



U.S. marines guarding their camp (*foreground*) watch Iraqi civilians looting a government warehouse 9 April 2003 on a main road leading into Baghdad in a southeastern suburb of the Iraqi capital. Initial reluctance by U.S. forces to immediately assert control over domestic law enforcement after the fall of the Saddam Hussein regime undermined the Iraqi population's confidence in the competence and willingness of the United States to assure its safety while also encouraging the rise of insurgent and criminal groups, which emerged in part because of an unfilled security vacuum. (Photo by Laurent Rebours, Associated Press)

Government versus Governance

Why the U.S. Military Must Understand the Difference

Maj. Jennifer Jantzi-Schlichter, U.S. Army

When a country is being subverted it is not being outfought; it is being out-administered.

—Bernard B. Fall

The American experience in war has shown that, despite superior combat power and capabilities, the United States cannot win wars through force alone. For example, while the United States was successful in completing all phases of a stability campaign as we know them today following World War II, a process that established the foundation for peaceful prosperity in Germany and Japan that has lasted for more than seventy years, it currently struggles in Iraq and Afghanistan to establish stability due in large measure to a lack of planning and preparation for postconflict state building.¹

While both conventional forces and special operations forces have been tasked to build and foster government capability in those countries, writ large, the U.S. military has thus far not been able to achieve desired effects, which has resulted in prolonged wars in Iraq and Afghanistan that the United States continues to fight with marginal success.

This article argues that there are two main reasons that the U.S. military has been unable to achieve success in building sustainable governments in those countries. The first is because the U.S. military has failed to differentiate between government and governance. The second, which stems from the first, is that the military did not effectively train and educate its personnel on how to execute the task of governance—a failure that continues to institutionally persist within training and education given to U.S. military personnel even today.²

Reengineering Government as the Wrong Objective

Historically, U.S. activity in Iraq and Afghanistan has been largely focused on attempting to build democracies and democratic government institutions in the Western mold such as election processes, security structures, the rule of law, and new host-nation capitalist structures to promote Western-style market-driven economies.³ Despite a continued focus on reconfiguring core functions of government to emulate Western democratic models and institutions, the governance in Iraq and Afghanistan remains unstable. One reason for this is that the U.S. military has been overly focused on attempting to rebuild

those governments into democracies using culturally unviable models rather than examining and using the traditional governance structures already in place and building upon what has traditionally been successful. Another reason is that the U.S. military would rather focus on conducting combat operations than conducting postconflict stabilization actions, possibly because stabilizing a nation and rebuilding governance is viewed as more difficult than defeating the enemy on the battlefield.⁴

Government versus Governance

To more clearly understand why the U.S. military has failed to build sustainable governments in Iraq and Afghanistan, it is important to distinguish the difference between governance and government. The UN defines governance as “the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented (or not implemented).”⁵ The UN further articulates,

Governance is the result of interactions, relationships, and networks between the different sectors (government, public sector, private sector, and civil society) and involves decisions, negotiation, and different power relations between stakeholders to determine who gets what, when, and how. The relationships between government and different sectors of society determine how things are done and how services are provided. Governance is, therefore, much more than government or “good government” and shapes the way a service or any set of services are planned, managed, and regulated within a set of political social and economic systems.⁶

U.S. military doctrine has definitions of governance as well that clearly differentiate it from the government, though more narrowly than the UN. Joint Publication (JP) 3-07, *Stability*, defines governance as,

The state’s ability to serve the citizens through the rules, processes, and behavior by which interests are articulated, resources are managed, and power is exercised in a society, including the representative participatory decision-making processes typically guaranteed under inclusive, constitutional authority.⁷

In contrast, the UN defines government more broadly as follows:

Government is one of the actors in governance. Other actors involved in governance vary



depending on the level of government that is under discussion. In rural areas, for example, other actors may include influential land lords, associations of peasant farmers, cooperatives, NGOs [nongovernmental organizations], research institutes, religious leaders, finance institutions, political parties, the military etc.⁸

There are other key terms that are often used alongside governance and government such as stabilization and reconstruction that need to be precisely defined in order to analyze the flawed U.S. approach. To prevent confusion regarding the usage of each, JP 3-07 defines stabilization as,

The process by which military and nonmilitary actors collectively apply various instruments of national power to address drivers of conflict, foster host-nation resiliencies, and create conditions that enable sustainable peace and security.⁹

Military contributions to stabilization consist of those various military missions, tasks, and activities conducted outside the U.S.

Afghan guards provide security for the Khost-Gardez National Highway construction project 30 March 2010 in Afghanistan. The project, which included the creation of an all-weather national highway by building bridges, causeways, and drainage structures, and asphalt paving to international standards, was completed in December 2015. (Photo courtesy of U.S. Agency for International Development)

in coordination with other instruments of national power to maintain or reestablish a safe and secure environment, provide essential governmental services, emergency infrastructure reconstruction, and humanitarian relief.¹⁰

Therefore, there is agreement that governance is a concept that comprises a range of government functions and institutions, stabilization activities, and reconstruction. Thus, stabilization operations are understood to be essential elements to establish governance and build governments. Similarly, reconstruction is described as a subelement of stabilization that involves rebuilding damaged physical and government infrastructure and restoring essential services.¹¹

Governance, therefore, is an overarching concept that ties all such elements together by integrating the activities of the inherent networks, relationships, and interactions that exist; the means of negotiation; power sharing; and the balance between formal and informal leadership. It describes how and why things get done, taking into consideration the values and leverage of the local population.

Role of Civil Society Organizations

To be successful, governance must involve members of the local population in the stabilization process by giving them a platform for involvement. One key component of this process is the use of what are termed civil society organizations (CSOs). CSOs exist in multiple forms in most societies to channel voluntary public participation and the interests and concerns of the population to influence public policy, provide checks and balances to governmental power, gain access to public resources, and prevent social abuse. Some examples of CSOs include faith-based groups, tribal and ethnic organizations, media outlets, and women's and minority advocacy groups. Other CSOs may involve social, sports, and recreation organizations, charities, youth groups, labor unions, noncommercial business associations as well as organized social movements and organizations that express opinions on government policy.¹²

The Mexican War: Effective Governance

While the United States currently struggles in governance and stabilization in Iraq and Afghanistan, there are significant examples from the past in which the United States successfully executed stabilization and reconstruction tasks to produce effective governance. These include one notable example in the early history of the U.S. military derived from the Mexican War. An examination of U.S. actions during and after the Mexican War can provide valuable insight to the U.S. military with regard to its planning and operations for the future to achieve greater success in establishing postconflict governance.

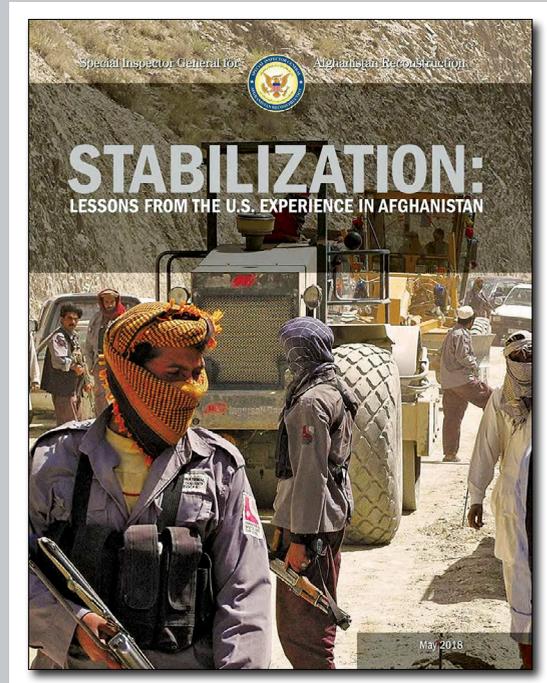
Gen. Winfield Scott's leading role during the Mexican War was largely conducive to the successful execution of a postconflict stabilization campaign by a young United States that focused on advising and assisting the Mexican population and government leadership on improving methods of governance.

Before the invasion of Mexico, Scott carefully studied Napoleon's invasion of Spain, observing how the terrible conduct and poor discipline of the French army resulted in the uprising of Spanish irregulars. This uprising led to the death of over three hundred thousand French soldiers, which was drastically higher than the French estimate of only twelve thousand, and the French withdrawal from Spain.¹³

Based on his research, Scott recognized and prioritized the importance of disciplined soldiers and their respect toward the local population. Additionally, because his army of regulars and volunteers was militarily outnumbered by the Mexicans, Scott knew that earning the trust and loyalty of the local populace would be essential for success. Consequently, Scott emphasized the importance of providing for the basic needs of the population in a more effective way than the Mexican government itself.¹⁴ To accomplish these goals, before Scott's invasion, he drafted his plan for martial law (General Order No. 20), which established the rules and regulations for postconflict occupation, applying them equally to U.S. and Mexican soldiers and civilians.¹⁵ This planning prepared Scott for postconflict governance and the conduct of stabilization operations.

In March 1847, Scott's army achieved its first victory in Veracruz and immediately put General Order No. 20 into effect. His first priority was to set up food distribution to the locals, who had suffered throughout the siege. Additionally, he made several public proclamations, the first being that the United States was a friend to the Mexicans and would abolish the harsh treatment that existed under the Mexican government.¹⁶ Following through with this plan of action required strict discipline from his soldiers, which meant holding them accountable for all crimes and infractions as articulated in General Order No. 20. For example, if a soldier was caught stealing, he was imprisoned in the local town jail in the same manner as Mexican thieves.¹⁷ This created a transparent system, demonstrating to everyone that U.S. regular soldiers and volunteers were being held equally accountable for their crimes. As proclaimed, Scott also employed capital punishment for U.S. soldiers and citizens when they committed heinous crimes such as murder and rape, and ensured punishments were visible to the population.¹⁸ Scott's General Order No. 20 created a rule-of-law system that was both predictable and fair to everyone by holding both Mexicans and Americans equally accountable for

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their crimes. Based on Scott's public proclamations regarding General Order No. 20, Americans and Mexicans alike knew the rules and regulations and the punishments that would ensue if they were broken.

In addition to focusing on the rule-of-law system, Scott effectively communicated with the Mexican population and civic leaders, ensuring them that, if the Mexicans cooperated with American occupiers, the war would quickly end and civilian life would return to a state of normalcy.¹⁹ To demonstrate this, Scott took steps to improve the existing local economy in Veracruz by assuring merchants that their goods and property were protected by the U.S. Army and then following through with this promise. This resulted in businesses quickly reopening, reestablishing the local economy. Additionally, Scott required his soldiers to pay Mexican merchants in full at the time of purchase.²⁰ This bolstered the social contract between the Mexican population and the U.S. occupying force. The locals knew if they cooperated, their families and property would be protected. In this manner, Scott's troops protected the population and their property, and in return, received the cooperation of the local populace. As a result, Scott's policies increased his social capital in Mexican society, resulting in improved trust and confidence in the U.S. occupiers. As the United States followed through with promises in a transparent manner, the local population extended its radius of trust to include the U.S. occupying force.

Scott's policies illustrate that transparency and accountability are key tenants for establishing good governance. Adherence to these principles demonstrated to the population that the government was operating in an honest and legitimate manner when executing its responsibilities.²¹

To maintain legitimacy in local government structures and systems in the eyes of the population, Scott kept existing civic leaders in place and worked through them to enforce General Order No. 20.²² Maintaining existing leadership (rather than replacing

For those interested in reading more on stability operations, *Stabilization: Lessons from the U.S. Experience in Afghanistan*, the fourth lessons-learned report issued May 2018 by the special inspector general for Afghanistan reconstruction, provides unvarnished critical assessments detailing how the U.S. Agency for International Development and the Departments of State and Defense tried to support and legitimize the Afghan government in contested districts from 2002 through 2017. The report identifies lessons learned together with recommendations regarding how to mitigate errors committed in hopes of informing future U.S. policies and actions to stabilize a country or region before and during a contingency operation. With the rise of the Islamic State, its affiliates, and other similarly motivated insurgencies, making poorly governed spaces inhospitable to transnational terrorist groups remains a vital U.S. national security priority. The analysis reveals the U.S. government greatly overestimated its ability to build and reform government institutions in Afghanistan as part of its stabilization strategy. It also found the stabilization strategy and the programs used to achieve it were not properly tailored to the Afghan context, and successes in stabilizing Afghan districts rarely lasted longer than the physical presence of coalition troops and civilians. The report provides invaluable insight to prospective commanders and their staffs preparing to deploy into such operational environments. To view the overview of the report, please visit <https://www.sigar.mil/interactive-reports/stabilization/index.html>. The complete report may be downloaded at <https://www.sigar.mil/pdf/lessonslearned/SIGAR-18-48-LL.pdf>.

them with U.S.-appointed officials) demonstrated to the population that Scott acknowledged and respected their social norms and values. Empowering local civic leaders resulted in their increased loyalty and cooperation, which was apparent to the population and led to the spread of trust to the local populace.

Additionally, in an effort to increase employment and diffuse tensions, Scott created programs that hired locals to clean city streets after the conflict was terminated. This visibly demonstrated that the war was over, increased the quality of life, infused money into the economy, and introduced employment opportunities.²³ These programs were strongly supported by the population.

When executing his governance and stabilization campaign, Scott relied on discipline, cultural understanding, and good public relations to prevent the emergence of guerrillas and the seeds of insurgency. Despite Secretary of the Army William Marcy recommending that Scott destroy cultural landmarks such as the castle at Veracruz, Scott refused because he knew it would upset the populace and invoke anger and resentment toward the U.S. occupiers.²⁴ And in

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an attempt to appeal to the social norms and values of the population, Scott attended Catholic church services when he was available. This also demonstrated his dedication to the protection of the church and church property.²⁵

Scott's stabilization efforts in Veracruz during the Mexican War demonstrated his sophisticated understanding of the importance of governance, specifically with regard to respecting and valuing the government systems in place and enforcing regulations in ways that were fair, accountable, transparent, and predictable, and

that also appealed to the already established social and cultural norms within Mexican society.

Iraq

Scott's successful efforts stand in sharp contrast to the U.S. experience in Iraq. His focus on bolstering governance in lieu of rebuilding government institutions was far more successful than the disjointed and often haphazard efforts of the United States while attempting to build a functioning democracy in an effort to stabilize Iraq.

In January 2003, President George W. Bush formally gave the Department of Defense (DOD) primary responsibility for the postinvasion efforts in Iraq.²⁶ At the same time, U.S. leaders declared that the main goals were regime change and establishment of a free, unified, and democratic nation, which constituted a commitment to reshape government systems and political infrastructure.²⁷ This indicated that from the beginning, the United States was more focused on creating a democratic Iraqi government—on the assumption that once built it could take care of itself—than providing immediate practical governance for the Iraqi people postinvasion.

Despite the announcement of these lofty goals, the United States was not prepared to execute the required stabilization tasks to achieve them following the dismantling of Saddam Hussein's government and, arguably, should not have been focused on restructuring the Iraqi government in the first place.²⁸ After ousting Hussein, more realistic and sustainable goals would have been to focus on the reestablishment of governance and stabilization first, which should have included providing human and physical security, security of key infrastructure and essential services, maintenance of public access to basic necessities, and reestablishment of existing government systems and leadership.²⁹

Instead, the DOD focused on militarily defeating the Hussein regime with little concern or planning for what would follow. Later, it focused on defeating a rising insurgency, apparently operating under the assumption that the Department of State would handle postconflict stabilization, which proved not to be the case.³⁰ Additionally, because the U.S. military was able to defeat Iraq militarily in only three days, the focus on combat operations quickly shifted to stabilization operations, which was something it was not prepared for.³¹ As the DOD shifted to postinvasion governance and stabilization, planning was poorly coordinated and



disjointed, and indicated that the DOD had an ambivalent attitude toward the mission writ large.³²

Because the United States was unprepared for the challenges it faced, efforts to execute essential stabilization tasks were severely delayed, causing a lack of Iraqi support for the United States as occupiers and, more importantly, the failure of the Iraqi government to reestablish essential governing structures and necessities in a timely manner. This resulted in the United States having to refocus on rebuilding the Iraqi government infrastructure instead of building governance upon the Iraqi governance systems in place that were functional before to the conflict.

Priority Need to Establish Security

Following the defeat of the Iraqi Baathist regime, the coalition chose to disband all Iraqi security forces instead of attempting to vet them. This eliminated almost immediately potential security forces that could have been used for Iraqi internal security.³³ With disbandment, the security situation within Iraq became terrible.

Civil affairs officer Capt. Jennifer Jantzi-Schlichter meets with the district governor, village malik, and other local representatives November 2012 in the Panjwai District to discuss building civic capacity. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Joseph Lemmon, U.S. Army)

Providing security is a key element in government infrastructure and governance in any case, and especially necessary for the restoration of and stabilization of society in a postconflict environment in which the rule of law may have collapsed. Because there was no effective and comprehensive plan in place for postinvasion stabilization in Iraq, the U.S. military was not prepared to provide security for critical infrastructure. Therefore, Iraqi civilians were soon looting and vandalizing shops, businesses, government buildings, and essential service hubs such as electrical substations and hospitals.³⁴

Coalition failure to immediately establish security after the fall of Hussein's government was a major setback to all other stabilization efforts. Poor security conditions

prevented government officials from returning to work.³⁵ This resulted in a lack of governance that led to overall chaos. For example, lack of security prevented the operation of businesses, severely impacting the economy, including the ability of people to find employment to feed and care for their families. This generated great resentment against the U.S.-led coalition. There are various arguments regarding why the U.S. military did not step in immediately to provide the necessary security to prevent chaos. One is that there were not enough U.S. security forces to fulfill the task, and another is that the United States simply did not use all military forces available to their potential since it wanted to disentangle itself from Iraq and leave as quickly as possible.³⁶

As a result, instead of maintaining and leveraging the already trained existing Iraqi security forces to provide security over critical infrastructure, the United States chose to disband them, releasing thousands of unemployed but well-trained soldiers onto the streets. These dissatisfied individuals became willing to take up arms against the occupiers, spread anti-U.S. sentiment, and often became future al-Qaida fighters.³⁷

Additionally, the disbandment of the Iraqi security forces forced the time consuming and expensive reconstruction of an entire army. Arguably, it would have been more productive to analyze the performance and effectiveness of the existing Iraqi military security forces and the population's satisfaction with them and vet the force of undesirables to quickly establish security instead of creating a whole new security apparatus.

The lack of security resulted in the destruction of infrastructure and a shutdown of essential services. Prior to the invasion of Iraq, major cities such as Baghdad had running water, electricity, trash collection services, and access to fuel for heating and cooking, and these services were protected by the Iraqi government.³⁸ Additionally, government employees, teachers, and religious facility workers were regularly paid.

Following the invasion and largely because of the postconflict vandalism, looting, and lack of security, all of these basic necessities were disrupted, and many people went without pay (with all the impacts failing to have an income implies), which bred deep popular resentment.³⁹ While initially viewed by many as liberators from the oppressive Hussein regime, as security and basic needs went unfulfilled for months after the invasion, U.S. forces became viewed as hostile

occupiers that were not capable of restoring Iraq to preinvasion conditions.

Many of the things that went ignored by the United States were key elements that comprise effective governance within society. Since these systems were all running and in place prior to the conflict, the United States should have prioritized the identification of key individuals and aspects of those systems and restored them to a functional level. Instead of doing this, it resorted to infusing rather capriciously billions of dollars into reconstruction projects that were supposed to enable the creation of a democratic Iraqi government and rebuild its damaged infrastructure. However, these projects were largely unsynchronized with Iraqi needs and did little to actually improve the stabilization of Iraq.⁴⁰

In an attempt to garner support from Iraqis and rebuild Iraq following months of insecurity and a lack of governance that had resulted in a dearth of essential services, the U.S. military executed thousands of reconstruction projects using the Commander's Emergency Relief Program funds. These localized projects included rebuilding schools, power plants, government buildings, military police stations, and many others. While the intent of this funding source was to respond quickly to the needs of Iraqis, a lack of preparation and training in governance and stabilization coupled with a lack of synchronization and effective targeting efforts resulted in billions of dollars being wasted on projects that resulted in very few positive strategic effects. In fact, many had just the opposite effect, as this author experienced as a brigade engineer projects offer during her 2009 deployment to Iraq. She witnessed how a brigade combat team might agree to fund a school construction before identifying teachers or students to attend the school. This could result in a building being used as an al-Qaida safe house rather than as an education establishment. Such poorly synchronized efforts were often an attempt to circumvent Iraqi government infrastructure, rather than working with the local Iraqi leadership to improve their support (government or tribal) to the population.

Money as a Weapons System

As the necessity for building local projects as a means of co-opting the public became an article of faith of the counterinsurgency effort, the concept of using money as a means to execute counterinsurgency (COIN) operations was validated and basically codified in the *Commander's Guide*

to *Money as a Weapons System*, a document that gained wide circulation. It states, “Coalition money is defeating COIN targets without creating collateral damage by motivating antigovernment forces to cease lethal and nonlethal operations, by creating and providing jobs along with other forms of financial assistance to the indigenous population, and by restoring or creating vital infrastructure.”⁴¹ This handbook was widely employed among coalition forces in Iraq and Afghanistan as a guide to generating local projects aimed at undermining the insurgency by supporting stability operations and governance that emphasized providing jobs and an infusion of money into local economies.

However, what the handbook does not articulate is the limited and temporary nature of many projects supported, which sows the seed of discontent when money for such projects runs out. Similarly, it does not discuss that many of the jobs it created had a limited timeline, resulting in Iraqis not getting paid after the United States cut funding. An example of this is the Sons of Iraq program, which employed military-age males to secure their communities in

Iraq. Though this program was initially very successful, it turned into a liability when the United States cut funding, resulting in a large number of trained and armed young men suddenly becoming unemployed with few long-term opportunities for employment.

The *Commander’s Guide to Money as a Weapons System* also does not articulate how unsynchronized attempts at building infrastructure would improve governance and stabilization in Iraq. In sum, using “money as a weapons system” was a ultimately a futile concept fostering short-term stabilization efforts that would have been more productive had the military focused on identifying the current governance systems in place and working with legitimate leaders of

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers workers construct a building 20 September 2010 in Iraq. This was one of the more than five thousand projects completed in Iraq from 2004 to 2011 in support of that nation’s new government. (Photo courtesy of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers)





them to develop long-term projects to meet locally defined needs in a way that better supported the Iraqi populace long term. Rather than focusing on rebuilding infrastructure with U.S. dollars, time and money would have been better spent examining the social contract within the local Iraqi population by asking questions, such as: Did locals trust their leadership? Were they willing to invest in their society? What were the local leadership and the government providing to the population? What was the population providing in return?

Instead of analyzing these aspects of social well-being and Iraqi society, money was frivolously thrown at problems, resulting in few campaign-supporting effects.

Giving Back Sovereignty

Because of the numerous and immediate difficulties faced in the stabilization phase of Iraq, the United States decided to turn over sovereignty to the Iraqi government by 1 July 2004 (some would argue prematurely).⁴² The Coalition Provisional Authority was responsible for this transition plan, which was reliant on holding Iraqi national elections in January 2005. However, at the time, sectarian violence and Iraqi disunity were

An Islamist rebel group in Aleppo, Syria, called “the Authority for the Promotion of Virtue and Supporting the Oppressed” reviews applications for aid 25 February 2013. In addition to handing out aid, the Islamist group said it carried out civilian administration in parts of Aleppo. Conflicts are ultimately settled when the populace decides who has sovereign authority over it. As a result, one main goal of insurgents like the Islamic State is to supplant the authority of the presiding government in the popular mind, operating on the premise that a new caliphate would usurp authority by “out administering” both the Syrian and the Iraqi governments. (Photo by Hamid Khatib, Reuters)

leading to an increased insurgency, which al-Qaida capitalized upon.⁴³ While the concept of elections to settle differences makes sense to Americans from their own cultural perspective, it was not a concept that was deemed legitimate or necessary by large portions of the Iraqi population. This was demonstrated when the disenfranchised Sunni population boycotted the elections, leaving Shia Arabs and Kurds to dominate the government, which only escalated the sectarian violence.⁴⁴ The emphasis on imposing new government institutions (in this case, democratic elections) without analysis of existing Iraqi social norms and values is one example of how

futile the U.S. attempt to force American government systems on the Iraqis was.

A failure to acknowledge and predict a lack of participation from large portions of the Iraqi populace was another factor that resulted in the elections yielding an unproductive result. Additionally, this was the first time that democratic elections had been held in Iraq for many decades, indicating that elections were not a part of Iraqis current respected ideology.

Large portions of the population did not respect the new system or view it as legitimate, which was demonstrated in boycotts of the elections. Instead of solving governance problems, the election process led to continued control of the Iraqi government by sectarian Shia elements, exacerbating the sectarian divide in Iraq, which is still a problem today.

Rather than attempting to impose new methods for selecting leaders on the Iraqi people, the United States could have explored a multitude of other options to foster improved governance such as examining the power-sharing relationships, personal networks, and governance systems already in place in Iraq, and working off of those.

Summary of Governance Failures

Struggles to stabilize Iraq continue to haunt the United States today. Emphasis on rebuilding the government of Iraq by disbanding and reestablishing its security forces, failing to reestablish essential services and government systems, attempting to impose democratic elections on a society not culturally accepting of such elections, propping up sectarian leadership, and continuing to focus on reconfiguring government infrastructure in Western forms led to instability levels that the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria later capitalized on when successfully expanding its territory into Mosul and to the gates of Baghdad. Perhaps the occupation and stabilization of Iraq would have been more successful if the United States had focused on studying successful case histories of the past that emphasized building upon already existing governance structures such as those employed by Scott during the Mexican war.

Training and Education

One reason for the recent U.S. struggles in governance operations can be attributed to the lack of education and training military units receive on governance, government, and stabilization activities.

Despite stabilization being a planning responsibility for DOD and a key focus for the U.S. military in its recent theaters of Iraq and Afghanistan, the U.S. military continues to fail to train and prepare soldiers for governance and stabilization operations in anticipation of successful combat operations.⁴⁵

By contrast, in 1942, the United States began planning for the occupation of Germany and Japan, which included the establishment of the School of Military Government in Charlottesville, Virginia.⁴⁶ There, soldiers attended courses focused on stability, reconstruction, peace enforcement, foreign languages, and cultural studies.⁴⁷ The U.S. government even sent civilian experts to assist the military during these operations in Germany and Japan.⁴⁸ These preparations resulted in good governance and stabilized countries.

While U.S. doctrine for stability operations exists, it is not useful unless it is operationalized and practiced through hands-on education and training.⁴⁹ Today, however, the focus remains on training tactical tasks even when deployed, although many U.S. military units are mainly employed executing governance and advise-and-assist missions. Instead of formally and rigorously training for establishing governance, the U.S. military has substituted an investment in actual training with the introduction of catchy mnemonic aids to assist in analysis, namely ASCOPE (areas, structures, capabilities, organization, people, events) and PMESII (political, military, economic, social, information, and infrastructure) analyses, both of which barely scratch the surface of what is required to successfully execute a governance mission. Such superficial and shallow techniques to educate and train fail to adhere to the U.S. military mantra of performance-oriented training.⁵⁰

The lack of emphasis can be attributed to the so-called traditional “American way of war,” which emphasizes the importance of kinetic and logistical aspects of warfare, indicating that civilian-centric stabilization efforts have no comparable status.⁵¹ As previously noted, many military leaders would rather focus on combat operations and largely dismiss postconflict stabilization training, possibly because stabilizing a nation and rebuilding governance are viewed as more difficult than merely eradicating the enemy on the battlefield.⁵²

Additionally, many military members believe that other U.S. government departments and agencies such as the Department of State are better equipped to execute

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The Theory and Practice of Insurgency and Counterinsurgency

Bernard B. Fall, PhD



Photo courtesy of the U.S. Marine Corps
Dr. Bernard Fall, author of *The Street Without Mercy*, takes a break 20 February 1967 with Company Jay, 1st Battalion, 9th Marine, on Operation Chinook II. Fall was killed by an enemy booby trap the following day.

Editor's note: Due to the events of 9/11, the U.S. Army was forced to undergo a major retooling of its doctrine, practice, and support systems in order to deal with a plethora of unconventional adversaries that have subsequently not gone away. Part of this retooling was resuscitation and revitalization of counterinsurgency doctrine, largely moribund since the end of the Vietnam War in 1975. Among the hard lessons relearned over the last fifteen years is that the outcome of counterinsurgency largely depends on a range of political, economic, and cultural factors over which the U.S. military, or even the U.S. government, has marginal control. For example, most observers appear to agree that the highly successful counterinsurgency campaign that exploited the "Arab Spring" in Arab provinces, Iraq, from 2005 to 2008, which pitted largely Sunni tribes against al-Qaida operatives, opened a window of national reconciliation that was then completely undermined by the Shia parallelism of Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's administration. As a result, many tribal members who had fought against al-Qaida joined with the Islamic State starting in 2013 to fight the Shia-dominated army and government, resulting in

regional chaos and laying waste to what was formerly regarded as a U.S. counterinsurgency success.

It is against the backdrop of the current situation in Iraq, as well as similar setbacks in Afghanistan, Yemen, Libya, Nigeria, and elsewhere, that the observations Bernard Fall made fifty years ago concerning a similarly unraveling situation in South Vietnam still apply. "The Theory and Practice of Insurgency and Counterinsurgency," which attributed strategic as well as tactical counterinsurgency failure to the alienation of the people from central government due to the paradoxical hubris of those in power, rings with particularly disturbing familiarity. His essay unmarks a prerequisite for counterinsurgency success encapsulated by the timeless observation that "when a country is being subverted it is not being outfought; it is being out-administered."

Fall's work, based on a lecture delivered at the Naval War College on 10 December 1964, was originally published in the April 1965 issue of *Naval War College Review*, then republished in the Winter 1998 edition of that same journal. Minor edits have been performed here only to reflect *Military Review* style.

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If you have interest in the relationship between governance and insurgency, Bernard B. Fall, professor of international relations at Howard University, conducted extensive field research throughout the 1950s and 1960 on the Cold War era conflicts unfolding then in Southeast Asia. His research chronicled and analyzed the expulsion of the French from their colonial control over Indochina and the gradual enmeshing of the United States in Indochina as it pursued policies aimed at stemming the expansion of Chinese-style communism.

Fall's "The Theory and Practice of Insurgency and Counterinsurgency," based on a lecture he delivered at the Naval War College on 10 December 1964, was originally published in the April 1965 issue of *Naval War College Review*. In this article, Fall coined the now often repeated aphorism related to governance and insurgency: "When a country is being subverted it is not being outfought; it is being out-administered." He was among the first to predict the failure of the United States in its prosecution of the war in Vietnam because of what he noted were tactics formulated without an understanding of the societies in which the conflict was being fought. To view this reprinted article featured in the September-October 2015 edition of *Military Review*, visit https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Portals/7/military-review/Archives/English/MilitaryReview_20151031_art009.pdf.

governance and stabilization, which is not true.⁵³ Still other military members relegate these tasks to attached civil affairs units in an effort to wash their hands of further responsibility for establishing governance postconflict. However, similar to conventional army units, civil affairs units do not receive formal training in governance. Surprisingly, in light of now sixteen years of ongoing stabilization operations, governance is not covered in the Civil Affairs Qualification Course (CAQC), and there are few opportunities in the form of niche governance training.

Despite reluctance by the military to participate in governance and stabilization operations, lessons learned in past operations, such as the ones described in this article (and many others such as Operation Sea Angel, Operation Just Cause, Operation Enduring Freedom, as well as numerous forays in Haiti, to name a few) suggest a gap exists that only the military can fill when conducting governance tasks in support of campaign objectives.

To successfully execute governance and stabilization missions in the future, it is necessary that military leaders receive adequate training on how to execute those missions. To accomplish this, the Army must reevaluate its training priorities with an emphasis on the importance of incorporating hands-on governance and stabilization training to those units who have the potential to become responsible for certain operational areas. This training should be evaluated during unit- and national-level training exercises to ensure an acceptable level of proficiency.

While the United States has been rebuilding foreign armies, emplacing formal democratic elections, altering economies, spending millions of dollars on infrastructure projects, and attempting to create strong central democratic governments, it has failed to take actions that acknowledge the elements of governance that made societies functional prior to a U.S. invasion.

Postconflict actions should include becoming informed on the occupied nation's societal cultures, values, and norms; taking advantage of the existing informal governance structures such as tribal leadership; analyzing governance effectiveness; and using existing systems in place to strengthen America's indigenous partners' ability to govern themselves.

As the United States prepares for future operations such as the continued stabilization of Iraq and

Afghanistan and other missions to come, it is critical that differentiation between governance and government be

made, ensuring that the United States is prepared to execute these missions with more success in the future. ■

Notes

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