reached three thousand officers—steps closer to the Ministry of Interior’s goal of five thousand. (Photo by Igot Ryabchuk; courtesy of UNDP Afghanistan)

training should include basic investigative skills, interpersonal skills, and effective communication skills, both oral and written. In some nations, the police are responsible for interviewing alleged criminals and insurgents. In-depth training on specific skills such as interview techniques for both victims and criminals will prevent abuses and also bolster any subsequent criminal cases for the prosecution with tangible and legitimate evidence. Trainers must ensure that proper interview techniques comport with international humanitarian law. “Any indigenous interview methods in the host nation that could result in a coerced statement must be specifically discouraged and the negative ramifications of such illegal activity discussed during the training.”⁹

Police development and training must also focus on due process and the timely and fair disposition of cases for those who are arrested. Newly trained police officers must understand that they are only one facet of the rule of law. The rule of law is premised on ensuring basic human rights that are reflected in some form of a written law or code that ensures due process. The code of justice should guarantee both transparency and clarity of the criminal justice process in the eyes of the population. This can only be accomplished with the fair and impartial adjudication of cases, to include proportional punishment for those convicted of criminal activity. Police officers must learn to become detached from the cases and simply enforce the rule of law without bias. Police officers involved in an investigation and arrest must accept the adjudication of the case as determined by the courts.

Lastly, police officers in a PCE must understand, appreciate, and plan for the last component of the rule of law—detention. Police will be responsible for holding citizens for a certain period of time. However, unlike developed nations, which quickly produce a person accused of a crime before a magistrate, those held by police in a PCE may be in custody for an extended period

of time. To quote Dostoevsky, “the degree of civilization in a society can be judged by entering its prisons.”¹⁰ To newly trained police officers, this means their jails or holding areas should meet basic human standards. Citizens that are held should be treated humanely and receive proper medical care, food, clothing to protect against climate changes, and the ability to engage with an attorney. Anything less is simply unacceptable.

Recruitment

One cannot overemphasize the importance of properly recruiting, screening, and selecting quality personnel to enforce the rule of law. It is vital for leaders or administrators in a PCE to recruit a diverse cross section of the community that truly reflects the population.¹¹ To do this successfully, eligibility criteria must be established prior to recruiting potential candidates for police training. Criteria such as age, education, criminal record, health, physical abilities, and psychological background are often used to screen candidates. Many Western democracies also consider minority recruiting to ensure a diverse police force that reflects the makeup of a community, thus enabling the police and the



community to better interact and resolve issues together. A trustworthy police force is seen by the public to be effective and fair, and to have shared values, interests, and a strong commitment to the local community.¹²

The recruitment of law enforcement applicants is a necessary but difficult task. One must be patient and understand that this process may take years, not simply

detailed, long-term planning to identify and design strategies that will be used to recruit people of ethnically and culturally diverse backgrounds, train them accordingly, and to monitor their effectiveness.

Police organizations and tactics will often differ from country to country because of historical developments, internal strife, religious considerations, and cultural fac-



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weeks or months. Simultaneously, however, there may be great pressure from the newly formed host-nation government and the international community to rapidly recruit, train, and deploy a new police force. Regardless, it is important that those responsible for recruiting never allow substandard recruits to enter the system.¹³ Effective screening will help identify and weed out undesirable candidates, including those who have been accused of violating human rights or those who may have been involved in organizations who systematically abused the population. Recruiting these types of candidates will create resentment and cause the population to question the legitimacy of the government and newly formed police organizations.

PCEs may have diverse populations. They will be difficult to administer, and each will present a unique challenge for those responsible for setting up a police force. Accordingly, diversity management poses significant challenges for leaders in a new government or those who find themselves in temporary administrative positions. The formation of a new police force requires

tors, as well as different legal systems. What is universal, however, is the need for police in areas of great diversity to gain the trust and legitimacy of the minority communities. Police who are recruited from local populations have the advantage in this regard, both culturally and politically, based on coethnic cohabitation. However, they must always understand that there are competing cultures, religions, national identities that will challenge the newly formed government and law enforcement communities. Police forces must develop the ability to work with the local populations while simultaneously putting aside their prejudices as well as the scars of conflict that often plague those in a PCE.¹⁴

Vetting

Often after a conflict is over, there will be an effort by the host nation or international community to hire security personnel or police officers. The recruiting effort will compile a pool of potential candidates who are seeking employment in the new security sector. In the United States, as well as other Western democracies, many recruits who have passed the prerequisite requirements will then be vetted by a professional in the applicant investigation unit. It is the responsibility of the investigator to ensure a thorough investigation of each applicant, which includes a complete background check. This process is known as vetting. Vetting is best defined as taking the necessary measures to assess a candidate's suitability for public employment in the security forces or police.¹⁵ Part of the vetting process will be to ensure a candidate has complied with the international standards of human rights and professional conduct. It also

Previous page: A Royal Danish Army soldier (left) with Task Force Al Asad hands an M16 rifle to an Iraqi Federal Police Force trainee 15 March 2016 on the trainee's first day of military training at Al Asad Air Base, Iraq. Funding to purchase the equipment was allocated from the Iraq Train and Equip Fund (ITEF), which the U.S. Congress appropriated to provide assistance to military and other security services associated with the government of Iraq. ITEF, facilitated by Combined Joint Task Force–Operation Inherent Resolve, provided essential weapons and equipment to Iraqi security forces as part of the building partner capacity mission. (Photo by Sgt. Joshua E. Powell, U.S. Army)

attempts to eliminate candidates who are personally responsible for gross violations of human rights or serious crimes under international law. This will also include character as it relates to the integrity and trust of the citizens the candidates will eventually serve. Proper vetting is also critical to preventing insurgents and other

a “bad person” for acts of this type. This is more cultural than actual acts of criminal behavior. If an investigator does not understand this dynamic, many potentially good candidates could be eliminated. Regardless, in a PCE, the number of problematic candidates may be high, and those conducting the vetting process might



The host nation, which has the primary interest in training its newly established police force, should ensure that police training is an integral element of the broader process of peace and institution building.



nefarious actors from infiltrating the newly formed police force. Improper vetting would fundamentally impair the institution’s capacity to deliver its mandate that would call into legitimacy the entire organization.¹⁶

Individuals who are accused of or known to have committed gross violations of human rights or serious crimes under international law should not be allowed to continue with the vetting process.¹⁷ Proper vetting is also critical for preventing insurgents and other nefarious actors from infiltrating the newly formed police force.

In “The Art and Aggravation of Vetting in Post-Conflict Environments,” Sean McFate noted that during conflicts or times of turbulence, citizens may conduct themselves inappropriately by acting criminally or taking sides in the conflict. This will result in a large number of candidates being tainted.¹⁸ Unfortunately, it may be hard to identify many of these tainted candidates, as a general characteristic of PCEs is a severely flawed records keeping or storage process. The resources that are available for the vetting processes in Western democracies are not readily available in PCE; vetting resources such as education records, criminal arrest reports, land deeds, credit reports, and employment history simply may not exist. This means that each PCE is unique and may require flexibility and a variety of hiring and vetting standards and processes.

One must also consider culture when vetting. For example, in the United States, it would not mean a great deal for an applicant investigator to hear that a person stayed out late, did not pray five times a day, or played loud music. However, in nations that follow strict adherence to the Koran, it would not be uncommon for U.S. forces to be told that a potential police candidate is

find themselves rejecting most of the candidates.

Finally, not all applicants and vetting processes are perfect, so there should be a review or appeals process that should enable those conducting the appeal to assess all evidence, the pertinent witness statements, and the various versions of events in order to make informed decisions regarding potential candidates.

Police Training Considerations in Postconflict Environments

There are a variety of considerations when training police recruits for a PCE. Initial concerns will include the physical structure of the training academy, the program of instruction (with particular sensitivity to ethnic, tribal, and religious considerations), police equipment, recruit safety, and the permissiveness of the training environment. It is important to consider that while in these types of situations, “cookie-cutter” training programs have often been put in place. However, in complex environments, one size does not fit all.¹⁹

Logistics. While police compensation can be much of a law enforcement budget, funding for the logistical aspects of initiating a police or security structure must also be included. Additionally, maintenance costs must be included when planning for physical structures such as training academics and police stations.

In Afghanistan, funding for equipment and facility construction for the Afghan police force’s training became a challenge for the German Police Project Office.²⁰ The Afghans lacked the necessary physical space, which the Germans had to build or reconstruct. And, due to the economic deprivation in Afghanistan, the police recruits simply lacked the basic police equipment

necessary to begin their training, such as uniforms, personal equipment, office equipment, and police vehicles.

Training. There are numerous opinions on the best way to train potential police candidates in a PCE. The host nation, which has the primary interest in training its newly established police force, should ensure that police training is an integral element of the broader

taught methods that were not especially relevant in the Kosovan area such as a pursuit technique in which two police cars would block a third car. The relevancy of this instruction was called into question since most Kosovan officers lacked drivers' licenses, and therefore, the likelihood to perform such a task was slim. The Germans eliminated such training from the new curriculum.



process of peace and institution building. It is vital that the police force is developed with the goals of reforming, restructuring, and rebuilding an effective, legitimate, and sustainable indigenous police force with short- and long-term law enforcement capacities.²¹

Since there is usually a lead nation responsible for the security line of effort in a PCE, training for host-nation police forces will generally reflect the training received by police in the lead nation, using the lead nation's national curriculum. As an example, a German lead trainer in Kosovo wanted to change the training curriculum and use European standards. He believed that this change would make training more conducive and relevant to the Kosovan context. Conversely, U.S. police instructors

A member of the Iraqi Federal Police leads simulated prisoners during a final training exercise 8 January 2019 at the Besmaya Range Complex, Iraq. The Multi-National Force–Iraq coalition offers training programs in areas as diverse as operational planning, counterterrorism, logistics and sustainment, equipment maintenance, counter-IED techniques, and law enforcement. (Photo by Spc. Eric Cerami, U.S. Army)

Perhaps one of the most important aspects of a program of instruction for police in PCEs is the need to ensure they are trained to uphold human rights and democratic principles. “The United Nations Guidelines for the Effective Implementation of the Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement” has provided standard



To increase the odds of long-term success, police candidates must be recruited from the various ethnic, religious, and tribal organizations, to include gender, that make up the demographics of the nation involved.



guidance for police officials to include the use of force and ten basic standards for human rights:²²

1. Everyone is entitled to equal protection under the law without discrimination.
2. Victims should be afforded compassion and respect regarding safety and privacy.
3. Use the minimal amount of force to carry out one's duties.
4. Be cautious of using forces during peaceful assemblies and, if required, during violent assemblies only use the minimum amount of force that is required.
5. Lethal force should be a last resort.
6. Only arrest when legally sufficient grounds are present and in accordance with all prescribed laws.
7. Ensure detainees are afforded due process, medical care, and access to their families and legal representation.
8. Treat all detainees with dignity and respect.
9. There will be no gross violations of human rights to include extra judicial killings.
10. Report any violations of these tenets to your appropriate supervisor.

The Geneva Center for the Democratic Control of the Armed Forces and the Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe's International Police Standards has authored the *Guidebook on Democratic Policing*.²³ This guideline endeavors to provide potential police officers with their specific responsibilities and obligations with respect to preventing crime and protecting human rights. Democratic policing upholds the values that all

citizens' rights should be protected, and the police should be responsive to their needs.²⁴

Conclusion

The United States and other members of the international community are highly likely to continue conducting operations in PCEs. They have little choice but to maintain an active role to counter, impede, and dissuade hostile states, nonstate actors, and TOCs from creating chaos in PCEs, and stability through security will be a key component of their actions. This will require funding, planning, and executing the development of a democratically trained and functional police force.

To create a police force from its inception is quite challenging. There are a variety of considerations to include in the size of the force; budgeting; recruiting, screening, and training of candidates; equipment and training facilities; and monitoring police activities. Naturally, the contributions of manpower and resources from the international community are paramount to the success of these endeavors and will have to be considered for near-term and long-term planning and solutions.

To increase the odds of long-term success, police candidates must be recruited from the various ethnic, religious, and tribal organizations, to include gender, that make up the demographics of the nation involved. Finally, and most importantly, the basic principle of human rights must be inculcated into a newly formed police force for it to have any chance of connecting with its citizenry, applying the rule of law, and maintaining security in a PCE. ■

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