While the security threats of the 20th century arose from powerful states that embarked on aggressive courses, the key dimensions of the 21st century—globalization and the potential proliferation of weapons of mass destruction—mean great dangers may arise in and emanate from relatively weak states and ungoverned areas. The United States and its allies and partners must remain vigilant to those states that lack the capacity to govern activity within their borders.

—U.S. National Security Strategy

GOVERNANCE OPERATIONS are integral to all military campaigns where establishing a local government over an ungoverned or disrupted political space is required to secure an intended strategic end state. Despite the inseparable role of governance throughout war’s history, the United States has been reluctant to embrace a military role for establishing civil government. Aversion is rooted in concerns about military involvement in a fundamentally political activity, which seems to threaten the principle of civilian control, and the military’s unwillingness to divert attention from its combat arms. As a result, governance operations have been treated as tangential postconflict missions, leaving field commanders ill-prepared for governance tasks and delaying consolidation of a conflict’s political aims.

Reluctance must give way to reality. Governance operations are integral to most phases of war, and their relevance to future conflict is increased by the interplay of globalization, transnational threats, and failing states. Military commanders will continue to serve as provincial governors and city mayors in conflict zones. To meet the evolving security challenge of ungoverned space, a more developed concept of operations for governance is needed to improve the ability of military forces to deliver basic public services while simultaneously developing an indigenous capacity for good, democratic governance.

Governance operations are the activities of military commanders to provide basic public services while developing an effective, participatory local public management capacity to consolidate operational objectives. Governance operations at the local level set the conditions for national-level projects and the ultimate transition to civil authority. Specifically, governance involves a unique set of public management tasks and competencies that do not wholly reside within the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD); however, they must be conducted in austere, insecure, uncertain environments that demand military forces. Therefore, governance operations require blending expanded interagency capabilities through integrated civil-military planning, supported by improved social intelligence.

Back to the Future

Throughout the history of warfare, militaries have assumed the powers of a sovereign governing authority. The United States is no exception. The Army first established a military government in Mexico from 1847 to 1848. It gained further experience during the reconstruction of the Confederate States after the Civil War and in the Philippines and Cuba after the Spanish-American War of 1898. But these experiences were not institutionalized, and the Army was not ready to govern in the German Rhineland during World War I. According to a seminal 1920 report by Colonel Irwin L. Hunt, Officer in Charge of Civil Affairs for the Third Army, “The American army of occupation lacked both the training and organization to guide the destinies of the nearly one million civilians whom the fortunes of war had placed under its temporary sovereignty.” Not until 1940 did the Army formalize its doctrine on military government.
During the interwar period, the U.S. Marine Corps (USMC) assumed the governance mantle as part of small wars in Latin America, including Haiti, Nicaragua, Panama, and the Dominican Republic. The hard-learned lessons of the so-called Banana Wars made their way into the highly regarded, but rarely read, 1940 *Small Wars Manual*. Chapter 13, “Military Government,” provides doctrine and techniques for associated tasks while highlighting the reality that governance operations exist across the spectrum of conflict, including cases “where the inhabitants of the country were not characterized as enemies and where war was neither declared nor contemplated.” Among other influences, the manual reflects tenets of the emergent body of international law governing “belligerent occupation.”

Armed with experience and doctrine, the military remained reluctant to prepare for the inevitable occupations of friendly and enemy territory during World War II. In fact, President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s view of military government as “strange and abhorrent” was consistent with General Dwight D. Eisenhower’s desire to turn responsibility over to civilian authorities as soon as possible. Nonetheless, deliberate planning for governance operations began in earnest in 1942 with the establishment of a Military Government Division on the Army Staff and the opening of the first School of Military Government at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville. Planning accelerated in 1943 when Roosevelt reluctantly shifted responsibility for occupation from the U.S. Department of State (DOS) to the U.S. Department of War. On the European front, theater planning culminated in December 1944 with the publication of a draft of the *Handbook for Military Government in Germany*. Genuinely successful occupations of Germany and Japan and an expansion of the laws for belligerent occupation in the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 portended a strong future for military governance operations.

During the Cold War and immediate post-Cold War periods, however, focus shifted from wars of occupation to nuclear war, revolutionary war, and peace operations. Officially, Army Civil Affairs (CA) gained responsibility for governance. In reality, training and doctrine withered while Civil Affairs prepared for the humanitarian-assistance role. Training disappeared entirely, while guidance shrank to a few paragraphs in field manuals and joint doctrine. As a result, military commanders performed governance tasks on an ad hoc basis during operations in Grenada, Panama, Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, and Afghanistan.

Operation Iraqi Freedom offers the most recent and compelling case for renewed attention to governance operations. The ability of military commanders to simultaneously combat insurgents and govern communities after the fall of Baghdad in April 2003 is more a testament to their flexibility and problem-solving skills than it is to deliberate planning. Civil Affairs teams prepared to deliver humanitarian relief were instead opening banks, setting up school boards, and clearing out roaming dogs.

Military commanders governed Iraqi provinces and towns for several weeks before the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA) and, later, the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) were established. These initial local efforts were not guided by theater-level policy or doctrine, however, nor were they linked to an overall concept of governance for Iraq. For example, Special Forces Major Jim Gavrilis’s only guidance during his administration of a Sunni city and the western portion of the Al Anbar province in March and April 2003 was Central Command’s mission statement. Gavrilis’s initial successes were ultimately reversed “because no real guidance ever materialized, and there was no CPA representative at that level to take over once he departed.” The limited civil-military planning generated false starts, wasted resources, and ultimately delayed the translation of operational victory into strategic success.

Ungoverned Space

Governance operations are not confined to wars of occupation. They also emerge from ungoverned political space. As described in the *United States National Defense Strategy*, “The absence of effective governance in many parts of the world creates sanctuaries for terrorists, criminals, and insurgents.
Many states are unstable, and in some cases, unwilling, to exercise effective control over their territory or frontiers, thus leaving areas open to hostile exploitation.\(^{15}\)

Tomorrow’s threats breed and prosper in the ungoverned space of failing states where terrorists find sanctuary, humanitarian crises grow, and the illegal trade of drugs, guns, and humans flourishes. As a result, military operations across the spectrum of conflict, including humanitarian assistance, peace enforcement, counterinsurgency, and others, will include a governance component. Among many contemporary examples, the ongoing Combined Joint Task Force Horn of Africa, established in October 2002, combines intercepting Al Qaeda operatives with operations “designed to strengthen the ability of local governments” to improve social conditions and undercut the spreading influence of Islamic extremism.\(^{16}\)

Across the security landscape, the problem of ungoverned space is growing. A recent World Bank study of governance in 196 countries cautiously asserted “evidence is suggestive of deterioration, at the very least in key dimensions such as control of corruption, rule of law, political stability and government effectiveness.” Further analyses from the Institute for National Security Studies indicates approximately 50 percent of the 196 countries evaluated by the World Bank qualified as weak, very weak, or failed.\(^{17}\) Not surprisingly, these states are concentrated in the strategic ghettos of Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. Of the remaining states, a quarter rated as fair, leaving only about 20 percent of the surveyed countries in the categories of excellent and good.\(^{18}\) Out of 90-plus failing states, “terrorist groups, as well as insurgent and criminal organizations, are located in the remote parts of more than 20 countries.”\(^{19}\) Over the last 20 years, U.S. military deployments have been with few exceptions to very weak or failed states.\(^{20}\) This is an unremitting trend that carries with it a burden of governance.

Trends in governance also provide clues to the characteristics of the future operating environment. The battlespace for governance operations will be turbulent, creating uncertainty for planners and commanders because of complexity and rapid change. Complexity refers to the number of battlespace features relevant to a governance line of operation.\(^{21}\) Battlespace clutter is increased for governance operations since they most often occur in messy urban terrain with its associated decaying infrastructure, impotent public service capacity, and wide range of actors vying for control of resources. The governance battlespace is also dynamic; features change rapidly over time. Given the inherent political character of governance, allegiances shift, resources dry up, and public support oscillates. Moreover, persistent media scrutiny, pressure to deliver services, and high stakes associated with political transitions elevate uncertainty. While uncertainty cannot be eliminated, it can be mitigated with a clear concept of operations.

**Concept of Operations**

Governance operations provide public management of disrupted political space, enabling other stabilization tasks such as infrastructure recovery, humanitarian relief, and public security. Governance is a distinct type of operation that builds on past and existing doctrinal concepts. From the World War II era, governance draws on the military government experience and Army and USMC doctrine. From the post-Cold War period, governance draws on service and joint civil affairs doctrine for civil administration and postconflict reconstruction. Future governance operations will entail activities and competencies that deliver short-term results while developing an enduring local capacity. Finally, governance operations set the conditions and facilitate the transfer of local public authority to another agency or to local officials—they win the peace.

Governance is the capacity to deliver essential public services. It encompasses the institutions and rules for the effective allocation of resources in a target community; it is a political decisionmaking process. Public management is the function of governance at the local level and is considered effective when local governments have the “technical know-how, capacity, and financial resources to sustain delivery of public services at levels satisfactory to citizens.”\(^{22}\) Governance is participatory, or democratic, when the political process is competitive, civil society is active, and government institutions are transparent and accountable. According to the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), governance is “good” when a government
is able to “maintain social peace, guarantee law and order, promote or create conditions necessary for economic growth, and ensure a minimum level of social security.”

Applying the definitions to the military, governance operations are the activities of military commanders to provide basic public services while developing an effective, participatory local public management capacity in order to consolidate operational objectives. In ungoverned situations, communities are primarily concerned with execution—the effective short-term delivery of public services. Because of persistent violence and limited access, the military is often the only potent authority until civil capabilities can be brought to bear or built. At the municipal level, commanders are at once the mayor, city council, magistrate, and city manager.

Practical necessity, as well customary international law, require commanders to provide for public order and the general welfare of the population. Even so, there is a necessary distinction between governance operations in friendly versus hostile or occupied territory. The former is more likely to occur pursuant to humanitarian or stabilization missions that have the support of the national government(s) involved and/or with international sanction in the case of collapsed states. In these cases, governance operations will seek to restore the legitimate local governing authority. In hostile or occupied territory, international law guides governance operations, and they are subject to the occupying power’s authority. Most likely, the military will work to establish local governance but will not be empowered to determine the final governing authority.

Increasingly, the operation’s strategic end state goes beyond effective governance to include the added expectation for good, participatory government. Building government capacity, and ensuring broad participation in reconstruction. Commanders reestablish the presence of the state while pursuing the demilitarization of local politics. On the socio-economic front, commanders restore or oversee the restoration of basic services and revive economic activity. For example, in 2003-2004, 1st Armored Division brigade commanders governed Baghdad suburbs while the division’s governance support team implemented a Baghdad Citizen Advisory Council System in cooperation with the CPA.

Governance operations that focus only on execution at the expense of developmental work risk the campaign’s overall objectives.

Governance operations involve execution and developmental activities, which enable and align other stabilization and reconstruction tasks. During execution, the first governance task is to determine and prioritize the needs of the local community. The needs assessment is a structured process that involves a technical assessment of recovery needs and provides “a platform for national and international actors to agree on joint principles, define their commitments, and prepare their activities.” More important, it demands direct involvement from the community. Former military governor of Karbala province, Iraq, USMC Lieutenant Colonel Matthew Lopez, the commanding officer of the 3d Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, highlighted this point in July 2003: “I have many groups telling me what all the problems are: crime, security, unemployment, food. What I’m looking for is leaders in the community who can also help me to solve these problems.”

Translating needs into solutions is the job of public management. Public management encompasses all the activities to develop, implement, and enforce the administrative laws, regulations, and policies that guide the delivery of services. The first days and weeks are the most critical to avoiding negative ripple effects. Early governance operations are personnel and resource intensive and might require military units to act in unfamiliar roles. Rapid results to build momentum and demonstrate potency require the ability to quickly distribute resources across multiple communities in an area of operations. Moreover, one of the military commander’s first acts should be a public statement that at a minimum clarifies intentions, jurisdiction, applicability of local laws, the role of
indigenous institutions, and penalties for violating ordinances. Other pressing implied tasks include the preservation of public records; identification of civil administrators; initiation of media relations; and the opening of financial institutions, markets, hospitals, and schools. Over the long term, public management includes budgeting and cost analysis, urban planning, civil service management, and public-sector quality control. As capacity is built, the military commander increasingly delegates these tasks to other agencies and local officials.

Commanders can facilitate speed to transition and consolidation of political aims through three interrelated developmental imperatives: decentralize, build capacity, and democratize. The commander has a role in setting these in motion and supporting progress, but is unlikely to see the end results.

Decentralization. Decentralization, probably the most politically charged activity, involves handing over power from the central to local government along political, financial, and administrative lines. The process brings government closer to the problems and its constituents, allowing for tailored solutions while holding officials accountable. Decentralization also carries risk. As witnessed in Iraq as part of a program to extend local participation, the Citizen Advisory Council System empowered local elites, but also generated corruption and conflict over scarce resources. USMC military governors were dealing with similar problems before the CPA initiated its governance programs. Within the first 2 weeks of July 2003, the first postwar Iraqi governors of Karbala and Najaf were ousted for misappropriation of funds and kidnapping. Striking the right balance between a controlled, yet slow process and early success is the greatest challenge. Of course, decentralization is only meaningful if the central government has capacity to transfer. In failing states (Somalia and Haiti) the government is impotent at federal and local levels.

Building capacity and democratization. The long haul of decentralization is complemented by building local capacity and expanding participation. In addition to linking resources with training, capacity is built by expanding revenue-generating authority and engaging local officials and citizen groups in policymaking. The latter buttresses democratization at the local level, which seeks to increase transparency, accountability, and responsiveness by—

- Creating opportunities for citizen participation.
- Establishing a legal basis for local government associations.
- Opening public meetings, records, and information to the media and citizens.
- Strengthening media relations.
- Expanding the net of participation to include women and minorities within a cultural context.
- Promoting partnerships among local government, civil society, the private sector, and other groups.

Developing effective, good, participatory local governance enables progress in other stabilization and reconstruction areas. In turn, garbage removal, clean water, and public security strengthen governance—a reinforcing cycle the military initiates and sustains.

Preparing for Governance

The governance experience the United States is currently gaining in Iraq and Afghanistan can serve as a foundation for future operations in ungoverned space. Preparing the force requires initiative in three areas: developing governance competencies in the right organizations for the right tasks, integrating skills sets through improved civil-military planning, and placing increased emphasis on social intelligence.

Developing competencies. Proficiency in governance operations requires the military to update past programs and the civilian sector to adapt existing expertise to a new battlespace. For the military, the way forward begins with recognizing the central role of governance in consolidating objectives and continues with emphasis on leadership. The commander is sovereign under law and by necessity until transition. Former Central Command commander General Anthony Zinni clarifies: “On one hand, you have to shoot and kill somebody; on the other hand, you have to feed somebody. On the other hand, you have to build an economy, restructure the infrastructure, and build the political system. And there’s some poor lieutenant colonel, colonel, brigadier general down there, stuck in some province with all that saddled onto him, with nongovernmental organizations and political wannabes running around, with factions and a culture he doesn’t understand.”

In addition to problem-solving skills, commanders need a deep understanding of the local battlespace, insight to working with civilian organizations, and basic public management knowledge. Minimal areas of expertise include those described earlier with...
emphasis on the exercise of military law, supervision of local officials, collection and expenditure of revenues, and preservation of personal and property rights.\textsuperscript{40} Know-how should be combined with practice in solving municipal problems as part of professional education and staff training programs. More important, the commander must provide a clear statement of intent to guide street-level decisionmaking and the alignment of other stabilization and reconstruction tasks.

Concentrating all the expertise of governance in the commander is neither desirable nor feasible. Functional responsibility for advising the commander and running governance programs has traditionally belonged to and should remain with Civil Affairs. However, changes in structure, numbers, and training must be addressed. Regarding structure, 96 percent of Army and 100 percent of USMC CA personnel were in Reserve units as of 2005.\textsuperscript{41} One implication of the limited activation period for Reservists is the rapid exhaustion of a specialty that is required well beyond its 2-year commitment.\textsuperscript{42} Additional CA Active or Reserve units are being created to meet the pressing and growing demand.

We should also revive governance training. Reflecting the peace operations focus of the 1990s, CA training in preparation for Operation Iraqi Freedom focused primarily on humanitarian relief. Training programs are already being adapted; however, it is not clear that they are taking full advantage of the curriculum from the World War II-era School of Military Government, the doctrine and techniques captured in the \textit{Handbook for Military Government or Small Wars Manual}, and the lessons of past experience.\textsuperscript{43} In addition to general governance training, each CA unit should recruit and develop a core cadre with public management (city/county managers, municipal administrators, public utility managers) expertise. The need to significantly expand military Civil Affairs can be offset in part by developing an expeditionary civilian capacity. Among U.S. agencies, USAID offers a repository of expertise commanders can tailor for governance operations. Specifically, a decade’s worth of expertise in the Office for Democracy and Governance (DG) should be matched with the flexibility of the Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI).\textsuperscript{44} Prior to military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, the DG worked primarily in transitional countries that had secure, receptive programming environments.\textsuperscript{45} In addition to relying primarily on private-sector contractors with minimal conflict-zone experience, a cumbersome and unresponsive spending authority hindered the effectiveness of the DG.\textsuperscript{46} Nonetheless, the DG knows governance development and has established relationships with core private-sector organizations with in-demand governance skills.\textsuperscript{47}

Enter OTI. This USAID office is specifically chartered to deliver quick results in dynamic situations, including postconflict reconstruction. In addition to a “culture of risk-taking, political orientation, and swift response,” OTI has a unique budgeting authority that allows immediate spending through rapid, competitive contracting and direct grants to local organizations.\textsuperscript{48} The future for USAID lies in finding the right balance between an organic, expeditionary governance capacity and a pool of readily available contracting expertise that can be integrated with military operations. Even with organizational change, the security situation will likely constrain civilian capability during the first days and weeks. This reality, as well as the mix of civil-military expertise, supports a military emphasis on execution during initial intervention complemented by a civilian focus on development over the long term.

\textbf{Improving civil-military planning.} Integrated civil-military planning is required to link civilian expertise with the military’s capacity for early action in ungoverned space. Progress is underway at the national level. In November 2005, DOD released Directive 3000, establishing stability operations as a core military mission that includes developing local governance.\textsuperscript{49} The directive charged the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy with developing policy
and identifying required capabilities. Within DOS, the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS) was established in July 2004 with a broad mandate from the U.S. Secretary of State to “manage resources, planning, and development of policy options to respond to failing, failed, and postconflict states.” Its meager 30-member staff includes officials from USAID, the CIA, the U.S. Department of the Treasury, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the Joint Forces Command. Among S/CRS’s ambitions is the ability to “deploy personnel and resources in an immediate surge response,” suggesting a need to significantly expand its staff. National-level coordination is essential to coherent policy, clear political objectives, and coordination with a wide range of international governmental and nongovernmental organizations.

Healthier interagency coordination is an important first step toward improving civil-military planning and execution at the operational level. The next steps include deploying S/CRS teams with governance expertise to regional combatant commands in order to participate in campaign planning and interagency participation in joint military exercises with a governance component. During execution, experience with Provisional Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan and Governance Support Teams in Iraq validates embedding civilian expertise with CA personnel and military units. When security does not allow embedding, information technology offers a reachback option for CA units to tap subject matter expertise.

**Emphasizing social intelligence.** Pervasive local knowledge, or social intelligence, is a critical enabler for governance. The battlespace is unique for every operation. Social intelligence goes beyond culture to include collection and analysis of socioeconomic conditions, political institutions and affiliations, and demographic characteristics. Cultural analysis is gaining prominence; however, most current efforts mistake insight to customs for actionable intelligence. Instead, culture should be operationalized to address the underlying value system enacted as behavioral norms. Not eating with your left hand is a custom; loyalty to one’s family over personal needs is a value.

Political analysis looks at the tradition of local governance as well as the web of relevant stakeholders. A community’s history with local governance, including the degree of decentralization, extent of participation, and existing capacity, are all prerequisites to planning. An analysis of the individuals and organizations with a stake in the outcome helps commanders navigate the complex social network of relationships that exert influence on the development process and end state. Demographic and socioeconomic analysis addresses the changing composition of the population in relationship to relevant identity-based characteristics (religion, ethnicity, age) and human security concerns (unemployment, health care, education). Finally, social intelligence must be scalable from the theater to the neighborhood.

**Forging a Capability for Governance**

Governance operations reconcile political ends with civil-military means. The dark dynamics of globalization are eroding state sovereignty and expanding the terrain of ungoverned space. The U.S. military is obliged to forge a capability for governance to consolidate political aims across the emergent security landscape. To this end, this concept of governance operations focuses on delivering basic public services and building local capacity in anticipation of transition to a civil administration.

Preparing the force begins with the commander and continues by reviving and updating governance expertise in Civil Affairs and creating a complementary civilian expeditionary capacity. More important, the new mix of competencies must be integrated through coherent, street-smart civil-military campaign planning.

**NOTES**

7. Ibid.
8. The Hague Convention (IV) Respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land. Annex to the Convention, 18 October 1897, requires the occupying power to "take all the measures in his power to restore, and ensure, as far as possible, public order and safety, while respecting, unless absolutely prevented, the laws in force in the country” (W. Michael Reisman and Chris T. Antoniou, eds., The Laws of War [New York: Random House, 1994], 232).
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