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NDC FORUM PAPER

Complex Operations: NATO at war and on the margins of war

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and on the margins of war

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NATO DEFENSE COLLEGE

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CHAPTER ONE

NATO and Complex Operations: introduction

Christopher M. Schnaubelt

"With the Alliance increasingly engaged in Afghanistan, the question was asked, 'How can we improve NATO's ability to build lasting peace?' NATO, a purely military organization, needed to look at this with fresh eyes. The answer, endorsed by NATO countries at the Riga Summit in 2006, was to create a common approach in the Alliance to coordination of military and civilian efforts in complex operations…. There are no easy solutions in the complex missions where NATO is engaged. And questions remain about the right way forward for the Alliance."
Embassy of Denmark Roundtable on
NATO's Approach to Building Lasting Peace in Afghanistan, Washington, DC.[1]

"God, I miss the Cold War!"
-Judi Dench as "M," *Casino Royale* (2006)

In November 2009, the Research Division of the NATO Defense College conducted a workshop on NATO and Complex Operations. This NDC Forum Paper is a result of that workshop. It is designed to take a broad look at this topic and includes a wide range of articles—some of which may not be consistent with today's official policies—related to the problems that Complex Operations pose for NATO.[2]

The next section describes why Complex Operations are presently an important issue for NATO and are likely to remain so for the foreseeable future. It is intended to set the stage for the other articles in this volume by providing a

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[1] http://www.ambwashington.um.dk/en/menu/TheEmbassy/News/NATOsApproachToBuildingLasting-PeaceInAfghanistanRoundtableAtTheEmbassy.htm
[2] Opinions stated in this Forum Paper are those of the authors and not the official position of NATO, the NATO Defense College, or any of the governments or institutions represented by the contributors.

brief review of the nature of Complex Operations and the challenges they present to NATO and its members. This is followed by an analysis of "strategic compression," an emerging concept which posits that the impact of modern technology—especially the electronic reach of the media—has significantly decreased the traditionally conceived separation between the strategic, operational, and tactical levels of war, and how this effect exacerbates the difficulties presented by Complex Operations.

This chapter concludes with a summary of each of the other chapters in this volume.

Transformation and Complex Operations

NATO has devoted considerable energy to transforming itself to meet the demands for the security of its members in the contemporary strategic environment. Yet despite efforts to develop a long-range view and a strategy that looks to the future, NATO has found it extremely difficult to break free from the mental frame imposed by immediate requirements such as the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission in Afghanistan as well as a mindset influenced by fifty years of focus upon a single, clearly identified threat. The end of the Cold War and the events of September 11, 2001 have combined to create a confusing situation that disrupted NATO's process of determining its own identity.

According to the analysis and recommendations of the Group of Experts on a New Strategic Concept for NATO, convened beginning in September 2009 by Secretary General Ander Fogh Rasmussen:

> The Cold War rivalry that once stirred fears of nuclear Armageddon has long since disappeared. NATO's role in maintaining the unity, security, and freedom of the Euro-Atlantic region is ongoing. Its status as the globe's most successful political-military Alliance is unchallenged. Yet NATO's past accomplishments provide no guarantee for the future. Between now and 2020, it will be tested by the emergence of new dangers, the many-sided demands of complex operations, and the challenges of organizing itself efficiently in an era where rapid responses are vital, versatility critical, and resources tight.[3]

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[3] *NATO 2020: Assured Security; Dynamic Engagement*, NATO Public Diplomacy Division, May 17, 2010. Available at: http://www.nato.int/nato_static/assets/pdf/pdf_2010_05/20100517_100517_expertsreport.pdf

Besides the problem of seeing beyond today in order to anticipate future needs, and the institutional and cultural challenges that make change hard for any large organization, NATO transformation has been made more difficult for lack of a solid answer to the question: transform in order to do what? As this Forum Paper is being written, no one yet knows what the new NATO Strategic Concept will look like. Nonetheless, we do know that the vast majority—if not all—of the missions that NATO has actually undertaken in the last twenty years have been significantly different than the defense of West Germany against Soviet tank and mechanized infantry divisions that the Alliance had anticipated during its first five decades. Should not this recent history influence NATO's plans for the future?

By imagining the security challenges that may be present in the year 2030, the Multiple Futures Project was intended to provide an intellectual framework to help identify the capabilities that NATO would need in the next 20 years and provide the impetus to begin acquiring them.[4] Nevertheless, it remains to be seen how or if this project will influence the new Strategic Concept or shape NATO's future operational capabilities. NATO is struggling with both the present and the future. To date, it has not fared particularly well in anticipating future requirements or rapidly adapting to changing circumstances.

To provide just one example, the historian John Lewis Gaddis related the following anecdote, which illustrates a failure to think strategically and consider the longer term impact of major initiatives. In a lecture to a conference on strategy, he stated:

> The date was September 24, 1998. A NATO briefing team had invited itself to Yale to make the case for the Clinton administration's policy of expanding the Alliance eastward. There would be no problem about including the Czechs, the Poles, and the Hungarians, the briefers told us, because so much effort had gone into reorganizing committees in Brussels to make them feel welcome.
>
> [During the question and answer period], Bruce Russett raised his hand and asked whether NATO expansion might not cause difficulties with the Russians, perhaps undermining President Yeltsin's efforts to democratize the country, perhaps creating an awkward situation for the new or prospective members of the alliance as Russian

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[4] The report of the NATO Multiple Futures Project can be found at: http://www.act.nato.int/content.asp?pageid=994727584

power revived, perhaps even driving Russia into some new form of cooperation with the Chinese, thereby reversing one of the greatest victories for the West in the Cold War, which was the Sino-Soviet split. There was a moment of shocked silence. Then one of the briefers exclaimed, in front of our entire audience: "Good God! We'd never thought of that!"[5]

A significant portion of NATO's post-Cold War transformation efforts have been devoted to expeditionary operations capabilities.[6] One of the purposes initially envisioned for the NATO Response Force (NRF) was to drive transformation throughout the armed forces of NATO members. It might be too extreme to describe the NRF as presently languishing, yet after an initial burst of enthusiasm its relevance has clearly faded.[7] Instead, the biggest push for transformation seems to be coming from the largest and longest combat operation in NATO history, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan. In addition to the operational challenges, it is widely argued that the political implications of failure in Afghanistan would have grave consequences for the Alliance.[8]

Ironically, the ISAF mission has been extremely problematic because of initial assumptions that it would be relatively quick and easy. Yet even though the burgeoning insurgent threat was readily foreseeable,[9] NATO was ill-prepared to conduct an operation that would require a long-term counterinsurgency effort. The initial mission was built upon belief that NATO troops would largely be operating in a permissive environment akin to peacekeeping or at the worst, stability operations.

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[5] John Lewis Gaddis, "What is Grand Strategy?" Karl Von Der Heyden Lecture, Duke University, February 26, 2009: http://www.duke.edu/web/agsp/grandstrategypaper.pdf

[6] See Mario Bartoli, "Assessing NATO Transformation", *NATO Review* Autumn 2006, http://www.nato.int/docu/review/2006/issue3/english/art3.html and Jeffrey Simon, "NATO Expeditionary Operations: Impacts Upon New Members and Partners", Institute for National Security Studies Occasional Paper 1 (March 2005), http://www.ndu.edu/inss/Occassional_Papers/SIMON_OP_032005.pdf

[7] Jens Ringsmose, "Taking Stock of NATO's Response Force" NDC Research Paper 54 (January 2010), http://www.ndc.nato.int/download/downloads.php?icode=159

[8] See Vincent Morelli and Paul Belkin, "NATO in Afghanistan: A Test of the Transatlantic Alliance," Congressional Research Service Report for Congress RL33627, December 3, 2009: http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL33627.pdf

[9] Even as early as March 2002, analysts were suggesting that the insurgency might be intractable despite the initial success of toppling the Taliban government. For example, see Michael R. Gordon, "Ideas & Trends: Game Plan; Where Does Phase 2 Start? In Afghanistan", *The New York Times*, March 10, 2002: http://www.nytimes.com/2002/03/10/weekinreview/ideas-trends-game-plan-where-does-phase-2-start-in-afghanistan.html?scp=2&sq=michael%20gordon%20march%2010,%202002&st=cse

As David Rohde and David E. Sanger have described it:

"Two years after the Taliban fell to an American-led coalition, a group of NATO ambassadors landed in Kabul, Afghanistan, to survey what appeared to be a triumph – a fresh start for a country ripped apart by years of war with the Soviets and brutal repression by religious extremists…they thundered around the country in Black Hawk helicopters, with little fear for their safety. They strolled quiet streets in Kandahar and sipped tea with tribal leaders. At a briefing from the United States Central Command, they were told that the Taliban were now a 'spent force.'"[10]

When NATO first took command of ISAF on August 11, 2003, its mission was limited to providing security for Kabul and the surrounding area. In December 2003, the mission began to expand across the country beginning with the command of a Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Kunduz, expanding to command of 13 PRTs in December 2005, and eventually command of international military forces across all of Afghanistan except for a portion of U.S. forces that remained under Operation Enduring Freedom.[11] Meanwhile, the number of security incidents escalated from a monthly average of less than fifty during 2003 to almost six hundred in May 2007.[12] The following chart depicts how the rate of United States and other NATO troops killed in action increased from 2001 to 2007.

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[10] "How a 'Good War' in Afghanistan Went Bad," *New York Times* August 12, 2007: http://www.nytimes.com/2007/08/12/world/asia/12afghan.html. Also see Michael R. Gordon, "Threats and Responses: Afghan Security; NATO Chief Says Alliance Needs Role in Afghanistan", *The New York Times* February 21, 2003: http://www.nytimes.com/2003/02/21/world/threats-responses-afghan-security-nato-chief-says-alliance-needs-role.html?scp=1&sq=michael%20gordon%20february%2021,%202003&st=cse

[11] Headquarters ISAF, "Our History" at: http://www.isaf.nato.int/en/our-history/ (accessed March 29, 2010).

[12] Anthony Cordesman, "The Afghan-Pakistan War: A Status Report", May 12, 2008, pp. 20 and 23: http://csis.org/files/media/csis/pubs/080512_afghanstatus_trend.pdf

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Allied	0	20	9	6	31	93	115
US	12	48	48	52	99	98	117
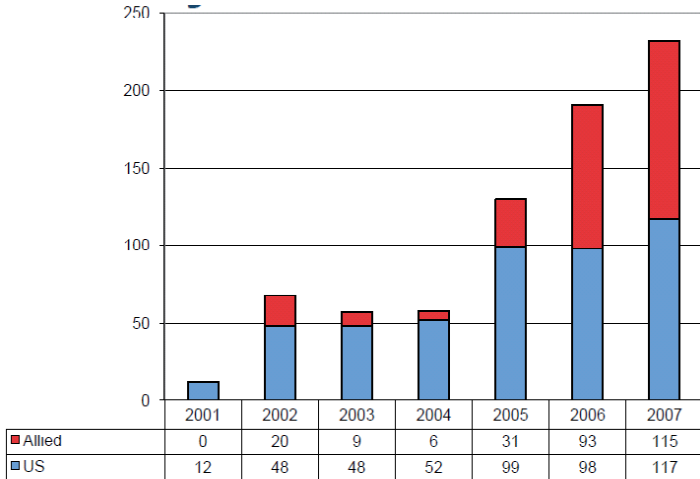
U.S./NATO/ISAF Killed by Year: 2001 - 2007[13]

Because of the difficulties it has found in Afghanistan, some analysts argue that NATO should, or is likely to, revert to the kind of collective defense of member state territory that characterized its amazingly successful strategy during the Cold War. Strong arguments are being put forward that NATO should focus on a restricted view of the Washington Treaty's Article V and collective defense of Alliance member territory.[14] Most analysts, however, agree that for many years to come contemporary adversaries are highly unlikely to directly threaten NATO or any of its individual members with traditional military means.[15] Perceptions within the Alliance vary—especially in correlation with a member's proximity to Russia—but

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[13] Cordesman, Ibid., p. 34. As of March 2010, total coalition military fatalities since 2001 were U.S.: 1029; UK: 278; other ISAF troop contributing nations: 396. See: http://www.icasualties.org/oef/default.aspx (accessed March 29, 2010).

[14] See, for example, the interview with Jan Kohout, the Czech Minister of Foreign Affairs, in *Süddeutsche Zeitung* published March 3, 2010: http://www.mzv.cz/jnp/cz/o_ministerstvu/archivy/clanky_a_projevy_ministra_kohouta_2010/x2010_03_03_die_nato_muss_zur_territorialen_verteidigung_zuruckkehren.html. Also, see Ian Davis "Affirming Collective Defense and 'Moral, Muscular Multilateralism' as the Primary Purpose of NATO" in *The Shadow NATO Summit: Options for NATO – Pressing Reset Button on the Strategic Concept* NATO Watch, May and June 2009, p. 51. Available at: http://www.basicint.org/pubs/natoshadow.pdf

[15] See Michael Miklaucic, "Introduction" in Michael Miklaucic (editor), *Commanding Heights: Strategic Lessons from Complex Operations* (Washington, DC: Center for Complex Operations and Center for Technology and National Security Policy, National Defense University, July 2009), p. x.

given NATO's conventional military capabilities, emerging threats to NATO are most likely to consist of asymmetric warfare that is less vulnerable to overwhelming conventional combat forces.

As General (ret) Charles Krulak has put it: "They're not going to fight us straight up. We're not going to see the son of Desert Storm anymore. You're going to see the stepchild of Chechnya."[16] Thus, an examination of NATO's missions since the end of the Cold War and the threats anticipated in the Multiple Futures Project make it seem likely that NATO will continue to be involved in Complex Operations for the foreseeable future.

Defining "Complex Operations"

The U.S. Department of Defense electronic dictionary does not include the term "Complex Operations" as such, but defines "complex contingency operations" as "Large-scale peace operations (or elements thereof) conducted by a combination of military forces and nonmilitary organizations that involve one or more of the elements of peace operations that include one or more elements of other types of operations such as foreign humanitarian assistance, nation assistance, support to insurgency, or support to counterinsurgency."[17] However, the concept has evolved to represent something less than major interstate war but—as in Afghanistan—can include a requirement for significant combat.

Hans Binnendijk and Patrick M. Cronin have written that "The definition of Complex Operations has changed over time—sometimes including combat, sometimes excluding it, sometimes encompassing disaster relief, sometimes not, and usually focusing only on missions overseas. For example, the Center for Complex Operations Website states that "stability operations, counterinsurgency and irregular warfare [are] collectively called 'Complex Operations.'" Binnendijk and Cronin argue that in the American lexicon the term should be used more broadly, to encompass domestic and foreign humanitarian assistance and disaster relief efforts.[18]

Use of the term was boosted when the U.S. Government created the Center

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[16] Interview with Jim Lehrer, June 25, 1999. Transcript at:
http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/military/jan-june99/krulak_6-25.html
[17] http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/dod_dictionary/data/c/10561.html. Timo Noetzel and Martin Zapfe also discuss the definitional challenge in Chapter Eight of this Forum Paper.
[18] *Civilian Surge: Key to Complex Operations*. (U.S.) National Defense University, 2008, p. v. http://www.ndu.edu/CTNSP/pubs/Civilian%20Surge%20DEC%2008.pdf

for Complex Operations (CCO). Currently located at the National Defense University in Fort McNair, Washington, DC, the CCO is operated jointly by the U.S. Department of Defense, Department of State, and Agency for International Development.[19] It has been suggested that the title for the center was proposed by David Kilcullen as a compromise that would be acceptable to civilian stakeholders by avoiding the warfighting implications of the military missions, such as counterinsurgency and irregular warfare, which were the Department of Defense's primary interests in supporting the center.[20]

In the NATO context, "Complex Operations" is largely a term of art that is not presently listed in the *NATO Glossary of Terms and Definitions*, AAP-6(2009). These missions are also likely to be "out of area" and entail expeditionary operations. While there is no consensus definition, the range of activities included are generally agreed to include peace support, counterinsurgency, stability operations, and humanitarian assistance.[21] The best description might be those military operations that intrinsically require the application of a comprehensive approach[22] if they are to be accomplished successfully.

Despite the current definitional ambiguity, it seems clear that Complex Operations lie somewhere in the middle of the Spectrum of Conflict. They are not at the level of general war as once envisioned by NATO to fight the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact in Central Europe, yet they present a risk or actuality of combat (and of course, casualties) that significantly exceeds that found in the typically permissive environment of operations such as disaster relief or consensual peacekeeping.

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[19] The U.S. Defense Authorization Act of 2009 included the following as complex operations: stability operations, security operations, transition and reconstruction operations, counterinsurgency, and irregular warfare. (http://complexoperations.org/cowiki/Complex_Operations).

[20] Conversation between author and other attendees at the CCO Kickoff Conference in ashington, DC, April 2008.

[21] The U.S. Department of Defense also includes irregular warfare in this category while treating peace operations as a related but separate activity. See http://ccoportal.org/page/about and Section 1032 of the U.S. Public Law 110-335, *National Defense Authorization Act for 2009*. This seems to be a minority view among NATO members, most of whom would include peace operations. (For example, see the Summer 2005 issue of *NATO Review*, http://www.nato.int/docu/review/2005/issue2/english/foreword.html).

[22] "Comprehensive Approach" is another term that is commonly used without a standard NATO definition. See "Introduction," NDC Forum Paper #9 *Operationalizing a Comprehensive Approach in Semi-Permissive Environments* at: http://www.ndc.nato.int/download/downloads.php?icode=79
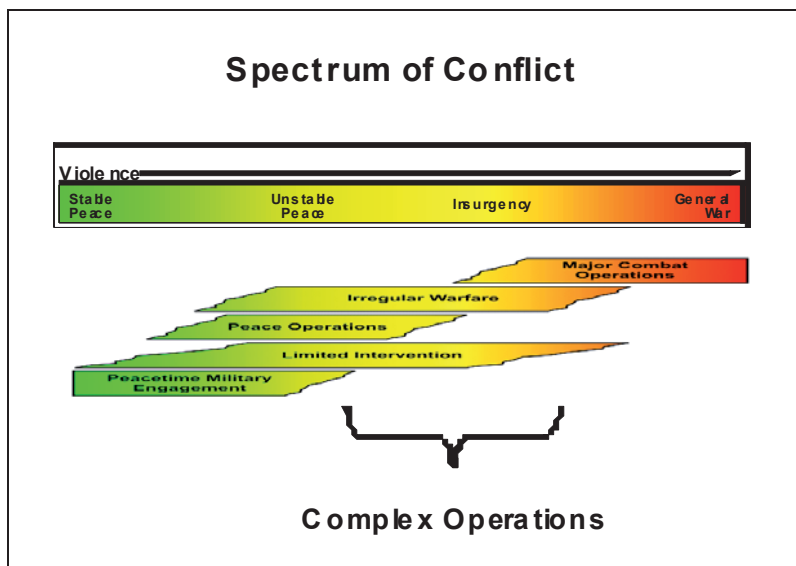
Military Operations and the Spectrum of Conflict

The preceding discussion begs the question: Even if there is a distinguishable set of activities that can be defined as Complex Operations, what is the relevance? Does not every military operation exhibit a high degree of complexity—especially conventional major combat operations?

As one participant during the NDC workshop on Complex Operations waggishly put it: "For my next assignment, I want to be Director of the Center for Simple Operations." Or, according to Ambassador Barbara K. Bodine: "Any decent surgeon will tell you that all operations are complex; none are simple, routine, or risk-free. Any doctor who would say otherwise is ignorant or arrogant and, in either case, potentially lethal."[23]

In short, Complex Operations are relevant to NATO policy and strategy because:

- As evidenced by the history of the ISAF mission and the evolution of

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[23] "Preemptive Post-conflict Stabilization and Reconstruction" in Miklaucic *Commanding Heights* (ibid), p. 31.

previous concepts that are similar, such as "low intensity conflict" and "military operations other than war,"[24] conventional armed forces have usually been ill-prepared to conduct these types of activities;

- Because of their differences from conventional combat operations, Complex Operations are likely to produce unique or different doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel, and facilities requirements.

- The domestic publics of NATO member states frequently desire military operations on the lower end of the spectrum of conflict, such as peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance, but also have a greater awareness of the costs of operations on the higher end such as counterinsurgency.

The impact of strategic compression

Although the reach and speed of the internet and modern broadcast technology are unprecedented, complaints about the influence of the press are neither a unique nor a modern phenomenon—certainly not in democracies. During the run up to the "War of the Ear" with Spain in 1738, John Danvers told the House of Commons:

> I believe the people of Great Britain are governed by a power that was never heard of as a supreme authority in any age or country before. This power, sir, does not consist in the absolute will of the Prince, in the direction of Parliament, in the strength of an army, in the influence of the clergy; neither, sir, is it a petticoat government: but, sir, it is the government of the press. The stuff which our weekly newspapers are filled with is received with greater reverence than Acts of Parliament; and the sentiments of one of these scribblers have more weight with the multitude than the opinion of the best politician in the kingdom.[25]

Nevertheless, the ability of the public to see video of natural or man-made

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[24] For example, see U.S. Field Manual 100-20 / Air Force Pamphlet 3-20 *Military Operations in Low Intensity Conflict*, Headquarters Departments of the Army and Air Force, Washington, DC, December 5, 1990 (available at: http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/policy/army/fm/100-20/index.html) and U.S. Joint Pub 3-07 *Joint Doctrine for Military Operations Other Than War*, The Joint Chiefs of Staff, June 16, 1995.

[25] Quoted in Brendan Simms, *Three Victories and a Defeat: The Rise and Fall of the First British Empire, 1714-1783* (New York: Basic Books, 2009), p. 247.

disasters, humanitarian assistance efforts, and combat operations—often in real time—increases the pressures upon decision makers. The planning and execution challenges presented by Complex Operations (and probably conventional combat operations as well) is thus exacerbated by aspects of "strategic compression"—an emerging but ill-defined assertion that the three levels of war (strategic, operational, and tactical) are being compressed by modern technology, particularly the reach of the media.[26]

For example, the U.S. Department of Defense *Joint Urban Operations Joint Integrating Concept* states that "Tactical or local events can take on added importance, largely because of the amplifying effect of pervasive mass media" and notes: "[this is a] phenomenon sometimes known as 'strategic compression.' A contributing factor is the 'CNN effect.'"[27] More succinctly, James Wirtz summarizes the concept as the recognition that "tactical actions have strategic consequences."[28]

On the political level, this means that domestic publics have a view of current challenges and operations that are unfiltered by the NATO (and member state) military and political chains of command. This situation cuts in two directions—in creating greater demand for action in response to crises such as those in Bosnia and Kosovo, but also in highlighting the costs of operations in terms of both friendly military and civilian casualties. It can also disrupt unity of command. A frequent problem for ISAF headquarters has been the tendency of force contributing capitals to bypass the NATO chain of command and issue guidance directly to their national military units in Afghanistan.[29]

The logic underlying the concept of strategic compression is intuitively persuasive. It might be argued that this is the military corollary to the impact of

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[26] Various similar terms have been used to describe this phenomenon. For example, see Douglas A. MacGregor, "Future Battle: The Merging Levels of War," *Parameters* Winter 1992-92, pp. 33-47 (http://www.usamhi.army.mil/USAWC/Parameters/1992/1992%20macgregor.pdf); and Henning-A. Franzen, "Military Command: the Compression of Levels of Command", in *Challenge and Change for the Military: New Missions, Old Problems* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004).

[27] Version 1.0, 23 July 2007 (http://www.dtic.mil/futurejointwarfare/concepts/juo_jic_v1.pdf), p. 9. It further states: "The phenomenon of 'strategic compression' that is common to urban operations implies the need for junior leaders with a strong appreciation for the potential operational and strategic implications of local actions" (p. 31).

[28] *Strategy in the Contemporary World*, (Monterey, California: Institute for Joint Warfare Analysis, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, California June 2000); (http://bosun.nps.edu/Archimages/6489.pdf), p. 17. Also see John Baylis, James J. Wirtz, Eliot A. Cohen, and Colin S. Gray, *Strategy in the Contemporary World: an Introduction to Strategic Studies* (New York: Oxford University Press, Second Edition 2007), pp. 328-330.

[29] Comments by senior officers speaking under non-attribution rules, September 2009 and April 2010.

globalization on economy and culture described by Thomas Friedman in *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*.[30] As military technology and the modern media increase their reach in terms of both geography and speed, it seems that the distance between tactical actions on the battlefield and strategic decisions at the top levels of command must in turn be shrinking. Similarly, the impact is also felt by the makers of policy in national capitals as politicians and the public vividly and nearly immediately see tragic events occurring far away.

Almost all official documents and articles on strategic compression treat the term as something that is self-evident, yet the concept is in need of greater development if it is going to provide useful insights regarding the development and execution of effective strategies and plans in the current milieu. Although a Google search of "strategic compression" + "war" produces more than 12,000 hits, very few academic/scholarly articles have been published that explore the topic in depth.

One of the few detailed analyses of strategic compression to date is found on the *Small Wars Journal* website in a discussion thread initiated on September 8, 2006 and followed by a draft think-piece called "Thoughts on 'Strategic Compression'" posted by Dave Dilegge on February 3, 2007.[31]

The post initiating the thread and the think-piece posit some general aspects of strategic compression:

> One of the great paradoxes of Small Wars is that terrorists are regularly able to leverage Strategic Compression—use tactical actions to create strategic effects—yet great powers seem unable to. Terrorists and insurgents regularly fight through using asymmetric engagements: using tactics, equipment, and resources that generate disproportionate effects. While asymmetric engagement is the method in which asymmetric actors wage war against the U.S., it is a term distinct from Strategic Compression. Strategic Compression is specifically leveraged by insurgents and terrorists when actions are undertaken with the intent to influence public opinion through the media (traditional and non-traditional) towards specific aims.

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[30] New York: Anchor Books, 2000. Friedman wrote that "…the 'post-Cold War world' should be declared over. We are now in the new international system of globalization" (p. 7).

[31] At: http://council.smallwarsjournal.com/showthread.php?t=1198 and http://smallwarsjournal.com/blog/2007/02/thoughts-on-strategic-compress/. Dilegge wrote that he was "not the author – but did participate in many of the discussions concerning Strategic Compression and its implication for coalition forces that fed the context of the paper."

The tactical actions of killing a few U.S. soldiers or destroying U.S. vehicles are just a means of achieving the greater goal of eroding support or enraging the domestic and local AO [area of operations] populations, respectively.

This limited point of view ignores the aspects of popular calls for action as well as demands to know "what are we doing there?" Much of the recent discussion of strategic compression, including a major purpose of a U.S. military exercise called "Joint Urban Warrior 07" (which is described further below), seems to be focused on its impact upon senior levels of command and the resulting limits imposed on the scope of action available to higher military headquarters.

To be convincing, however, assertions that there exists a phenomenon known as strategic compression must provide answers to two basic questions: exactly what is supposedly being compressed, and is this something new?

Levels of war

Today, it is widely recognized that effectively linking the activities of individual troops "on the ground" to higher level operational plans and strategy is critical to success in achieving national and international objectives. As Brigadier General H.R. McMaster has written:

One of the most important lessons of the war in Iraq is that achieving an outcome consistent with U.S. interests demands effective interdepartmental and multinational planning at the operational level. Although it is clear that decentralization is an essential feature of effective counterinsurgency operations, success at the tactical level, if not connected to well-designed operational plans and a fundamentally sound strategy, is unlikely to be sustained. Moreover, junior leaders and soldiers must understand how their actions fit into the overall plan to defeat the enemy and accomplish the mission.[32]

In an influential article called "The Operational Level of War," published in 1980 and later expanded into a book, Edward Luttwak helped to revive the

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[32] "Effective Civilian-Military Planning at the Operational Level: The Foundation of Operational Planning" in Miklaucic *Commanding Heights* (ibid), p. 105.

study of Clausewitz among American students of warfare.[33] Although Clausewitz discussed only two levels of war—strategic and tactical—Luttwak described five levels of strategy: technical, tactical, operational, theater strategy, and grand strategy. According to Luttwak, getting bogged down in terminology would be counterproductive since the topic "is as varied as human life." Thus, he did not propose "a neat set of definitions" but instead argued that the "boundary lines of the *natural stratification* of conflictual phenomena" could be inferred by examining particular cases.[34]

According to Luttwak, each level has a horizontal dimension with its own "dynamic logic." Nonetheless, he argued: "The five levels form a definite hierarchy, but outcomes are not simply imposed in a one-way transmission from top to bottom because the levels interact with one another in a two-way process" that exhibits a "dynamic totality...."[35] In other words, they are not discrete concepts with impermeable boundaries. This observation implies that while it might be tempting to view the levels in isolation—and indeed, some analysis is possible without considering the interaction among them—a full understanding cannot be achieved by examining the levels independently. Or in contemporary parlance, the individual levels are systems within a system.

Although some theorists distinguish additional levels, such as "grand strategic" or "theatre strategic," the most common typology is that of three levels: tactical, operational, and strategic. Readers may judge for themselves how well they elucidate the concepts, but the following are taken from the *NATO Glossary of Terms and Definitions*:[36]

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[33] "The Operational Level of War," *International Security* 5 (Winter 1980-81), p. 68 and *Strategy: the Logic of War and Peace* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press/ Harvard University Press 1987), pp 69-70. The article focused on his claim that American officers "do not *think* or practice war in operational terms…" (p. 61) while the book considered the relationship of all the levels of war.

[34] Italics in original. *Strategy: the Logic of War and Peace*, pp. 71-72. The case he examined was NATO defense of Western Europe and whether "high technology" conventional combat systems instead of large tank and mechanized formations—or nuclear weapons—could deter the Soviet Union from employing nuclear weapons.

[35] Ibid. Clausewitz, however, only discussed two levels of war—strategic and tactical. See Antulio J. Echevarria II *Defense Analysis*, Vol 11, No. 3, (1995): 229-240. Available at: http://www.clausewitz.com/readings/Echevarria/APSTRAT1.htm

[36] AAP-6(2009). Available at: http://www.nato.int/docu/stanag/aap006/aap-6-2009.pdf. The U.S. DoD Electronic Dictionary of Military Terms has very similar definitions but also provides brief examples of the types of activities included within each level: http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/dod_dictionary/

Tactical level
The level at which activities, battles and engagements are planned and executed to accomplish military objectives assigned to tactical formations and units.

Operational level
The level at which campaigns and major operations are planned, conducted and sustained to accomplish strategic objectives within theaters or areas of operations.

Strategic level
The level at which a nation or group of nations determines national or multinational security objectives and deploys national, including military, resources to achieve them.

During the Cold War, these conceptual categories could for the most part be neatly aligned with geographic space and echelons of command. There was a strong correlation between the level of military echelon and the level of war in which it was expected to act. The strategic level aligned with national capitals and four-star generals, such as the Supreme Allied Commander Europe. This is an admittedly army-centric oversimplification, but armies and corps were commanded by three-star generals who led specific groupings of units responsible for the defense of defined geographic areas and formed the operational link between strategic and tactical echelons. The tactical echelon began with the two-star generals at the division level (or sometime corps) and ran down to the individual privates "in the field".

Although the echelons of military headquarters and the ranks of command associated with them may be similar today, their relationships to the levels of war are much more ambiguous. In a typical European Cold War scenario, a battalion task force of fourteen tanks and thirty infantry fighting vehicles might be expected to defend an area with a frontage of five to ten kilometers and a depth of twenty to thirty kilometers. Its mission was clearly a tactical one.

Compare this hypothetical example to the real effects created when a handful of U.S. soldiers abused Iraqi prisoners at Abu Ghraib prison in 2003 and 2004. In this tragic case, a small unit produced a strategic impact—albeit a negative one. Furthermore, it now seems obvious that U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and other senior officials who were fully aware of the specific details of the incident were nonetheless taken by surprise at the global response when the story broke. They were completely unprepared for the way in which the news media and

the internet rapidly and vividly provoked worldwide disgust and anger as the graphic images were seen by millions of people.

In May 2007, the U.S. Joint Forces Command (USJFCOM) conducted an exercise called Joint Urban Warrior 07 that focused on strategic compression. A USJFCOM Public Affairs blog during the exercise stated that:

> Strategic compression is the forming of unexpected causal relationships and breaking of expected causal relationships among the tactical, operational, and strategic levels of conflict. Strategic compression accelerates due to the rapidity of information transmission and the lack of understanding of preexisting and emergent trends and social appetites both within the local area of conflict and within a world-wide audience. As such, the levels of war seem to compress in time and in casual linkages….In plain English then, strategic compression is what happens with information doesn't flow up and down the chain of command but instead leapfrogs the headquarters.[37]

Two months later, the U.S. Department of Defense published its *Joint Urban Operations Joint Integrating Concept*.[38] Its findings included the assertion that "The phenomenon of 'strategic compression' that is common to urban operations implies the need for junior leaders with a strong appreciation for the potential operational and strategic implications of local actions.'"[39]

Implications for NATO

Strategic compression means greater and paradoxical pressure upon NATO policy makers and leaders throughout the chain of command. The experience of contemporary operations may have swung the pendulum to an extreme, wherein the domestic publics of most—if not all—NATO members are opposed to military intervention due to a heightened awareness of the human and financial costs. Yet it would be myopic to ignore the possibility the pendulum will eventually swing the

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[37] Chris Hoffpauir, "Liveblogging: Joint Urban Warrior 07," May 21, 2007 at: http://www.jfcom.mil/newslink/storyarchive/2007/pa052107.html. Also see Andrew Orillion, "U.S. Joint Forces Command, Marines begin Joint Urban Warrior 07," May 18, 2007 at: http://www.jfcom.mil/newslink/storyarchive/2007/pa051807.html
[38] July 23, 2007. Available at: http://www.dtic.mil/futurejointwarfare/concepts/juo_jic_v1.pdf.
[39] Ibid., pp. 9, 31

other direction and create demands for intervention in response to future crises such as those in Rwanda and Darfur that once produced little Allied military action.

The ubiquity of cell phone cameras and the reach of the Internet should not be assumed to only support arguments against military action. These and similar technologies are likely to produce both demands for intervention and greater accountability, precision, and effectiveness if NATO forces are deployed.

Although painful for policy makers, the effects of strategic compression may have a silver lining. No one likes to have their work graded. As people rise in power and authority, they don't enjoy it any more than they did when lower on the totem pole—but they expect it less and have greater ability to avoid it. Yet as Robert Kaplan has recently written: "Only the most difficult human landscapes require intervention, and when one does intervene militarily, one should always do so without illusions."[40] Strategic compression could amplify public awareness of the difficult challenges that intervention entails and also increase the answerability of policy makers and operators.

Summary of other chapters

In the next chapter, Jeremiah Pam explores the nature of complex problems and their relationship to policies and plans intended to address them. After providing a brief review of the literature on complexity and complex –or "wicked"—problems, he analyses the implications for policy in response to security challenges such as the U.S./Coalition war in Iraq and the U.S./NATO war in Afghanistan. His key points include:

- Rather than adjust methods and organizational structures as necessary to resolve the original problem, bureaucracies will tend to redefine problems to make it easier to claim success.
- It is extremely difficult to achieve understanding of interactively complex problems; unintended effects are likely to proliferate.
- Those closest to the problem (i.e. "on the ground") are likely to have the best understanding of the situation, yet policymakers in national capitals tend to view the situation through the prism of *their own* local politics.
- Simple strategies with incremental, indirect, and oblique approaches are likely to be more sustainable and, paradoxically, more effective in the long run than

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[40] "Man Versus Afghanistan," *The Atlantic*, April 2010, p. 62.

complex strategies and plans that come in large expensive packages.

Patrick J. Mahaney follows with observations drawn from his experience in the field as an officer in U.S. Army Special Forces. He examines the complex and anarchic nature of contemporary operations and argues that even during missions such as stability or counterinsurgency operations that intellectually may be conceived as something "other" than war, from the tactical and operational perspective the most practical approach is usually to think of them as war.[41] It is particularly important to remember these are not one-sided affairs: the enemy gets a vote. Furthermore, the human element remains the most important consideration even in a modern era where technology often makes it easier for humans to perform their duties or enhances their capabilities. Leadership thus remains a critical factor despite modern improvements in sensing, precision, protection, effects, range, and logistics. Mahaney concludes with recommendations on doctrine, training, and education that would help to make NATO troops and units better able to meet the challenges of today's Complex Operations.

H.R. McMaster subsequently writes that small unit performance is the cornerstone for success in contemporary operations. Preparing soldiers and unit leaders, even at the lowest echelons, for the psychological and ethical challenges of counterinsurgency operations is therefore vital to achieving the desired strategic outcomes. Doing so is made more difficult because NATO's enemies in Afghanistan purposely kill civilians in order to instill terror and hide among the population to make it more difficult for NATO troops to avoid civilian casualties while engaged in combat. McMaster argues that "leaders must make a concerted effort to prepare their soldiers and units in four areas: applied ethics or values-based instruction; training that replicates as closely as possible situations that soldiers are likely to encounter; education about culture and historical experiences of the peoples among whom the wars are being fought; and leadership that sets the example, keeps soldiers informed, and manages combat stress." He also notes the role played by nations providing NATO troops: "the value that society places on the courageous, selfless, and ethical service of NATO soldiers will help determine how well the militaries of members nations are able to preserve their ethos, their effectiveness, and their relationship to their societies."

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[41] However, at the strategic and policy level this may not be politically or legally true. Aside from a politically greater challenge of gaining support from their domestic public, some NATO members and partners have severe constitutional constraints on activities defined as "war" outside their national territory but can otherwise engage in missions that might involve combat.

"Security Force Assistance inevitably entails close cooperation among soldiers from different cultures" writes Florence Gaub, "and cultural differences can impact negatively on the mission." She describes how an incomplete understanding of culture can inhibit multinational cooperation and in particular, NATO's desire to quickly develop capable Afghan forces that can take responsibility for that nation's security. Even when comprised of inadvertent, "innocent" mistakes, cultural misunderstandings may cause anger and disgust that can produce deadly results. This situation is especially challenging because most NATO nations exhibit cultural dimensions opposite to those of Iraqi and Afghan culture. Explaining the shortcomings in many of the training materials currently used by NATO troops, Gaub provides a framework based upon dimensions such as Power Distance, Tolerance for Uncertainty, Masculinity – Femininity, Individualism – Collectivism, Long-Term – Short-Term Orientation, Perceptions of Time as linear or non-linear, and High or Low Context. By promoting an increased awareness of the potential for cultural problems, improving knowledge, and motivating and training troops, NATO can not only improve the ability of its forces to perform their missions in Afghanistan but may also increase interoperability within NATO as a culturally diverse organization.

In the sixth chapter, Andrew Rathmell analyzes the experiences of NATO and other organizations attempting to promote Security Sector Reform (SSR). Noting that SSR has been one of the most critical aspects of international peace operations in places as diverse as Haiti, Sierra Leone, and East Timor—as well as the Coalition's efforts in Iraq and current NATO strategy for Afghanistan—he points out that such "efforts to build local security forces have involved a massive investment of international resources but have met with repeated disappointment" nonetheless. To date, most approaches towards improving this situation have focused on technical, programmatic efforts. While these are important, Rathmell argues that the crux of the problem lies in a failure to recognize that SSR is typically a *political* rather than technocratic challenge. Drawing upon lessons from Iraq and Afghanistan, he distills four guidelines for policymakers and practitioners dealing with SSR in a stabilization or counterinsurgency context: (1) recognize that SSR is a heavily political issue and expect to deal with the stresses this creates; (2) rather than technically-oriented efforts to build capacity, establish a holistic view of SSR that requires "comprehensive and nimble influence activities…to shape the host government's behaviours and incentive structures," (3) take better account of local interests, (4) recognize that SSR in situations such as Iraq and Afghanistan take place within contexts of broader missions of stabilization, counterinsurgency, or armed state-building. This implies acceptance of partial solutions to SSR that can be subsequently handed over to the UN or another neutral body once the underlying

violence is brought under control.

Next, Sarah Sewall asserts that NATO needs to pay much more attention to the potential requirement to conduct a Mass Atrocity Response Operation (MARO). These are qualitatively different from the missions NATO is currently conducting or explicitly recognizes as likely, and thus present difficult political and operational challenges for which NATO is presently ill-prepared. Characteristics of MARO that are different from other military operations may include: perpetrators deliberately using violence against civilians to achieve political goals, multi-party dynamics (including perpetrators, victims, and intervening forces), impossibility of impartiality, and the escalatory dynamic. These features imply differences in intervening force requirements for information, whole-of-government/multinational planning, tradeoffs between speed of deployment versus force size, and the power of witness—whereby the mere ability to document and expose the violence against civilians can have a very powerful deterrent effect.

Timo Noetzel and Martin Zapfe, in Chapter Eight, examine the implications of Complex Operations in terms of force structure and use the German Bundeswehr as a case study to analyze specific conceptual and bureaucratic challenges. They note that although it is widely recognized that the future is uncertain and poses a wide array of possible dangers, "The trouble is that preparing for threats across the spectrum is extremely expensive." Conventional operations are distinguished as operations involving war between states and typically having the purpose of defeating regular armed forces and/or seizing control of territory. Complex Operations, on the other hand, are defined by the inherent requirement to integrate civilian and military efforts to the degree that the military is not "'simply' employed to do what it does best: to fight the enemy's forces and/or to capture or defend territory." Noetzel and Zapfe describe the phases of post-Cold War transformation experienced by the German armed forces and suggest the need for a more flexible mix that could be provided converting a significant portion of other combat arms to infantry. They conclude by observing that similar decisions may face other NATO members and pose a particular conundrum regarding the highest appropriate echelon for a deployable national level headquarters. Additionally, they argue that the need to integrate more "cultural and political advisors [and] translators or personnel specialized in civil-military relations on the ground" applies across the entire NATO force, not Germany alone.

The penultimate two articles present innovative thinking that is outside the current boundaries of NATO policy and doctrine. Lynne Schneider and Frank Miller advocate a concept that would establish a type of unit able to "quickly react to a counterinsurgency or stability contingency requirement by bringing a robust range

of security and development capabilities" and carry out a "mission and objectives [that] go far beyond the ordinary scope" of a typical brigade. Asymmetric Brigade Combat Teams (ABCTs) would be built upon a basic brigade combat team's structure but include embedded civilian capabilities not normally available therein. Besides the typical combat, combat support, and combat service support elements, an ABCT might have additional civil affairs, medical, agricultural, and human terrain team expertise. Schneider and Miller argue that ABCTs would be able to simultaneously engage in irregular, offensive, defense, and stability operations—to include the capability to execute all of the Clear-Hold-Build phases of a counterinsurgency effort.

In the subsequent article, Rolf Schwarz opines that the underlying cause that has created the need for most, if not all, of NATO's current military operations is state failure. Further, he argues failed or failing states are most likely to be the source of future situations that engender NATO military intervention. He therefore proposes a new agenda for NATO that would "develop a capacity to monitor security developments and strengthen dysfunctional states in order to lessen the need to act and plan operationally for interventions in the aftermath of state failure." In a nutshell, his argument is that NATO would be wiser to reduce its net costs in terms of finances, casualties, and reputation by mitigating these sources of chaos and violence *before* NATO forces are called upon to deploy rather than waiting for them to fester to the point that military intervention is required. By creating "partnerships of partnerships," he suggests that NATO could focus more on conducting capacity building and less on deployments.

Closing out this volume, Benjamin Schreer questions the usefulness of Complex Operations as a definition or categorization of NATO missions. Arguing that the concept "is beset by ambiguity, and raises more questions than [it] answers" he is skeptical about the likelihood that many NATO members will be willing to accept the costs necessary to create effective counterinsurgency and irregular warfare capabilities, or to designate forces specifically for stabilization or reconstruction mission.

CHAPTER TWO

The paradox of complexity: embracing its contribution to situational understanding, resisting its temptation in strategy and operational plans

Jeremiah S. Pam[1]

"That which is simple is always false; that which is not simple is unusable."
Paul Valéry, 1942[2]

Introduction

Making sense of, and drawing practical lessons from, the U.S./Coalition experience in Iraq and the U.S./NATO experience in Afghanistan – particularly with respect to what hasn't gone well and what needs to change in order for us to be more effective in the future – raises challenging theoretical questions about the very nature of this type of undertaking and the best ways in which to respond to that nature. This article discusses the meaning and role of "complexity" as a defining feature of security and foreign policy challenges such as Iraq and Afghanistan.

My argument proceeds in two parts. I begin with the phenomenon of "complexity." I will first make the case that a certain kind of interactive "complexity" is a quite real, distinctive and substantive quality of some of the most important security challenges we find ourselves facing today, particularly so-called "Complex Operations" to respond to insurgencies and weak states - which taken seriously can provide invaluable contributions to our understanding of essential dynamics in operations like these.

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[2] "Mauvaises pensées et autres", 1942, in *œuvres, Vol. II, Gallimard, Bibliothèque de La Pléiade, 1960, p. 864 (free translation).*

At the same time, however, I will suggest that this deeper understanding of the complexity of such situations can serve as an unhelpful, indeed counterproductive, basis for action – and that we should therefore strive to resist the lures of complexity in formulating strategy and practicing the operational art of making plans that connect strategy to tactics.

In sum, my argument is that there is a kind of 'paradox of complexity.' On the one hand, seeing the ways in which these kinds of security and foreign policy operations are complex provides benefits to situational understanding in all sorts of critical ways. Yet we should at the same time be constantly on our guard not to respond to that complexity with strategies and plans that are so complex that they are in practice incapacitating.

Having unpacked what I think are some of the broad implications of complexity and some related concepts, I will conclude with an analytical suggestion for thinking about these kinds of "complex problems" and brief descriptions of what strike me as five provisional policy lessons that follow from this paradox, with some illustrations from Iraq and Afghanistan.

The vogue of "complex" and "complexity"

"Complex" has become one of the defining buzzwords of contemporary security and foreign policy. The term "Complex Operations" seems to be close to gaining agreement as a broadly acceptable umbrella term for the kinds of civil-military, whole-of-government, U.S.-international operations of which the NATO operation in Afghanistan is currently the most prominent example. And as I will show in a moment, the challenges of insurgency and state weakness are increasingly being referred to as examples of the genus of "interactively complex" or "wicked" problems.

My unscientific sense is that is the most important factor behind "complex" achieving its current ubiquitous usage is in fact the dramatic return of another, obviously related 'c' idea counterinsurgency doctrine, as most famously symbolized by the U.S. Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual that was drafted under the leadership of General David Petraeus at the U.S. Army Combined Arms Center at Fort Leavenworth (in conjuction with General James Mattis of the U.S. Marine Corps Combat Development Command) during 2006 and widely disseminated beginning in 2007 upon General Petraeus' appointment as Commanding General of the Multi-National Force in Iraq.

But the origins of the current security policy usage of "complex" go back at least to the period following the end of the Cold War and the more frequent occurrence of overt interventions aimed at producing both security and non-security results undertaken during the 1990s, including the Kurdish relief effort following the 1991 war with Iraq and operations in Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia and Kosovo, among others. The Presidential Decision Directive (PDD) drafted by the Clinton Administration to try to codify some of the organizational lessons learned from all but the last of these interventions, PDD 56 of 1997, was titled "Managing Complex Contingency Operations."

But does "complex" really mean anything? I will admit that I was at first somewhat skeptical. My initial suspicion was that the main point of the term "complex" might simply be to rationalize disappointing success in these kinds of undertakings by drawing a trumped-up distinction between them and a perhaps imaginary category of "simple" or "easy" ones.

Three integrally related concepts

Over the last year or two, however, I've become persuaded that "complex" does in fact have some quite real substance, and striking (if sometimes paradoxical) implications. The three qualities of complexity that seem most important involve ideas and literatures that are so rich that I won't have space to begin to do them justice here, but I will provide a cursory review.

First, I noticed beginning around 2008 that some analysts had begun to describe the challenge of Iraq and Afghanistan operations not only in terms of complexity but by reference to a concept from a different social science literature – as *wicked problems*.[3] As students of design and planning and public policy know, the concept of "wicked problems" was pioneered by University of California Berkeley professor of design Horst Rittel in the late 1960s and early 1970s to describe a category of social

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[3] On insurgency as a wicked problem, T.C. Greenwood and T.X. Hammes, "War planning for wicked problems: Where joint doctrine fails" *Armed Forces Journal,* December 2009. On state weakness as a wicked problem, Kenneth J. Menkhaus, "State Fragility as a Wicked Problem," *Prism* 1, No. 2 (March 2010), 85-100. And for two recent articles on operational art that can be read as implying something similar to the analytical point made here that international civil-military operations themselves have elements of wicked problems worth attention independent of insurgency and state weakness, Christopher M. Schnaubelt, "Complex Operations and Interagency Operational Art," *Prism* 1, No. 1, 37-50, December 2009; and Adam Elkus, "Operational art and modern strategy", 11 December 2009.
http://www.opendemocracy.net/opensecurity/adam-elkus/operational-art-and-modern-american-strategy

and policy problems that in many ways defied the clear definition and structuring usually thought necessary to plan an effective solution. Here is a description from the canonical article by Rittel and co-author Melvin Webber in 1973:

> By now we are all beginning to realize that one of the most intractable problems is that of defining problems (of knowing what distinguishes an observed condition from a desired condition) and of locating problems (finding where in the *complex* causal networks the trouble really lies). In turn, and equally intractable, is the problem of identifying the actions that might effectively narrow the gap between what-is and what-ought-to-be. As we seek to improve the effectiveness of actions in pursuit of valued outcomes, as system boundaries get stretched, and as we become more sophisticated about the *complex* workings of open societal systems, it becomes ever more difficult to make the planning idea operational.[4]

The connection between "wicked problems" and the phenomenon of "complexity" is quite explicit here: it is the complexity that makes the problems "wicked" or intractable (as opposed to "tame" or tame-able).

Second, upon closer study it became clear that what is most significant is not complexity per se but a particular type thereof - *interactive complexity*. Natural scientists, engineers, designers and social scientists have long been aware (in their respective fields) of a rough-and-ready distinction between systems that are merely structurally complex (in other words, possessing many parts that can be relied upon to relate to each other in predictable, linear ways – for example, an automobile assembly line) and those that are interactively complex (in other words, possessing many parts that interact with each other in nonlinear and unpredictable ways, sometimes producing second, third and Nth order consequences far removed from and seemingly disproportionate to the first order actions – for example, a city). This distinction between structural and interactive complexity and the functional identity of the latter with the concept of wicked problems was brought out very clearly in a theoretically sophisticated pamphlet of the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command titled, "Commander's Appreciation and Campaign Design" published in January 2008.[5]

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[4] Horst W.J. Rittel and Melvin W. Webber, "Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning," *Policy Sciences* 4, 159 [emphasis added], 1973.
[5] U.S. Army TRADOC Pamphlet 525-5-500, "Commander's Appreciation and Campaign Design", version 1.0, 28 January 2008.

Finally, in many ways the most striking consequence of taking interactive complexity seriously has to do with what it suggests about the inherent challenges to gaining *knowledge* about interactively complex problems and solutions. If it is in the nature of certain types of problems to be characterized by unpredictable, non-linear interactions, sometimes producing disproportionate effects, it follows that for at least some of this special subset of problems we will be quite limited in what we know about the dynamics underlying problems and potential solutions. In other words, even if we know something about many of the elements of an interactively complex problem, there will be much about how those elements may interact, what may happen as a consequence, and how those consequences themselves may interact that we will not, and cannot, know in advance. Furthermore, a significant amount of what is known about these interactions will be widely dispersed among actors possessing different relevant vantage points. This context dependence will mean that much of what is known will be what the Hungarian chemist and philosopher Michael Polanyi called "tacit" knowledge – difficult to fully explain or communicate apart from the context.[6] In short, for interactively complex problems, we will often not fully understand the sources of the problem or how a proposed policy intervention is likely to affect it for better or worse.

Four broader theoretical connections

While such implications initially struck me, at least, as somewhat startlingly radical, one of the things I discovered as I explored them further were the connections to a number of other parallel and powerful lines of thinking, of which I'll briefly describe four.

First and most obviously, the emphasis on interactive complexity relates directly to the complexity theory that grew up so rapidly in science beginning in the late 1970s and began to receive significant broader attention in the late '80s and early '90s with the establishment of the Santa Fe Institute in 1984 and the publication of popular science books like James Gleick's *Chaos: The Making of a New Science* (1987) and Mitchell Waldrop's *Complexity: The Emerging Science at the Edge of Order and Chaos* (1992). During the 1990s this early wave of popular complexity theory intersected at a few points with security studies, notably in historian Alan Beyerchen's 1992 article "Clausewitz, Nonlinearity and the Unpredictability of War,"[7]

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[6] Michael Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension,* 1966/2009.
[7] Alan Beyerchen, "Clausewitz, Nonlinearity and the Unpredictability of War," *International Security*, Vol 17, No. 3, 55-90, Winter 1992/92.

in a collection of essays by international security scholars published by National Defense University in 1997,[8] and in a book length treatment published the following year by Thomas Czerwinski, one of the editors of the first volume.[9] However, the principal focus of much of this work was on the traditionally military dimension of security studies rather than the broader range of operations characteristic of many of the post-Cold War interventions, and some of it was frankly a bit caught up in what Czerwinski later called the "gee whiz of applying the emerging sciences of nonlinear dynamics, chaos and complexity to military affairs"[10] – which was of course very much in keeping with the then-raging debates about how advances in technology and the advent of "net-centric warfare" had produced a paradigm-changing "Revolution in Military Affairs."

Second, stepping back to take a broader view reveals that social scientists have been grappling with the implications of interactively complex problems in an impressive variety of contexts for some time – predating and in many ways anticipating scientific complexity theory – and some of these thinkers have reached supporting conclusions that are in some ways more relevant and persuasive. Jane Jacobs' 1961 classic of urban planning *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* framed the concluding chapter in terms of "The kind of problem a city is" - and answered the question squarely: cities are problems in "organized complexity … [which] present 'situations in which a half-dozen or even several dozen quantities are all varying simultaneously and in subtly interconnected ways.'"[11] In 1984, Sociologist Charles Perrow's *Normal Accidents* argued for the impossibility of completely foreseeing or avoiding complex interactions even with the most sophisticated techniques for managing certain high-risk technologies.[12] In *System Effects: Complexity in Political and Social Life*, international security scholar Robert Jervis defined the closely related idea of systems effects as "when (a) a set of units or elements is interconnected so that changes in some elements or their relations produce changes in other parts of the system, and (b) the entire system exhibits properties and behaviors that are different from those of the parts." (Such latter properties are generally referred to as "emergent" in complexity theory – they "emerge" from the interaction of the system as a whole rather than any of its individual constituent parts, and can in fact be generated by the complex interaction of quite simple actions or rules.) Among the

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[8] David S. Alberts and Thomas J. Czerwinski, eds., *Complexity, Global Politics and National Security,* 1997.

[9] Thomas J. Czerwinski, *Coping with the Bounds: Speculations on Nonlinearity in Military Affairs,* 1998.

[10] Thomas J. Czerwinski, *Coping with the Bounds: A Neo-Clausewitzean Primer*, 1, 2008.

[11] Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, p. 433 [quoting Warren Weaver], 1961.

[12] Charles Perrow, *Normal Accidents: Living with High-Risk Technologies* (1984/1999).

conclusions Jervis drew were that where systems effects/interactive complexity is significant, "We Can Never Do Merely One Thing" and "Outcomes Do Not Follow From Intentions."[13]

Third, social orders of any complexity and persistence (putting aside for the moment the benefits and flaws of particular such orders) are not only the product of deliberate policy decisions premised on full knowledge of the way various dynamics will interact[14] in complex ways. Social orders are also in many respects unintended, arising as the result of the actions of many members of society pursuing ends other than the creation of any particular social order. This is, of course, a theme with a long history in social and political theory. Among moderns, Montesquieu was a notable proponent,[15] and the most familiar example of the idea was put forth during the Scottish Enlightenment by Adam Smith, who explained the creation of market economies as the result of the 'invisible hand' by which the self-interested acts of individual buyers and sellers are coordinated to produce social goods.[16] In the 20th century, the idea that there are inherent limits to central planners' knowledge about certain kinds of complex interactions such as the efficient pricing of goods and production, which can therefore be coordinated *only* through unintended orders like markets is perhaps most closely associated with Friedrich Hayek.[17]

Fourth and finally, it is interesting to note that the same year that Hayek made his first major presentation of these ideas about economics and knowledge, 1936, was also the year that sociologist Robert K. Merton published his landmark article on "The Unintended Consequences of Purposive Social Action." In this article Merton makes some strikingly similar observations about the effect of complex interactions (or "interplay") on our knowledge of the consequences of social action generally. This, too, I think is worth quoting directly:

> Although no formula for the exact *amount* of knowledge
> necessary for foreknowledge is presented, one may say in general
> that consequences are fortuitous when an exact knowledge of

[13] Robert Jervis, System Effects: Complexity in *Political and Social Life*, 6, 10, 61.

[14] Amitai Etzioni, "A self-restrained approach to nation-building by foreign powers", *International Affairs 80*, 3-5, 2004.

[15] See, e.g., Isaiah Berlin, "Montesquieu," in *Against the Current: Essays in the History of Ideas*, 146, 1955/1982.

[16] James R. Otteson, "Unintended Order Explanations in Adam Smith and the Scottish Enlightenment," in Louis Hunt and Peter McNamara, eds., *Liberalism, Conservatism and Hayek's Idea of Spontaneous Order*, 2007.

[17] Friedrich A. Hayek, "Economics and Knowledge", 1937, and "The Use of Knowledge in Society", 1945, reprinted in Hayek, *Individualism and Economic Order*, 1948.

many details and facts (as distinct from general principles) is needed for even a highly approximate prediction. In other words, "chance consequences" are those which are occasioned by the *interplay* of forces and circumstances which are so *complex* and numerous that prediction of them is quite beyond our reach.

> … with the *complex* interaction which constitutes society, action ramifies, its consequences are not restricted to the specific area in which they were initially intended to center, they occur in interrelated fields explicitly ignored at the time of action.[18]

In sum, we see an interesting convergence on a few propositions that, while developed in other contexts, seem quite relevant to the meaning of "complexity" in the context of security and foreign policy challenges such as Iraq and Afghanistan. These far flung inquiries give us a rich description of interactively complex or wicked problems as integrally tied up with the complex interactions of society itself, which are not always intended and cannot always be anticipated.

Implications – Analytical

So to bring things back to the concrete challenges of security policy in situations like Iraq and Afghanistan, what follows? I think these connections suggest two sets of observations, one analytical and having to do with how we might intellectually organize our thinking about both specific cases and this general category of post-Cold War interventions, and a second group more on the order of tentative policy lessons that follow from this analysis.

The analytical point is that while the idea of complexity and interactively complex or wicked problems seems to me to be exactly the right conceptual framework for thinking effectively about this policy area, I think we would gain from thinking about three distinct groups of complex problems, notwithstanding their interrelationships, which I've come to think of as (1) the complex problem of *our* Complex Operations, (2) the complex problem of insurgency and (3) the complex problem of state weakness.

The first of these focuses on understanding the inherent dynamics of *our*

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[18] Robert K. Merton, "The Unanticipated Consequences of Purposive Social Action," *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 1, Issue 6, 899-900, 903, December 1936 [emphasis added].

own "Complex Operations" – namely, civil-military, whole-of-government, U.S.-international collaboration on any sort of common effort deserving of the name. I suspect it's impossible to have spent any amount of time working on Iraq or Afghanistan – whether in Washington or Brussels, Baghdad or Kabul, Kirkuk or Marja – and not see that the international effort itself has important features of the interactively complex or wicked problem described above. The most important is the phenomenon of what might be called "emergent policy," by which bureaucratic incentives, organizational routines, interagency interactions and simple but profound differences in perception of reality regularly produce results that are not intended or anticipated by any central policymaking intelligence. The need to initiate a second, course-correcting Afghanistan-Pakistan strategy review in the summer and fall of 2009 just months after the same senior policymakers had completed a previous review and announced a strategy in March 2009 was perhaps a recent illustration – what intervened in the meantime were not only new perceptions of the threats and challenges and how to respond to them but also new insight into the difficulties of keeping the many parts of the U.S. and NATO effort on the same hymn sheet that the first strategy had been meant to serve as.[19] However, to my mind the definitive analysis of this dynamic remains former Johnson administration official Robert Komer's Vietnam study originally released by RAND in 1972 with very possibly the most apt title ever given an official study: *Bureaucracy Does Its Thing*.[20] (The more prosaic subtitle was "Institutional Constraints on U.S.-GVN [Government of Vietnam] Performance in Vietnam"). Reading this in Baghdad in 2006, one was hard-pressed to believe that it had been written 34 years ago about a war that took place a subcontinent away rather than the day before about Iraq and the Coalition effort there.

A second complex problem is the *insurgency* itself. I have the least to say about this both because it's the furthest beyond my area of expertise and because it's already being studied so intensively and ably by so many security specialists. My point here is just that the factors that start, sustain and stop people from taking up arms and joining an organized resistance, often against great odds, on their own soil, are sufficiently special and interactively complex to be thought of as a distinct complex problem in itself – even though it obviously never can or should be analytically isolated from other social, political and international factors.

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[19] Paul Richter, "U.S. envoy Holbrooke has been there, but will it help?" in *Los Angeles Times*, October 08, 2009.
[20] R.W. Komer, Bureaucracy Does Its Thing: Institutional Constraints on U.S.-GVN Performance in Vietnam, R-967-ARPA, August 1972.

The third complex problem is that of *weak states* above and beyond an insurgency's immediate security threat. To be sure, one of the most important dimensions of this state strengthening process for long term sustainability will be strengthening local security forces so that they can maintain the Weberian monopoly on the legitimate use of force with much less intensive and direct international assistance. But this is obviously only one dimension of what we used to think of as a much broader process of the political and economic development of states and civil societies. I think the utility of thinking of this broader conception of development as an interactively complex problem should be self-evident from what has been described earlier, as how modern states and civil societies developed was the original and natural focus for many of the thinkers grappling with complex problems that have been mentioned, from Montesquieu to Smith to Hayek.[21]

Implications – Policy

I hope it is the case that the rationale behind most of my concluding thoughts on five concrete policy lessons follows fairly straightforwardly from what has already been discussed.

1. When we match "our" complex coalitions and organizations against the complex problems of other states such as insurgencies and state weakness, it shouldn't be surprising to find that the U.S. and international entities are often by their nature imperfectly oriented towards the latter – and will often demonstrate great creativity to avoid operating out of their traditional zones of comfort or efficacy or running organizational risks of being too directly associated with failure.

In 1976 public policy scholar Aaron Wildavsky described, in the context of U.S. bureaucracies charged with responding to domestic wicked problems like poverty and education, the phenomenon of "strategic retreat" from objectives that are either "unobtainable" (within given constraints) or just particularly difficult for a given organization.[22] Similarly in foreign policy, when faced with a foreign

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[21] And in case there was any doubt about the relevance of the kind of complexity analysis referred to here to economic development, the Overseas Development Institute of London recently published a lengthy report drawing a multitude of interesting connections between economic development and the scientific complexity theory literature. Ben Ramalingam and Harry Jones with Toussaint Reba and John Young, "Exploring the science of complexity: ideas and implications for developement and humanitarian efforts," Working Paper 285, October 2008.

[22] Aaron Wildavsky, "Strategic Retreat on Objectives: Learning from Failure in American Public Policy", 1976, in Wildavsky, *Speaking Truth to Power: The Art and Craft of Policy Analysis*, 1987.

wicked problem whose "solubility" within given constraints is highly uncertain (say, poverty in Afghanistan), U.S. and international organizations can be expected to go to great lengths to find a way of approaching the problem so that they can "succeed" independently of the situation on the foreign ground. This is the case simply because these organizations are driven by organizational dynamics independent of any particular foreign policy problem.

In some respects, one of the original puzzles that started me down this path was why anyone would think that recognizing (accurately, I have argued) the fundamental challenges of Iraq or Afghanistan as "wicked problems" would be a basis for optimism that they could be solved straightforwardly with more application or resources or time measured in years rather than decades. As I've already mentioned, the whole intellectual genesis of wicked problems in the late '60s and '70s was to try to understand the *limits* of what it had been possible to achieve in the great social policy initiatives in which so many had placed so much hope for the previous decade if not generation.[23] And one of the findings of this original literature that I found helped explain dynamics I'd seen in Iraq and Afghanistan was that very often when an immovable object like a formidable bureaucracy was confronted with an unstoppable force in the form of an interactively complex policy problem, the bureaucracy usually found a way to ensure that its efforts could be framed in a way that would allow it to claim success on its own terms rather than risk having its reputation, budget and perhaps even survival dashed on the rocks of the complex problem itself.

None of this is to exclude the possibility of inspired efforts by particular individuals within bureaucracies and donor countries to ignore institutional equities, reach across organizational boundaries and bridge cognitive barriers to forge a common understanding of the problem and develop a few solutions that might actually be responsive. But it does help explain why even when the rhetorical responses of governments and organizations to foreign complex problems are long lists of commitments ostensibly aimed at having transformative effects on the country itself, the most visible efforts actually undertaken are often much more comfortably within the pledging countries' own control, such as policy reviews, reorganizations of our own structures and a primary emphasis on the spending of our own money via

[23] Nathan Glazer, *The Limits of Social Policy,* 1990.

trusted channels so that we at least know we will have appropriate receipts.[24]

    2. Understanding the dynamics of interactively complex problems (on our side and theirs) even retrospectively requires extraordinary effort, and prospective knowledge is inherently hazy.

    My main point has been that complex problems typically involve interactions between social factors and policy interventions that are so complex, and so regularly give rise to unintended emergent properties and consequences, that our efforts to understand what is actually going on will often be like seeing through a glass darkly. Small things will sometimes have big effects. Sometimes unintended consequences will be beneficial (like the social goods of markets and efficient pricing described by Smith and Hayek). Sometimes unanticipated consequences will be strongly negative (like the breakdown of social order in Iraq in 2003 following the disbanding of the Iraqi army).

    Because the owl of Minerva flies at dusk, in hindsight with the benefit of good information, analysis and powerful imaginative faculties, it will often be somewhat easier to figure out what went wrong or right. Such after-action reviews will be invaluable sources of information about how policy interventions and social factors have previously interacted, which in turn will be a useful input in thinking about how they might interact in the future. [25]

    But as Merton pointed out in 1936, it is in the *nature* of interactively complex problems that there will remain limits to our ability to anticipate how the Nth order interactions between multiple social factors (including policy interventions) will ultimately play out, and thus to our ability to fully anticipate the consequences[26].

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[24] U.S. Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan Ambassador Richard Holbrooke's recent efforts to channel a greater proportion of U.S. assistance directly to Pakistani governmental bodies and non-governmental organizations rather than U.S. and international contractors and NGOs has been a notable – and notably controversial within the relevant U.S. agencies – effort to resist this tendency. See James Traub, "Our Money in Pakistan," March 17, 2010, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/03/17/our_money_in_pakistan

[25] For recent persuasive statements of the need for situational understanding that acknowledges the full complexity and uncertainty of the current security challenges, H.R. McMaster, "The Human Element: When Gadgetry Become Strategy," in *World Affairs* (Winter 2009), and TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-0, The Army Capstone Concept, "Operational Adaptability: Operating Under Conditions of Uncertainty and Complexity in an Era of Persistent Conflict, 2016-2028", 21 December 2009.

[26] Rory Stewart recently made a related point about the inherent limits of our knowledge and ability to predict outcomes in Afghanistan in his essay "The Irresistible Illusion".

To take a current example from Iraq, who could have predicted the results of the second round of national elections held in March 2010 just two years ago, let alone in 2003? While as of mid-April 2010 a new government had not yet been formed and it thus remains very difficult to say what the elections will mean politically, the election results alone abounded with surprises, of which I'll just mention three. First, the return of Ayad Allawi, who was appointed by the Coalition Provisional Authority in 2004 as the first interim prime minister, then suffered such a weak showing in the 2005 elections that many took it to mean he'd been unable to establish an Iraqi constituency and was no longer a significant political force. Nonetheless, in the March 2010 elections, Allawi headed the coalition of parties that won the largest number of seats in the new Parliament. Second, one of the more religious Shia parties with which the U.S. had previously had a generally close relationship before and after 2003, the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI), suffered disappointing results – in part, credible news accounts have suggested, because they were perceived by some Shia voters as too close to Iran. Third, the Shia party of Moktada al-Sadr, whose ties with Iran and lethal militias were major sources of concern for the Coalition for much of the time after 2003, did very well in the election – in part because al-Sadr was seen by some Shia voters as more of an Iraqi nationalist and *less* close to Iran.[27]

3. The international actors with the best chance of understanding complex problems will usually be those with the most local knowledge – who will very often be those physically closest to the relevant situation and local actors.

It follows from what's been said that particularly with respect to the complex problems of insurgency or state weakness, where most of the key complex interactions are taking place in the foreign country, those closest to that action will generally have a better vantage point from which to observe the interactions and their context (Polanyi's "tacit knowledge"), and be better positioned to accurately interpret and perhaps even influence them. By contrast, those further away will generally be at a disadvantage from this perspective – particularly if they are somewhere like Washington or another capital where there are many domestic (e.g. U.S.) complex interactions (e.g., what was on the front page of today's newspaper, where one's agency is in the all-important budget process, what hearing Congress is planning, what happened at yesterday's NSC meeting) competing for one's observational and interpretative attention. While it is sometimes suggested that diplomatic or

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[27] Anthony Shadid, "Followers of Sadr Emerge Stronger After Iraq Elections," in *The New York Times*, March 16, 2010, http://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/17/world/middleeast/17sadr.html?scp=1&sq=shadid%20sadr%20iraq&st=cse and related video interview of Shadid at http://video.nytimes.com/video/2010/03/16/world/1247467351682/iraq-elections-sadr-and-his-rivals.html

intelligence reporting should be able to bridge this gap, both experience and theory incline me to think that those will usually be at best a fragmentary and very imperfect substitute for undivided immersion in the country situation and ongoing access to first-hand participants.

Of course, it is important to note at least three caveats to the presumption in favor of a field advantage in local knowledge. First, to the extent that what I've called the complex problem of *our* Complex Operations plays out in *our* capitals, people in those capitals will possess a knowledge advantage with respect to that dimension of the problem. Second, for all the importance of local and tacit knowledge, oversight from capitals (ideally in the form of regular, extended, truly two-way discussions with those based elsewhere) remains critical to ensuring that there are checks protecting against field officials' excessive embrace of the host nation's interests vs. U.S./Alliance interests referred to as local "capture" or "going native." (Of course, those doing the Washington oversight will want to make sure they are not just mistaking field officials' stronger grasp of local and tacit knowledge about what approaches are most likely to work or fail in light of the actually-existing local context – which may be different from ideas generated further away – for malign "capture.") Finally, there will be some matters of importance to the host nation with respect to which field officials do *not* have a knowledge advantage, for example, regional or global dimensions of the problem or grand strategic tradeoffs that are required by bigger picture considerations.[28] The obvious example of a regional dynamic that might be simply be beyond the scope of a field official based in a particular country to grasp as clearly as an official with a regional perspective is the impact of the insurgency in Pakistan on the insurgency in Afghanistan and vice versa. Nonetheless (to caveat the caveat), I see every reason to think that many, if not most issues of greatest importance to a country's vulnerability to an insurgency or able to strengthen its state will not fall under this exception. (And it is worth keeping in mind Jane Jacobs' wry comment about the value of regional approaches in the context of urban planning: "A Region is an area safely larger than the last one to whose problems we found no solution")[29].

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[28] Although I think its framing for the more straightforward context of a sovereign governing entity's delivery of services means that it does not have a direct application to the case of a foreign intervention, a sophisticated discussion of the strengths and limitations of centralized vs. decentralized actors under complex conditions and an alternative model of "experimentalist" governance that seeks to reconcile the best of both can be found in Charles F. Sabel and Rory O'Donnell, "Democratic Experimentalism: What To Do About Wicked Problems After Whitehall (and What Scotland May Just Possibly Already Be Doing)" in OECD, *Devolution and Globalisation: Implications for Local Decision-Makers*, 67-90, 26 October 2001.

[29] Jacobs, op cit, 438.

To cite an Iraq example, I would argue that an important key to the gradual improvement in the effectiveness of the U.S. effort during 2007 and 2008 was that Ambassador Crocker and General Petraeus were able as part of "the surge" to win and keep a greater degree of delegated authority and freedom from micromanagement, which was complemented by some White House efforts to reorient Washington's role to place a greater emphasis on supporting and exercising strategic oversight of, rather than second-guessing, the field. Despite this temporary improvement, however, the structural tension persists between the perspective of Washington and the perspective of the field with respect to fundamentally foreign operations, especially among civilian agencies. (In general, it's my sense that militaries, whose business during wartime requires them to deal on life-or-death terms with fundamentally local dynamics much of the time, have learned through hard experience the costs of failing to delegate to field commanders – although they too are periodically forced painfully to relearn the lesson as well[30]).

4. Incremental, indirect and oblique approaches will often be most likely to produce sustainable reform.

If we're not sure how complex dynamics work and interact, it makes sense to take a step-by-step approach when seeking to change them, experimenting with discrete interventions until we gradually gain a better understanding. Champions of the value of this kind of an *incrementalist* approach to reform can be found across the ideological spectrum and in varying country circumstances. Although Hayek's emphasis on the limits to our knowledge about interactively complex processes sometimes sounds like a denial of the possibility of any deliberate change (e.g., his emphasis on the "fatal conceit" of "how little [men] really know about what they imagine they can design"[31]), his most fundamental objection was to the feasibility of comprehensive reforms formulated and run from a central point far from the relevant dispersed knowledge.[32]

Coming from the opposite direction ideologically, economist Joseph Stiglitz has cited Hayek's thinking about the implications of central knowledge limitations as an inspiration both for the work on informational problems for which he won the Nobel Prize and for his critique of the "shock therapy" approach to

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[30] On the World War I battle of Passchendaele as one such painful learning experience about the limits of military planners' knowledge, see M.D. Feld, "Information and Authority: The Structure of Military Organization." *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 24, No. 1, pp. 15-22, February 1959.

[31] F.A. Hayek, *The Fatal Conceit*, 76, 1988.

[32] Andrew Gamble, "Hayek on knowledge, economics and society," in Edward Feser, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Hayek*, 128, 2006.

economic reform during the transitions from the former Soviet Union.[33] Stiglitz contrasts the destabilizing effects of "shock therapy" approaches with China's path of incremental but steady reform (quoting Vincent Benziger): "wisely realizing that they did not know what they were doing," "crossing the stream by reaching for the next stone" and demonstrating that it not only is not necessary to do all things at once, but that progress on small things can create more sustainable momentum for further reforms.[34] This argument against the need to do everything in order to do anything also echoes economist Albert Hirschman's critique of "big push" models of development economics and advocacy for "unbalanced growth", although Hirschman's fundamental point may be the need for country leaders to be sufficiently sensitive, agile and courageous to be able to take advantage of openings for reform wherever they materialize and whether planned or fortuitous.[35]

Perhaps somewhere in the middle, social scientist Charles Lindblom has long been an advocate for "muddling through" or, more recently, "epiphenomenal problem-solving", in which "solutions to problems emerge not from deliberation or design but as by-products of people's attention to other concerns or problems". Somewhat like Hirschman, Lindblom has also emphasized that "appropriate or best problem solutions, if found at all, are appropriate or best to a time and a place."[36]

Relatedly, *indirect approaches* emphasize international actors working "by, with and through" local parties – in substantial part in order to make the best use of their local knowledge. Such an approach has long been a traditional tenet of U.S. Army Special Forces doctrine, and it is also a basic premise of classic diplomacy's emphasis on influencing and persuading local officials to move in desired policy directions (rather than seeking to take the decision out of their hands)[37].

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[33] Joseph E. Stiglitz, "Whither Reform? Ten Years of the Transition," Keynote address, World Bank Annual Conference on Development Economics, 22, April 28-30, 1999.

[34] Vincent Benziger, "The Chinese Wisely Realized that They Did Not Know What They Were Doing," letter to World Bank Transition 7 (7-8 July-August 1996), 6-7 http://www.worldbank.org/html/prddr/trans/j&a96/art4.htm

[35] Albert O. Hirschman, *The Strategy for Economic Development* (1958); Albert O. Hirschman, "The Principle of the Hiding Hand" in *Development Projects Observed*, 9-34, 1967; Albert O. Hirschman, "The Case Against 'One Thing At a Time'" in Hirschman, *A Propensity to Self-Subversion* (1989/1995); Judith Tendler and Sara Freedheim, "Bringing Hirschman Back In" in Lloyd Rodwin and Donald A. Schon, *Rethinking the Development Experience: Essays Provoked by the Work of Albert O. Hirschman*, 176-209, 1994.

[36] Charles E. Lindblom, "The Science of Muddling Through" (1959); Charles E. Lindblom, *Inquiry and Change: The Troubled Attempt to Understand and Shape Society*, 223, 1990.

[37] David Ellerman provides a particularly broad and deep discussion of the indirect approach in Chapter 3 and 4 of *Helping People to Help Themselves: From the World Bank to an Alternative Philosophy of Development Assistance*, 2005.

Finally, oblique approaches seek to enable goals that are difficult or impossible to achieve directly by doing other things that are within our means. In *The Utility of Force*, Rupert Smith describes this as the fundamental objective of sophisticated modern counterinsurgency: "if a decisive strategic victory was the hallmark of interstate industrial war, establishing a condition may be deemed the hallmark of the new paradigm of war amongst the people."[38] As an illustration of Smith's point about establishing a condition, I would argue that in Iraq from 2003-2007 it was common to underestimate Iraqi civil capacity when people talked regularly about the state having "collapsed." At the same time, it was common to overestimate the degree to which international parties could substitute contemporary Western policies, laws and institutions. In contrast to both positions, in fact there remained an Iraqi state – but it had been effectively 'driven underground' by the conditions of physical insecurity and the uncertainty of occupation. By eventually focusing on doing what we could to improve security via the military surge, we in essence ended up adopting an oblique approach by which we were setting the conditions for the state to re-emerge, which it proceeded to do over the course of 2007 and beyond – even though international actors remained limited in our ability to strengthen it directly (that is, apart from improving security). More recently, economist John Kay has described the need for oblique approaches as required under a wide range of contemporary circumstances defined by complexity – and he argues that attempts to try to manage complex problems that are incapable of direct management using direct rather than oblique approaches have been a significant factor behind a number of catastrophic breakdowns, including the global financial crisis.[39]

   5. *Complex strategy and plans are less likely to succeed against complex problems, while simple strategy and plans will often be more effective.*

I think what complexity analysis teaches us about the difficulty of understanding, let alone predicting, complex interactions suggests that we're better off focusing on a few interventions so that we have a better chance of observing the consequences (positive or negative) than doing many things the results of which will be more unclear. Furthermore, the interaction between our Complex Operations and their complex problems, and the multiplication of unintended consequences, suggests that complex strategies and plans may simply be impossible to effectively coordinate. By contrast, we have a much greater chance of getting many diverse actors all moving in the same direction if we're pursuing a small number of objectives

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[38] Rupert Smith, *The Utility of Force*, 272-3, 2005/2008.
[39] John Kay, *Obliquity*, 2010.

that can be clearly explained to all (and supervised).[40]

I will use as my final illustration an example that may seem quite prosaic but was in many ways both one of my original impetuses for thinking about the role of complexity and a main source of my hope that a different approach to strategic and operational plans might be (more) effective despite the challenges inherent in interactively complex or wicked problems: the use of Iraqi budgets as a strategic focal point to enable more effective alignment of U.S./Coalition state-strengthening efforts with those of the Iraqi government at both the national and subnational levels.

We all recall that in 2004 and 2005 and 2006 the Iraq effort was routinely condemned as seriously, perhaps even fatally, hindered by coordination challenges – between civilians and the military, between different civilian agencies and, most importantly, between the U.S. efforts and the Iraqis themselves. Both official audits and journalistic accounts produced story after story about how the left hand didn't know what the right hand was doing and all of the ways in which this was undermining our efforts to get to the point when the Iraqi government and economy could stand on their own.

As it happened, a little appreciated but significant factor in addressing some of the most important coordination problems and improving the effectiveness of our efforts to support Iraqi self-governance was a belated recognition of the strategic importance of Iraqi public finance – Iraqis allocating and executing their own money via their own budgets. At the heart of this approach was the idea of accomplishing the general objective of finding some way to align our efforts around Iraqi priorities and the strengthening of Iraqi capacity for sustainable state functioning via a context-specific strategy of generally accepting Iraqi budgets (national and subnational) as "good enough" indicators of Iraqi national and local priorities and then doing everything we could to help Iraqi officials carry out their own priorities by better executing their budgets. Crucially, the simplicity of this strategy helped make it capable of catching on widely and providing some valuable coherence to the U.S./Coalition effort.

As recounted in the capstone report of the Special Inspector General for Iraq

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[40] For analogous arguments in the international business context that only simple strategies are capable of dealing with the interactively complex and consequently highly uncertain globalized business environment, Donald Sull, *The Upside of Turbulence: Seizing Opportunity in an Uncertain World*, 63, 2009; Miguel Pina e Cunha and Armenio Rego, "Complexity, simplicity, simplexity," *European Management Journal*, Vol. 28, Issue 2, 85-94, April 2010.

Reconstruction, *Hard Lessons: The Iraq Reconstruction Experience*[41], in 2006 most Americans in Iraq were still focused on spending U.S. money largely independently of Iraqi government institutions. Consequently, "In many cases there was a lack of sufficient Iraqi participation in deciding how or what to reconstruct and ensuring that projects could be maintained afterwards" (333). The end of 2006, however, saw "The Rise of Budget Execution" as a U.S. civilian and military priority (267). By mid-2007, the standard for a useful expenditure of U.S. funds had largely shifted to "if it can't be done by Iraqis, we probably shouldn't do it. What is better is a project that takes 60 days instead of 30 days – but is done by the Iraqi manager and is sustainable by the Iraqis [and] that their operations can support" (298). By mid-2008, Iraqi public finance and budgets had become such a central organizing principle to the U.S. effort that the Embassy and Multi-National Force Iraq created a civil-military Public Financial Management Action Group (PFMAG) chaired by the senior civilian and military leaders responsible for governance and the economy and incorporating the participation of dozens of U.S. organizations working on the civil side in Iraq in order to ensure that all civilian and military personnel, whether working with ministries from Baghdad or with provinces from Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), would make assisting with the execution of Iraqi budgets a paramount civil administration mission priority[42]. By the end of 2008, an independent U.S. Institute of Peace study of the PRTs had concluded that "[the budget execution] role is critical to the U.S. mission in Iraq and is the primary strategic justification to continue the PRT program".[43]

Conclusion

In closing, I'll return to the epigram of Paul Valéry quoted at the beginning: "That which is simple is always false: that which is not simple is unusable."

The "paradox of complexity" appears all too real in practice, and is supported by a persuasive range of examples from other policy areas and literatures. What follows from this? Certainly, nothing in the foregoing discussion should be taken as suggesting an argument against action per se, let alone action informed by

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[41] Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, *Hard Lessons: The Iraq Reconstruction Experience*, U.S. Government Printing Office, 2009 [parenthetical references are to page numbers in this report].

[42] U.S. Government Accountability Office, "Securing, Stabilizing and Rebuilding Iraq: Progress Report: Some Gains Made, Updated Strategy Needed", GAO-08-837, Appendix III: Comments from the Department of State. Department of Treasury 73, June 2008.

[43] Rusty Barber and Sam Parker, "Evaluating Iraq's Provincial Reconstruction Teams While Drawdown Looms" USIPeace Briefing, 3, December 2008.

careful consideration of lessons learned from experience. But one way we might consider trying to resolve this paradox of complexity is by distinguishing between the value of complexity in two circumstances. On the one hand, it is and will remain of the greatest value to have the best *understanding* possible of the dynamics of an interactively complex situation, whether regarding our civil-military, whole-of-government, international operations or with respect to the complex problems that an insurgency or a weak state presents. On the other hand, the best way of responding to a complex situation will often be to strive *not* to mirror the complexity of the problem in our strategy or operational plans or organization. Instead, this analysis suggests the conclusion that particularly (but not only) where we have significant complexity on our side, we will be better off exercising the self-restraint necessary to pursue simpler strategies for intervention that improve our ability to see and act on the consequences of our actions.

CHAPTER THREE

Observations for practitioners
of Complex Operations

Patrick J. Mahaney, Jr.

This paper concerns NATO's developing field of "Complex Operations", which includes developing institutional and operational capabilities in such areas as Counterinsurgency (COIN), Stability Operations, and Security Force Assistance (SFA). The paper explores the nature and pressing challenges presented by Complex Operations in an effort to begin a practical approach to them while theories and doctrines are worked out. Issues covered include the strategic context of anarchic environments, the nature of complexity and the "indirect" approach, and a review of COIN as a complex operation. Focusing on the human element, it introduces the concepts of a "New Heroic Age" and implications and roles for "functionaries and warriors." After reviewing the challenges and benefits of multinational operations, the author presents several conclusions and recommendations for NATO's doctrine, training, and educational development of personnel.

Context and strategic environment

In an increasingly complex world, more "Complex" Operations are a natural outgrowth. In contrast to the last several decades of conventional military thinking, which focused on the remarkable technological advances impacting the military, what makes current and future operations complex enough to require redefinition of operational concepts are factors related to the populations involved in and affected by those operations. More precisely, there is a growing recognition of the fundamental necessity to fully engage on the level of the human terrain. Although the term "Complex Operations" has not yet been doctrinally defined, it is a useful concept. Any operations frequently characterized by such adjectives as "irregular", "unconventional", "unrestricted", and/or "asymmetric", and which involve a high degree of political, economic and informational factors for the military practitioner to deal with, in addition to the already ever-complicated military realm itself, merit the descriptive "Complex."

Obviously, all professional problems are to some degree complex, and this is most obvious in warfare, which is the most complex of all human endeavors. However, it is helpful for NATO to state as a matter of doctrine and guidance that certain missions are more complex than others. Although there will surely be detractors and legitimate criticism of the term "Complex Operations", the term is useful in that it implies multi-dimensionality, specifically the coexistence of the elements of power (diplomatic/political, informational, military, economic; or "DIME"[1]) as variables at all levels (tactical and operational as well as strategic) at all times. Ultimately, "complexity" requires a more sophisticated mindset and skills, as the presence of a complex problem indicates the need to simplify it, understand it, and then work on multiple levels with multiple variables to solve it.

Complexity in anarchic environments

Although NATO's North America and Europe home environments are stable and essentially orderly, the world as a whole is still best characterized as the "anarchic international environment" described in the realist literature, particularly classical realist literature, although the forms and means of wielding power evolve. Power counts, in all of its forms. Those who have those elements of power, to whatever degree they have them, count. These include states and non-state actors (NSAs) that are hostile to NATO members' interests and values. Although the world as a whole has always been this way, the Alliance and its member states are just now beginning to comprehensively focus on how to deal with the full range of these challenges in a way consistent with both our collective interests *and* ideals. This is an exceptionally positive and long overdue development.

It is impossible to understand Complex Operations without understanding the power dynamics of the anarchic international environment, and indeed of the anarchic *internal* environments of the locations where Complex Operations take place. Those who have spent most of their service in the undeveloped/developing world—where virtually all of the conflicts are—will not find this as a surprise. In these areas, where the key terrain has always been the human terrain, there is less a "clash of civilizations" than a clash of civilization (writ large) versus barbarity. This occurs in anarchic environments where power groups struggle for either absolute or

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[1] In international security studies, the elements of national power are widely referred to as the "DIME" elements, meaning diplomatic, informational, military, and economic. The term "political" is added here to "diplomatic" to emphasize that the political concerns are not only for those specifically responsible for conducting international diplomacy, and are therefore a specific concern for practitioners of complex operations.

relative supremacy, or just for a "piece of the pie." Those who have not participated in or focused on the difficult grey-area operations against malicious and predatory elements[2] in the most unstable parts of the world are often stunned at the complexity of the situation on the ground. Welcome to the real world, where nothing is, or has ever been, simple.

The real world is complex because it is imperfect. In this all-too-human world there is no reliable, compellent supra-national enforcement authority to effectively confront the malicious and predatory, although in this vacuum stronger nation-states and alliances try to play the role. In the post-Cold War, post-9/11 context, what has changed is an increase in the collective will to get on the ground and effectively deal with these complex problems, with the imperative to actually produce positive results. Simply put, if NATO members are to live up to our ideals and codified visions of justice, and protect our interests, we must be prepared to take action—effective action. Talk is seldom effective, and economic sanctions by themselves are rarely effective or productive. Therefore, effective action for the most complex and vexing problems ultimately requires the credible threat or use of force, in conjunction with political, economic and informational efforts.

Unfortunately, no matter how well-meaning, intentions will always be suspect in a anarchic world. Therefore, there is a particular need to ensure legitimacy during operations, and legitimacy is largely about perceptions. In exercising power in the complex world, NATO members must avoid the extremes of the naïveté born of utopianism and the cynicism born of the naked pursuit of self-interest devoid of legitimate purpose. Balancing actions between these two extremes requires rigorous reflection and analysis, although not to the point of paralysis. This is most important in the case of military force, which further requires an intuitive understanding of its uses and limitations, particularly in achieving desired political endstates.

Pressing challenges in the complex contemporary environment

NATO member states individually and the Alliance itself are already conducting Complex Operations against a backdrop of tensions with Iran and Russia, a strengthening China, NATO enlargement, renewed interest in Africa, unease in

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[2] These are often characterized as "evil" by a range of writers over the last two millennia. My purpose here is not to enter a debate on values, whether juridical, ethical or theological, but rather to point out that value judgments must be made. Refer to the writings of St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430 AD), St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), Hugo Grotius (1583-1645), and Reinhold Niebuhr (1892-1971) as examples.

Latin America, economic instability, demographic change, and the growth of more complex transnational organized crime, terrorism, and insurgency. This reality will continue well into the future. Although contemporary Complex Operations occur against a background of tension vaguely reminiscent of the Cold War, they occur within a new and less clearly defined context than in the former era of bipolarity. Although the U.S. remains a superpower, the world is not unipolar and is headed towards increasing multipolarity in a world of growing, interconnected threats. Therefore, either NATO members collectively face the fact that there will be perennial, unacceptable challenges to our status, or we withdraw, decline, and "lose". This does not mean we should look for conflicts to get into, as hubris will lead to overextension, and the squandering of both legitimacy (measured in political will) and strength (measured in blood and treasure). However, there are and will be many complex crises that we cannot ignore. As a result, NATO members must confront the daunting and complex challenges of a 'brave new world' in which the interplay of the elements of national power are tightly interwoven into all levels of all operations. This fact, once accepted and internalized, leads the prudent observer—whether academic, decision-maker, or practitioner—to evaluate the emerging requirements and consider changes to doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel, and facilities (DOTMLPF)[3]. Clearly, a critical examination of the elements of Complex Operations is required.

Examining Complex Operations: the problem, the threat, and ourselves

Succeeding in contemporary Complex Operations requires first an understanding of the nature of complex operational problems, which requires an examination of certain fundamental dynamics to establish a framework. Within that framework, it is helpful to focus on an important specific case that NATO must face: counterinsurgency (COIN). Then, it is essential to use that framework to further examine two main protagonists: the evolving threats, and friendly forces (i.e. ourselves). This deeper examination produces some basic, but very significant, observations on how to approach the problems of Complex Operations. This leads to a series of conclusions that must be considered before making the required changes to DOTMLPF.

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[3] The DOTMLPF factors are widely accepted as the basic elements of military institutions. Changes in the operational environments must be reflected in updated DOTMLPF for military services and the governments they support to be effective.

The problem: even on the "margins of war", think of it as war

A complex problem that will involve military forces needs a frame of reference. Call it "conflict" or something other than "war" if needed for political or legal necessity, but it is best to think of Complex Operations in terms of warfare. Failure to do so obscures the danger inherent in Complex Operations and robs the practitioner of a conceptual framework for using power to achieve a desired endstate. Literally as ancient as human history, warfare is complete with certain enduring fundamentals and logic, yet always adapts to contemporary circumstances and means. This point deserves closer consideration.

The world is in a state of perpetual conflict with a milieu of complex threats that defy simple analysis, explanation, and solutions. Whatever the form of the conflict and threats, whether counterinsurgency (COIN), insurgency, "super-insurgency", "fourth generation warfare" (4GW), hybrid, asymmetric, irregular, etc., if it has a violent component and requires the use of military forces, it is best to think of this phenomenon as "war" and treat it as a "war"—a complex undertaking that must eventually be "won". Whether considered a "zero-sum" or "non-zero-sum" undertaking from a Game Theory perspective, there is no acceptable alternative to winning. However, despite the obvious desire to unambiguously "win all" in a zero-sum game, Complex Operations are much more likely to resemble a "non-zero sum game". The bad news is that non-zero sum games and outcomes can be frustrating, as they tend to be non-linear and the outcomes not complete; the good news is that even a "non-zero sum game" can be "won". Winning, in this case, may be simply achieving an imperfect but acceptable outcome.

Achieving an acceptable outcome (the "ends") requires effective and creative application of the available elements of power (the "means"). However, it is not sufficient to apply the means available in a simplistic or mechanical fashion. Warfare is an art, not a science, although it makes as much use of science as its practitioners can. Very much an "art of the possible", it combines violent and non-violent components in myriad ways to affect an opponent. Therefore, practitioners must consider the dynamic interplay of forces and select, develop, and apply the appropriate operational approaches.

Key to succeeding in complexity: the indirect approach

Complex Operations, like all warfare, involve an array of means and both direct and the indirect approaches, but the <u>indirect</u> is likely to be the dominant

required form. This is a problem for NATO forces and institutions, because despite a rising tide of discussion about employing "the indirect" there is actually little cognitive understanding of it and even less sense or intuition of how to apply it in practice. The "indirect" does *not* mean simply the non-violent, and is not necessarily synonymous with "non-lethal" or "soft" power. This is a surprisingly common misunderstanding. Rather, the indirect means the application of whatever means available "indirectly" against the enemy. This describes how the elements of power and their various means are applied, not simply which elements are applied. An effective and imaginative practitioner (which includes our enemies) will use a combination of lethal and non-lethal power in direct and indirect (most easily understood as obvious and non-obvious) ways to shape the environment. This is where it gets complicated in practice.

Complex Operations require both powers that persuade and powers that compel, and they are used directly and indirectly. However, borrowing from the law of physics which says that for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction, for every theory and operational approach there is a (somewhat) equal and opposite approach. For every tactic there is a counter-tactic, for every combination of the elements in operational design there is a complement which can negate it. The very nature of this yin-yang balance leads to "infinite combinations" or "inexhaustible permutations" that Sun Tzu wrote about. This point is essential to understanding and practicing the operational art in a complex environment.

The enemy gets a vote

Given the need to examine Complex Operations through the prism of warfare, and that in warfare it is critical to understand the enemy, Complex Operations require a holistic look at how the enemy thinks, acts, and organizes. In the contemporary context, this starts with a fundamental understanding of irregular, asymmetric, and unconventional threats. This, in turn, should include a grounding in Unconventional Warfare (UW).[4] UW is important because it covers how to conduct an insurgency using a wide variety of means, and there is already a significant base of doctrine, training, and organizations that NATO members can use. The ability to understand UW gives tremendous insights into how irregulars organize and fight,

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[4] It is very useful to consider the outlook of the U.S. Army Special Forces (SF, or the "Green Berets"). SF is unique in that it is the only branch specifically grounded in Unconventional Warfare—that is, they are assessed, trained, and educated on how to "be guerrillas" and work with insurgent forces. This critical factor provides a different perspective which can help in dealing with insurgent, irregular, and asymmetric warfare.

but more importantly *how* they think, coerce, and influence with their actions and words.

As with warfare, the enemy is dynamic. Therefore, while case studies of irregular forces current and past are highly useful, it is important to note that the threat evolves over time. Currently, the centripetal forces of globalization spawn centrifugal forces to counter them. The evolving threats that emerge become decentralized, and willing to throw virtually anything at their opponents in novel combinations and over time. This phenomenon is now often referred to as "hybrid threats". Although recognition of the hybrid nature of many threats is certainly helpful, it is not a completely novel dynamic. There have always been hybrid threats. In fact, the very nature of UW, often used as part of a larger campaign, is to present hybrid internal and external threats to the opponent regime, combining as many elements and means of power in novel ways. Those charged with performing UW in support of NATO operations throughout the Cold War[5], for example, knew this. Then as now, hybrid threats could be thought of as "clever, adaptive, surprising and dangerous threats", "not necessarily linear threats" and "I will figure out every way I can to damage you" threats. The point here is that this is not necessarily as new a concept to NATO members as it appears from the current literature, which in turn implies a process of rediscovery, updating, and internalizing, and not starting from zero.

In the current context, then, it is worth reviewing some basics. In Complex Operations the threat will use the asymmetric, irregular, and indirect means available to strike at our weaknesses in support of their strategic (political) goals**.** The enemy seeks to find and exploit the "seams" between our efforts, whether physically (e.g. the political and operational boundaries in Afghanistan) or conceptually (e.g. political alliance seams, with different national caveats, etc.). The enemy seeks to create "strategic ambiguity"[6] for us while maintaining strategic clarity for them. To accomplish this, the enemy uses lethal and non-lethal means in an indirect manner, harnesses them into information operations, and seeks to present us with ethical, political and operational dilemmas.

Of these, the ethical dilemmas are the most insidious. In this case, the

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[5] The defense of Europe included planned guerrilla/partisan operations against Soviet rear echelon and occupation forces. Going further back to World War II, many nations that are now members of NATO had significant experience with these types of operations.

[6] Max G. Manwaring, "Managing Globalization: Lessons for Constructing a Strategic Bridge to the Future", p.39, in *The Search for Security: A U.S. Grand Strategy for the Twenty-First Century*, ed. By Max G. Manwaring and Edwin G. Corr, and Robert H. Dorff, Praeger Publishers, Westport, CT, 2003.

enemy seeks to use NATO members' own ethical sensibilities against them by creating "radical asymmetries" and distorting perception of reality, particularly of who is *responsible* for ethical dilemmas.[7] The purpose of this is to negate the use of our military strengths (e.g. firepower, particularly airpower); the tactic is to dramatically distort facts. The fact that the enemy uses the "big lie" propaganda technique should not surprise anyone, but the way it is done often does. In Complex Operations, the best counter to this is ultimately to have credible, ethical, responsible personnel representing us both on the ground and in the media, and to effectively deconstruct both the lies themselves and the techniques used.

In a dynamic operational realm against this type of enemy, adaptability is essential, and nothing is 'business as usual'. Complacency in the face of ever-evolving tactics, techniques, procedures (TTPs)[8] and operational approaches of a networked yet decentralized threat is dangerous, and arrogance is irresponsible and self-defeating.

COIN as a Complex Operation

COIN deserves particular attention as a Complex Operation. Despite a recent surge of attention, there is limited understanding throughout NATO on the true nature of COIN.[9] COIN is ultimately a strategically defensive operation. It is useful to consider it as a defense in depth that occurs across the elements of power and other variables.[10] Significantly, because of this, the defense becomes more complex than the offense. This is the opposite of much conventional thinking. Simply put, offense implies "taking" something; defense implies holding it, and then presumably doing something with it. Although the military component of offensive operations can be exceedingly complex, it is in the defense where the already complex military component more fully intertwines with the other elements of power—and does it over a longer time, usually in a manner that is open to more public scrutiny. Failure to understand this critical point can lead to ultimate failure.

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[7] Michael Walzer, "Responsibility and Proportionality in State and Non-State War", in *Parameters*, Spring 2009, p. 51.

[8] "Tactics, techniques, and procedures" (TTP) is a widely used military doctrinal term referring to how armed forces (friendly and enemy) conduct operations. See, for example, U.S. Army Field Manual FM 7-0, Training for Full Spectrum Operations, December 2008, p. 2-8.

[9] Author's notes from Afghanistan, particularly 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2009. The collective failure of many elements to overtly identify the operations in Afghanistan as "COIN"—which they clearly were—reinforced the "strategic ambiguity" the enemy sought to achieve.

[10] Such as the "operational variables": political, military, economic, social, information, infrastructure, physical terrain, and time (PMESII-PT). See U.S. Army Field Manual 3-0, *Operations*. February 2008.

It is commonly understood that the prime focus of the defense is defending key terrain; however, in COIN the "key terrain" is the people. They are strategically the center of gravity. Unfortunately, this simple truth is not easily translated into a successful COIN campaign. *How* a power does this is not easily reduced to a simple formulaic approach, as specific local conditions and power dynamics are always at play. Although we can generalize about the enduring needs of a civilian population (e.g. security, food), the "key terrain" is not always the same, even within a single country or operational area. Cultural and political dynamics matter; in some cases these will be obvious, in others not. Those that are not so obvious, but which are crucial for the COIN practitioner to note, include: the degree to which local values are concordant with such international values as 'international human rights'; the nature of social/influence networks; and the role and form of patronage in the local culture(s). This last point is particularly difficult for many Western personnel to understand, because it is often complicated to the point of being byzantine.

Given the tremendous need for legitimacy for any successful COIN operation there must be a specific focus on the role of protecting the local population. Credible and enduring protection is essential to developing and maintaining popular support, and popular support is the best basis for legitimacy. This is all the more critical for operations conducted by NATO forces, who are answering to political concerns both in the area of operations and in participants' home countries. On the ground, protection requires a true commitment with credible forces to securing the local population for the long term; it does not equate to simply "showing the flag" with little real action and "giving them things" in the hope that they will be grateful. Likewise, it does not equate to simply targeting enemy leadership or to conducting large unit sweeps (to "clear") with no effective "hold". While attacking and reducing enemy strongpoints, leadership, and sanctuary areas are critical and necessary tactical and operational methods in themselves, how it is done as part of a larger, integrated strategy is key. Too frequently forces enter and leave an area only to return again, frequently in a subsequent rotation, with different units, to do the same thing again. This produces a net negative effect, as the local populations (and the enemy) see this for what it is: the lack of a commitment to provide necessary long-term security and development, and the lack of an integrated approach aligning tactical, operational, and strategic elements. With no real progress on the ground, or worse yet a reversal of progress, home country constituencies become disillusioned, leading to a loss of political will—exactly what the enemy wants.

Therefore, failure to provide real, credible security equates to operational and strategic failure. Fortunately, although challenging, there are a variety of ways to establish security over time. Ultimately, the most effective way to provide

credible and enduring protection is to develop, train, and advise indigenous security forces with the capability and legitimacy to provide the critical element of security. A significant part of this ultimately becomes Security Force Assistance (SFA), which is rightfully becoming a major interest for NATO members.

In sum, COIN is a complex and nuanced form of war. While certain portions of a COIN operation may appear to be "on the margins of war", it is a serious mistake to consider direct participation in COIN - siding with a government in an existential fight - as anything less than participation in a war. Doing so seriously undercuts chances of success, and discounts the remarkable, even heroic, efforts of those who are most effectively confronting the problems on the ground. Once undercut, there is a corresponding drop in the morale of the troops and officials involved and in their capability to solve problems at all levels. This drop in confidence and capability is then reflected by the media, creating a vicious cycle that threatens to separate the sides of the "Clausewitzian Trinity"[11] - exactly what the enemy wants. Understanding and communicating the real dynamics at play and the specifics on the ground are essential to stopping this. In the murky, complex world, this is hard, and it is only worsened by wishful thinking and erroneous assumptions.

Examining ourselves: enabling success in Complex Operations

The imperative in all military operations is to be effective and ultimately successful. Complex Operations, with their intertwined DIME facets from the highest to the lowest levels, are difficult enough on the ground, but become exponentially complicated when a practitioner fails to apply an appropriate operational approach using the proper means. In practice, the most common means are military. Therefore, any nation or alliance undertaking a Complex Operation must have a realistic and accurate understanding of the suitability of its forces for an operation. If something requires change, than it must be identified and developed. This requires the clarity that comes from critical and honest introspection.

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[11] Clausewitzian trinity refers to the Army, the People, and the Government. See Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. by Michael Howard and Peter Paret, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 1984, p.89. In the contemporary case, the "Army" should include the deployable inter-agency and inter-governmental as well as the military forces.

Introspection: of machines and men

Introspection is difficult enough within one nation's forces and government, but can be exceedingly painful within the political confines of an Alliance. Regardless of the discomfort, it is necessary for facing emerging challenges, staying relevant, and succeeding at matching actions to lofty goals and rhetoric. One useful piece of introspection is to note that NATO members over-focused on the technologically-driven "Revolution in Military Affairs" (RMA), and correspondingly overdid the certain changes in the DOTMLPF factors. While technology drives military "science", it became a focus to the detriment of the military "art" and its human dimensions. RMA theories ultimately implied a move away from the importance of individual soldiers on the ground, in which systems of systems removed the complexities associated with the "fog of war".[12] True, systems associated with the RMA significantly changed some aspects of combat. However, RMA enthusiasts took this reasoning to a *reductio ad absurdam*. This led to the belief that the military element could "win" virtually by itself. Logically, this implies a possible separation of the military element from the other elements of power, and leads to an almost exclusive focus on the direct approach—the exact opposite of what is needed in Complex Operations. Therefore, it is useful to view the RMA as a dramatic military-technological *evolution* that can enhance our operations, but one that does not revolutionize operations *vis-à-vis* the human terrain on the ground.

Interestingly, there were significant technological developments with military and police applications that were overlooked and which should be incorporated in DOTMLPF changes for a complex environment. Believing that the RMA produced quick and decisive victories, many overlooked a wide array of technologies available for effective and creative application in such fields as population and resource control and tactical or sensitive site exploitation. These derive, for example, from the burgeoning fields of forensics and biometrics, and are particularly useful for identifing members of threat networks, and are reliable for identifying people in a world where false names are in common usage. Much of these are commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) technologies, which means that they can be used by all Alliance forces and also during operations 'by, with, or through' local, indigenous forces. Such technologies are not a panacea for the murky world of Complex Operations, but used creatively and effectively can be tremendous force multipliers for professional, well-trained troops on the ground. Again, this becomes a case of science aiding the military art.

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[12] See Christopher M. Schnaubelt, "Whither the RMA?" in *Parameters* 37 (Autumn 2007), pp.95-107.

Re-emphasizing the human element

A Complex Operation, like warfare, is a quintessentially human undertaking; it is conducted by people, and must address human needs and concerns. Humans are complex, and it is not easy to separate passions from intellect, the rational from the irrational, or to understand an individual or community's complex web of interests and calculations of interests. However, it is useful to make certain generalizations. For the purposes of this article, there are two aspects of psychology that are highly relevant to a more profound understanding of Complex Operations.

First, it is clear from a wide range of literature and experience that Maslow[13] basically got it right. In the Hierarchy of Human Needs, "the safety needs" are second only to bodily functions[14]. In the context of Complex Operations, safety needs translate most directly into security**,** which balances physical security with a sense of justice**.** Put another way, as seen in COIN, securing a population is the most important aspect in a Complex Operation; experience in Iraq, Afghanistan and numerous other cases confirms this. However, "security" includes the broader elements associated with "a sense of justice". This in turn implies a stronger requirement for understanding and addressing what that sense of justice means in each operational environment.

The second point concerns our expeditionary forces, those striving to set the conditions to establish that security, across intertwined dimensions of power. In Complex Operations, there are socially based "wicked problems"[15] that require work by dedicated, talented people who know what they are doing and why they are doing it. Returning to Maslow, he described the characteristics of a person needed to perform these tasks. They are essentially self-motivated problem solvers who see the world as it is, and who have a very strong ethical sense.[16] These are people who

[13] Abraham H. Maslow, "A Theory of Human Motivation", in *Psychological Review* 50(4) (1943): 370-96. http://psychclassics.yorku.ca/Maslow/motivation.htm, accessed 04 JAN 09.

[14] Maslow, p.377 "*The safety needs*…we may then fairly describe the whole organism as a safety-seeking mechanism. …we find that the dominating goal is a strong determinant not only of his current world-out-look and philosophy but also of his philosophy of the future. Practically everything looks less important than safety…A man, in this state…may be characterized as living almost for safety alone."

[15] Horst W. J. Rittel, "On the Planning Crisis: Systems Analysis of the 'First and Second Generations,'" in *Bedriftsøkonomen* 8 (1972), pp. 392-393. Horst W. J. Rittel and Melvin M. Webber, "Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning," in *Policy Sciences* 4 (1973), pp. 161-167. As cited in U.S. Army TRADOC Pamphlet 525-5-500, Version1.0, 28 January 2008, p. 9.

[16] Whereas the basics of "self actualization" are described in Maslow, p. 383, the themes relevant to this article are covered in a later work, see: Maslow, Abraham *Motivation and Personality*. New York: Harper. 1954.

can simplify the 'complexity' and make order out of the chaos, and both design and execute far-reaching solutions to the problems at hand.

Since the RMA theses drew us away from the very human aspects of the military art which are fundamental to Complex Operations, it is time to reassess the human dimensions in the light of the developing requirements of Complex Operations. Specifically, there are two basic observations that bring up two fundamental premises with the potential to significantly impact NATO's DOTMLPF. The first concerns the possibility that we have entered a New Heroic Age in the middle of a highly technological age. If true, this brings into question how to develop personnel models for the New Heroic Age, which are best described as "functionaries" and "warriors."

Complex Operations = a new heroic age?

Edward N. Luttwak describes the era of the RMA as a "post-heroic" age[17], because advanced technology led to the ability to conduct operations from a distance. This implies a de-emphasis of the role of the individual in conflict. However, in Complex Operations such as COIN, every individual on the ground counts. The role of the "strategic corporal"[18] and the daily events in Afghanistan and Iraq highlight this development.

This is a logical and positive re-balancing in the evolution of militaries that have come to rely too heavily on machinery and technical solutions. Although this reliance stemmed from the rational desire of modern democracies to limit losses of blood and materiel in combat, it turned many friendly troops into "cogs in the wheels" of that machinery. Coupled with risk aversion on the ground, this often led to a "bunker mentality" of troops in ever-larger bases, detached from the real work on the ground. However, in operations in which the requirement for success is to have personnel (military and civilian) face to face with a heterogeneous foreign population, military and paramilitary local forces, enemy fighters and support networks, in a fluid and frequently lethal environment, in the support of a legitimate cause—we have entered (or re-entered) an age that should be thought of as "heroic". This is not a glorification; it is a reference to real conditions and required mindsets,

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[17] Edward N. Luttwak, "Toward Post-Heroic Warfare", in *Foreign Affairs*, 74, May/June, 1995. Also in "A Post-Heroic Military Policy", in *Foreign Affairs*, 75, July/August 1995. Most recently, in Part 4 "Post Heroic Warfare", *The Virtual American Empire: War, Faith, and Power*, Transaction Publishers, Brunswick, NJ. 2007.
[18] Charles C. Krulak, "Leadership in the Three Block War" in *Marines Magazine*, January 1999.

particularly the closer one gets to the problems on the ground. This has very significant implications.

"Functionaries" or "Warriors"?

Are the challenges of a return to the "heroic" too complex, too hard, for NATO? The answer depends on a number of factors, including the adaptability of our military institutions and the political will as represented by their governments and societies. Simply put, it depends on all three legs of the Clausewitzian trinity. However, the raw material must be "good troops"—good people—properly assessed, selected, trained, educated, and led. Although NATO troops can do it, and have done it, there still must be significant institutional change to allow individuals, units, and organizations the room to develop the skills and mindsets required, and the flexibility to apply creative solutions to complex, ill-structured, and "wicked" problems.

Significantly, in a complex environment most of this work is done on the ground among the human terrain, which increases personal risk dramatically. Despite the danger, there are significant benefits to this approach: it is not boring or meaningless, which has a great psychological effect on troops (current and potential), as well as on home populations, providing that the efforts are seen as worthwhile, necessary, and successful.[19] It is also an opportunity for the dedicated, talented problem solvers to practice the art of the possible in new and remarkable ways. For example, complexity allows the possibility of 'grand design' –normally in the strategic realm—at the *operational* and *tactical* levels, because conditions require it. There are plenty of examples of this from the recent operations[20].

This leads to the requirement to address something of a dichotomy in NATO professional military approaches and mindsets, which I will categorize as those of the "functionaries" and the "warriors". Although it may have different connotations in the different languages of the NATO countries, the term "functionary"[21] indicates

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[19] Consider the following: "A war to protect other human beings against tyrannical injustice; a war to give victory to their own ideas of right and good, and which is their own war, carried on for an honest purpose by their free choice, - is often the means of *their regeneration*." John Stuart Mill, "The Contest in America," in *Dissertations and Discussions,* vol. 1, p. 26 (1868). First published in *Fraser's Magazine,* February 1862.

[20] Author's notes while a Task Force commander in Afghanistan, 2007.

[21] Author's notes, 1999, 2004, 2009; I have heard the term "functionary" in four languages to describe the role of the military. Accounting for linguistic and cultural nuances, the term still stands in contrast to those that describe "warriors", "fighters", "combatants", "field troops", and a variety of more appropriate terms for military forces facing the challenges of complex operations.

a role akin to that of bureaucrats performing roles of some authority, as in a civil administration in a home country. Closely associated with this is the tendency to prefer overly technocratic solutions[22]. At an extreme, functionaries follow a careerist path focused on personal advancement, which is self-serving and can ultimately be detrimental to mission success. In contrast, there is a subtle reluctance to use language associated with the role of the "warrior", and to describe that role, most likely owing to political, historical, cultural, and even legal sensitivities. However, this does not change the fact that we need warriors, and should clearly identify what it means to be an ethical, professional, modern warrior. This should start with the acceptance of a simple and non-controversial warrior ethos.[23]

Bridging the cultural and professional gap between the functionaries and the warriors is fundamental to future success. Fortunately, the two are not necessarily mutually exclusive. However, it is far easier to develop functionaries than to develop the kind of warriors we need for Complex Operations, because while we can produce functionaries through education, it is difficult to imbue the physical and moral courage indicated by a warrior ethos. Likewise, the level of training required to move, survive, and operate effectively in the warrior's operational areas is significant.

In short, turning functionaries into ethically-based and operationally effective warriors is at the very heart of the possibility of a new "heroic" approach. This is not the swaggering "heroism" of a braggart or amateur adventurer; it is the way of the quiet professional who is confident and competent as a problem solver in an arduous and enduring mission. This situation becomes more heroic the closer it is to the messy and complex realities on the ground. Of note, people respond to the "heroic" in others and respect it, and this is certainly true in the places where Complex Operations occur. Local populations, from tribal to advanced societies, despise those seen as weak, detached, oppressive, and self-serving, but admire those showing strength (of character as well as arms), concern, and justice. They also admire those who are not only *against* something (like the enemy), but *for* something, and are dedicated and courageous in pursuing it. If these positive aspects are then passed on to others, for example to other military and police forces through SFA efforts, then it creates a virtuous cycle. This cycle can have a multiplier effect in the troubled areas, which supports the goal of providing stability with justice.

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[22] Lew Irwin, "Filling Irregular Warfare's Interagency Gaps", in *Parameters*, Autumn 2009. P. 70.
[23] For example, the U.S. Army's Warrior Ethos is simply stated as follows: "I will always place the mission first. I will never accept defeat. I will never quit. I will never leave a fallen comrade."

This internal personnel model is one basic challenge for NATO in dealing with the challenges of complexity, and is on the "micro" level of the individual. However, on the "macro" level there are additional challenges with potential solutions, if they are faced directly.

NATO requirement: identify and harness the advantages of multinational operations

Complex Operations are, by definition, already complex enough on the ground. In addition to this challenge, NATO must also manage the added complexity of conducting multinational operations. However, for every challenge, there is a potential positive aspect. Solving complex problems requires a breadth of capabilities and a depth of resources, whether that capital is human, economic, or political. Given that "burden sharing" for sustained operations is a particular challenge, it is wise to carefully muster and maintain the resources available from the nations involved. As in economics, certain nations have comparative advantages. The trick is to harness them for shared purposes in a way that directly relates to solving the complex problems at hand.

The challenges here include the obvious, such as resources available (e.g. operational budgets, helicopters, vehicles). However, they also include more sensitive but absolutely critical elements, such as the level of military capacity. This category includes having the institutional (DOTMLPF) factors for a given operation. In this case, developing or adapting the appropriate doctrine is a *relatively* easy part of the problem, as troops can adjust, providing that they are professional, well-trained and well-led. More complicated is the array of challenges associated with political will. These challenges often manifest themselves in the form of "national caveats", which to varying degrees affect the ability of an allied force to solve the complex problems on the ground. However, as a reality of coalition warfare, they must be respected, as they tie back to political support in the home countries.

Ultimately, the most daunting challenge is to achieve unity of command, effort, and purpose. Despite the obvious value of multinational institutions in enhancing political legitimacy, the recurring failure to achieve effective unity of effort must be addressed directly if there is to be any realistic chance of succeeding. There are no easy answers or formulas here, but the bottom line is that success is the only acceptable outcome in military operations. Therefore, direct participation must be tied to a willingness and capability to do those things that enable success in areas of the operation. While noble, participation itself is simply not good enough if we

are serious about achieving a successful outcome. Therefore, not everybody should "play the whole game." In such cases, however, political support is always welcome, as are extremely useful supporting roles, such as medical, logistics, financial, or developmental support outside of the non-permissive or semi-permissive areas. Managing who does what and where must be based on realistic assessments; the danger of getting it wrong imperils more than just the operations on the ground.

However, if done right, the benefits to the operation, as well as to the individual contributing nations and the Alliance, are significant. The operation can benefit from a broad range of unique skill sets, talent, expertise, organizations, and approaches. This includes, for example, deployable gendarme forces for stability operations; experience with internal and foreign subversion problems; and the legitimacy that comes from multilateral endorsement of an operation. In addition, despite the challenge of multiple voices, certain Allies may be better at overall strategy in a given circumstance, which helps avoid the "groupthink" phenomenon and short-sightedness. Longer term, the benefits are potentially exponential. When done right, these operations strengthen military-to-military and international bonds because of the very human individual and communal response to shared hardship in a legitimate cause. As heard often in Afghanistan, the old saying "he who has bled with me is my brother" is more than simple rhetoric. Anyone who has participated in a "ramp side ceremony"[24] will know exactly what this means.

Conclusions

Strategically, it is often said that Complex Operations require "whole of government"[25] approaches, although this concept is actually better as a "whole of nation"[26] approach, making use of private sector support as well to achieve "unity of purpose" as well as unity of command and effort. I would expand this further to suggest a "whole of Alliance" approach for NATO. Although this may seem unrealistic for a group of pluralistic, democratically-based states that treasure the right of dissent, the salient point is that the Clausewitzian Trinity of the Alliance needs all three components if the "Complex Operation" is to be successful. The Alliance is an alliance for a number of reasons, including treasured and shared values

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[24] Ceremony for fallen troops in the area of operations before repatriating remains. The presence of international forces alongside the national contingent of the fallen is a very powerful show of unity and honor.

[25] See U.S. Army Field Manual 3-07 Stability Operations, October 2008, p.1-4.

[26] David Grange et al., *Whole of Nation Engagement: Confronting Irregular Challenges in the 21st Century,* Nov 2008, McCormick Foundation, Wheaton, IL.

that we are collectively willing to defend with word and deed.

However, to date there is little evidence of any earnest or effective attempt to mobilize voluntary support to the level of "whole of" any political body. Doing so requires a clear strategic vision and communication of that vision in a way that it is supportable by most of the political spectrum. Civilian-military relations are critical; therefore it is essential to strengthen or forge those bonds with the cultural, entertainment, religious, and/or civic entities that count to each population. Mobilizing these resources, which are voluntary, requires making the case in the marketplace of ideas. Doing so is a strategic imperative, as it involves strengthening the bonds of the Clausewitzian Trinity - which is a strategic target of enemy action.

At the operational and tactical levels, we are fully capable of achieving success. Realistic assessments of complex problems, followed by imaginative and adaptable plans and actions, lead to success. Recognize what works, and use and adapt it; identify what does not work, and discard it. There is a simple truism: nothing breeds success like success. The corollary to this truism, though, is "you have to follow through." Gain the momentum in tactical and operational activities, and do not foolishly squander it. Complexity is challenging, but NATO is up to the task if willing to adapt to it. Clearly, NATO must prepare its people for these challenges.

Recommendations for doctrine, training, and education for Complex Operations

NATO must prepare its personnel for complex challenges, which requires developing the cognitive skills of "how to think" and "what to think" (of which the former is more important). Without the appropriate cognitive skills, for example, leaders at all levels will not be able to "understand, visualize, describe and direct"[27] successfully. To this end, I propose several simple recommendations. These, though not all-inclusive, are meant to further discussion of preparation for Complex Operations.

Doctrine

First, I propose some simple guiding principles for doctrine for Complex

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[27] The elements of "Battle Command" in US Army doctrine. See U.S. Army Field Manual 3-0, *Operations*, February 2008, Chapter 5.

Operations. Doctrine should be:

- Holistic, because the problem set is multi-faceted.

- Realistic, based on the imperfect human dimension in complex, anarchic situations.

- Parsimonious. Get to the point; do not muddle, confuse, or bore operators, commanders, and staffs. Extensive studies are useful when there is ample time for thorough academic study and reflection, but—like Sun Tzu—it is best to distill the wisdom and lessons learned for clarity and thorough absorption.

- Balanced, focused on the operational art, which is supported by the sciences. Likewise, focus on the complexities of the indirect approach, without neglecting the direct.

- Forward looking, looking to future applications and technologies while remaining grounded in current realities.

- Reviewed and revised, continually updated by talented, experienced people. As needed, issue "Training Circulars" and handbooks to continually update the force on the latest developments in enemy and friendly TTPs, without the full requirement of the doctrinal development process (which is normally 18-24 months long).

Training

The most obvious point about training for Complex Operations is that training scenarios must be complex themselves, reflecting the operational environments. The key is to be able to get to and effectively operate in the areas where the people are. Unique aspects include, but are not limited to:

-Mobility: as there are simply not enough helicopters in NATO for everyone, ground mobility is supremely important, and (as appropriate to unit and mission) should cover the full range of mobility, from horses[28] to motorcycles, all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) to light and armored off-road trucks. Complete reliance on armored vehicles is neither wise nor sufficient, as the enemy will adjust to larger Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) as larger vehicles are canalized onto more limited movement corridors. More flexible movement formations would include varied combinations of the means above, using modern combined arms cavalry

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[28] Author's notes, Afghanistan, 2002, 2004, 2005, 2007; South America 1996, 2000, 2006. Although not a replacement for vehicles, the advantages of horses include tactical mobility in virtually all terrain, and the significant fact that local populations (particularly rural populations) love horses and respect people who know how to use them. This novel yet ancient approach also presents excellent opportunities for positive information engagement, with both the local populations and with the media.

techniques (air and ground) both on roads and off-road. The use of scouts, overwatch, and self-recovery is fundamental; the use of mobility-enhancing[29] assets is highly recommended.

 -Combat Environmental Training: combat is the harshest of environments, regardless of where it occurs. Even if actual fighting does not occur, all personnel must be prepared for it. Replicate the physical terrain and conditions as possible; include cultural role-players and "grey-area" scenarios. Do not neglect rural training (like traditional patrolling), but emphasize urban combat training, as it is better for close combat, the most likely form of combat in Complex Operations.

 -Combatives: build confidence and physical stamina, as well as the warrior spirit. The techniques chosen are less important than the fact that the training is done.

 -Advisory and Assistance Training: local forces are ultimately the most effective way of securing local populations. A key part of SFA, personnel must prepare to operate alongside local counterparts. Of note, this is not about "putting a local face on" friendly operations, it is about enhancing *their* capabilities, getting *them* to do the operations, and ensuring *they* get credit for it.[30]

 -Key Leader Engagement (KLE) and Local Engagement Training: there is an art to conducting face-to-face (f2f) meetings with local populations and their leaders. As more units spread out among the key terrain (the people), this requirement increases exponentially. This is not just for the friendly leaders serving as spokesmen, but involves all personnel who will potentially participate in KLEs and meet with local people.

 -"SERE" (Survival, Evasion, Resistance, Escape) training: as above, with more civilian and military personnel f2f with local people, proximity to the enemy and their support networks increases; with it, the chance of capture increases. Therefore, even for rank-and-file members we have a responsibility to provide a degree of basic SERE training.

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[29] In addition to engineers, canine (K9) explosive detection teams are extremely valuable to search for IEDs and to search suspect vehicles, cargo, and personnel for explosives, as at checkpoints.

[30] This goes beyond combat operations, and includes Population and Resource Control (PRC) and civic action operations. There are numerous techniques for this. For example, all civic action projects should follow the "1/3 rule", meaning projects should be conducted by a *minimum* of 33% local police/military forces, a *minimum* of 33% local civilian population, and a *maximum* of 33% of our personnel.

Education: "*It's not rocket science…it is social science and art*"

Since Complex Operations are very human, the approach to them must be based on human behavior, and this essentially falls into the realm of the social sciences and liberal arts. Although social sciences may oversimplify in the name of achieving parsimony, or complicate understanding with endless data points, case studies, and theorizing, they can help practitioners develop the cognitive skills to "understand, visualize, and describe" complex problems they face. Focus on the study of power dynamics[31], cultural and language expertise (including transcendent aspects of interpersonal and intercultural communication[32]), information operations and engagement, and the essential elements of economics that are relevant for Complex Operations practitioners.[33] Likewise, a review of ethics is essential, as ethics apply across all dimensions of operations.

Personnel and units are already familiar with an array of handbooks, guidebooks, "Leader Books" and "Battle Books"[34] of key tasks and reference information that are straightforward, useful, and portable. Not necessarily doctrinal publications, they are a tool to shape and guide the operational understanding and vision as summaries of salient points (like "Cliff's Notes" or "Reader's Digest Condensed"), and are extremely useful. Therefore, it is advisable to develop a concise handbook containing key material from the cognitive skill subject matters listed above to further practitioners' education. This is more likely to be read and understood and absorbed than exhaustive reading lists.

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[31] Obviously a broad political-military field. I favor a return to a classic education concerning power dynamics. At a minimum, include the basics of both classical and neo-classical realism (Thucydides, Machiavelli, Hobbes, etc., as well as Reinhold Neibuhr) and liberalism, as well as salient points covered by military-political philosophers and theorists, specifically Sun Tzu and Clausewitz. This would also include, however, the basics of modern Game Theory.

[32] Learning a foreign language and culture makes an individual better at cross-cultural communications in general, not just in the specific target language and culture. Hence, language and culture are not simply "technical" skills, but rather cognitive abilities that enhance the art of communication.

[33] Relevant concepts include supply and demand, comparative advantage, opportunity costs, role of micro-finance; problems with "giving away" money and illicit funds (market flooding, distortions, inflation). Also the friendly force non-lethal concept of using "money as a weapons system".

[34] Guides and handbooks tend to be portable doctrinal publications relevant to specific mission sets; Leader Books and 'Battle Books' are normally created by each unit (down to detachment/ platoon level) that contain useful information about the unit and its mission, including mission essential tasks, training status, personnel.

Intuition: the complex dimension of cognitive skills

Art implies reliance on intuition; like Complex Operations, intuition is a very human phenomenon. Although exceedingly difficult to "teach", it can, however, be developed. Although there is no replacement for experience, reflection and broad-minded study, there are games that can help develop a "feel" for recognizing and handling complex problems. All games have their limits, but some are very useful to developing intuitive thought processes. Ideally, computer algorithms could model intuition and become training tools equal to a clever, adaptive human who may choose rationally or irrationally among strategic options—like a complex threat. However, given the apparent impossibility of "modeling intuition", institutions should encourage playing readily available yet complex games against human players. As humans have limits to their rationality and concentration, offer non-verbal clues, and often act on impulse, they are more useful for developing intuition than using computers. Like "mental combatives", this can help refine thought processes used for operational and strategic decision-making. There are two examples below.

Chess is an excellent strategic game, but concerning Complex Operations has several limits. Chess is a linear game focused on one ultimate target, the opponent's king. This is equivalent to a strategy of "decapitation", which is not particularly helpful in contemporary Complex Operations of networked, decentralized threats. These limits extend to the use of chess in analogies of Complex Operations. For example, it is commonplace to say "we play checkers, the enemy plays chess", or refer to an operational area as a "chessboard" to convey a sense of complexity. However, a more appropriate analogy would be a four dimensional (4D) chessboard, with one level each for each of the DIME elements. As this may be interesting as an analogy, but unwieldy as an actual game, it is worthwhile to consider alternatives.

A simpler, readily available means to help develop intuition in complexity is the ancient oriental game of Go. Known in Chinese as Wei Ch'i (the encircling game), it most broadly focuses on the indirect, as the enemy does. There are no fixed sides or positions and minimal rules. In order to understand the complexity belied by its simple form, consider that computer models are still unable to master it, given "the game's sheer insolvability."[35] Unlike games of linear and direct confrontation, Go is vague in terms of "profit-now" vs. "influence-later" assessments, and is

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[35] Peter Shotwell, *Go: More than a Game*, Tuttle Publishing, North Clarendon, Vermont, p.166: "the first 14 moves produce a search tree with ten thousand trillion leaves."

remarkably "complex on the local scale."[36] As Go is ultimately about controlling 'territory', the game requires strategic approaches that are less absolute, using calculation and intuition to play in local areas and across the board simultaneously. Interestingly, when using the game's handicap system, even amateurs can win against professionals; this in itself is analogous to professionals versus asymmetric and irregular threats.

Summarized advice for practitioners

Complex Operations are multidimensional because they are a very human endeavor. Even when "on the margins" of war, they represent a form of warfare to be won. Although the "direct" approach still applies, they largely rely on the "indirect". A broad and demanding category, Complex Operations require:

- **Leadership down to the lowest levels**, as every individual that operates in or influences the human terrain is important. Friendly forces operate tactically and operationally, but their actions have strategic impact.

- **Warrior ethos**, which implies both physical and moral courage. The moral courage must have a base in a firm ethical grounding, which is the cornerstone of building legitimacy.

- **Cognitive Skills, including intuition**. Understanding the problems at hand allows practitioners to apply the innovation and versatility required to succeed against current and future threats.

Complex Operations represent a challenge for dedicated, talented professionals who must succeed. The Alliance and the people of its member states, in addition to the affected local populations, deserve nothing less than success.

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[36] Shotwell, p. 164. In a commentary relevant to complex operations, Shotwell writes on "strategies for when conditions are chaotic" in Go: "the player whose stones or groups are not coordinated but have contradictory aims will always lose to the calm player who looks further ahead and has only one aim in mind", p.173.

CHAPTER FOUR

NATO will succeed only as its platoons succeed: psychological and ethical preparation for counterinsurgency operations

H.R. McMaster

NATO forces are engaged in Afghanistan against enemies that pose a great threat to all civilized peoples. Because transnational terrorist organizations will continue to seek safe havens and support bases from which they can organize and prepare mass murder attacks, it seems clear that NATO forces must continue to improve their ability to conduct effective counterinsurgency operations. As recent foiled attempts to commit terrorist attacks in Europe and the U.S. remind us, battlegrounds and lawless areas overseas are inexorably connected to NATO member states' security. And, because terrorist organizations and armed groups that ally with them inflict tremendous suffering on the populations of the regions they control, counterinsurgency operations are often based on humanitarian as well as security concerns. How NATO militaries prepare their soldiers, units, and leaders for the psychological and moral challenges of counterinsurgency operations will be a critical determinant for success in Afghanistan as well as potential future missions.

Because NATO is a political-military alliance, it is natural that discussions about preparation of NATO forces focus on operational planning or broad topics such as the integration of security efforts with development, governance, security sector reform, and rule of law efforts. While these subjects are important, it is also important to remember that NATO forces will succeed in counterinsurgency campaigns only as the platoons and companies of member nations succeed. Counterinsurgency operations place extraordinary demands on small units and junior leaders. The December 2009 "U.S. Army Capstone Concept", a document that lays a conceptual foundation for the development of future forces, highlights an enduring need for "cohesive teams and resilient soldiers who are capable of overcoming the enduring psychological and moral challenges of combat."[1] These psychological and moral challenges are particularly acute in a counterinsurgency environment.

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[1] U.S. Army TRADOC, Capstone Concept, *Operational Adaptability*, available at http://www.tradoc.army.mil/tpubs/pams/tp525-3-0.pdf

As the U.S. *Counterinsurgency Manual* observes, ensuring moral conduct during counterinsurgency operations is particularly difficult because "the environment that fosters insurgency is characterized by violence, immorality, distrust, and deceit."[2] While NATO forces have adapted their training and preparation for the rigors of operations of Afghanistan, it is time to evaluate and consolidate those adaptations with a particular focus on ensuring moral and ethical conduct while also preparing soldiers for the extraordinary psychological demands of counterinsurgency operations.

The first step may be to recognize that adaptation to the demands of operations in Afghanistan was complicated, in large measure, by a pre-war fixation on emerging technologies and the associated belief that these technologies would completely transform war. The belief in the so-called "Revolution in Military Affairs" (RMA) drove many NATO armed forces to pursue the "transformation" of their armed forces through the integration of communications, information, surveillance, and precision strike technologies. Many NATO senior officers and defense officials assumed that technologically-advanced military forces would wage war rapidly, decisively, and efficiently. The conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan have revealed that the ahistorical definition of armed conflict associated with the RMA divorced war from its political nature. It tried to simplify the problem of future war to a targeting effort. And this approach did little to prepare NATO forces for the challenges they faced in Afghanistan. As British Lieutenant General Sir John Kiszely observed:

> … for many military professionals, warfare – the practice of war, and warfighting – combat, were synonymous, thereby misleading themselves that there was no more to the practice of war than combat. True, some armed forces found themselves involved in other operations…. But these missions were largely considered by many military establishments to be aberrations – Operations Other Than War, as they came to be known in British and American doctrine – distractions from the 'real thing': large scale, hi-tech, inter-state conflict...[3].

The lack of intellectual preparation limited military effectiveness and made it difficult for NATO leaders and forces to adapt to the evolving character of the

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[2] FM 3-24, p. 7-2.
[3] John Kiszely, "Post-Modern Challenges for Modern Warriors", in *The Shrivenham Papers* – Number 5, p. 6, December 2007.

conflict in Afghanistan. The orthodoxy of the revolution in military affairs had conflated warfare and warfighting. It had "dehumanized" as well as "depoliticized" our understanding of war, ignored critical continuities in warfare, and exaggerated the effect of technology on the nature of armed conflict. For the first years of the war, military operations were based, in large measure, on the concept of "persistent raiding," an approach that was inconsistent with the evolving character of the conflict and proved inadequate in connection with achieving an outcome consistent with NATO and Afghan objectives.

As the security situation in Afghanistan deteriorated, NATO forces undertook a broad range of adaptations including a shift in emphasis away from raiding and toward population security, improvements in civil-military integration, and measures to minimize civilian casualties. These adaptations derived, in part, from a better appreciation for the political and human complexities of the war in Afghanistan and of war in general. As John Keegan observed in his classic 1974 study, *The Face of Battle*, the human dimension of war exhibited a high degree of continuity across five centuries:

> What battles have in common is human: the behaviour of men struggling to reconcile their instinct for self-preservation, their sense of honour and the achievement of some aim over which other men are ready to kill them. The study of battle is therefore always a study of fear and usually of courage, always of leadership, usually of obedience; always of compulsion, sometimes of insubordination; always of anxiety, sometimes of elation or catharsis; always of uncertainty and doubt, misinformation and misapprehension, usually also of faith and sometimes of vision; always of violence, sometimes also of cruelty, self-sacrifice, compassion; above all, it is always a study of solidarity and usually also of disintegration – for it is toward the disintegration of human groups that battle is directed."[4]

Keegan was particularly sensitive to the social and psychological dimensions of combat, but he argued against turning the study of war over to sociologists or psychologists. Military leaders must take an interdisciplinary approach to the study of war and understand contemporary conflicts in historical perspective. The resultant understanding of the human, social, and psychological dimensions of war should inform efforts to prepare soldiers and units for the extraordinary physical and

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[4] Keegan, *The Face of Battle*, p. 83.

psychological strains of combat.

Cognizant of the enduring human and political dimensions of war, NATO militaries have rediscovered counterinsurgency theory and doctrine and have published manuals meant to guide their forces' education, training, and operations.[5] NATO forces have adapted and leaders have taken measures to ensure ethical conduct in the trying circumstances of counterinsurgency operations of Afghanistan. Indeed, every day, NATO soldiers take risks and make sacrifices to protect innocents. Because enemy organizations in Afghanistan are unscrupulous, some might argue for a relaxation of ethical and moral standards and the use of force with *less* discrimination because the ends – the defeat of the enemy - justifies the means employed.[6] To think this way would be a grave mistake. The war in which NATO forces are engaged demands that our forces retain the moral high ground despite the depravity of our enemies. And, as the U.S. counterinsurgency (COIN) manual points out, the insurgent often hopes to provoke the excessive or indiscriminate use of force.[7]

Counterinsurgencies are mainly decided on two battlegrounds – intelligence and perception. NATO forces must be able to separate terrorists and insurgents from the population. Doing so requires treating people with respect and building relationships based on mutual trust and common purpose. It is a bond of trust with local partners that leads to intelligence about the enemy. To develop trust, NATO forces must counter a very sophisticated enemy propaganda and disinformation campaign and clarify their true intentions – not just with words, but also with deeds. Moral and ethical conduct despite the brutality of this enemy is essential to defeat enemies whose primary sources of strength are coercion and the stoking of hatreds based on ignorance.

Counterinsurgency operations demand decentralization mainly because of the need to secure the population while working closely with indigenous military, police, and civil officials. If forces operate in a centralized manner from large bases,

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[5] See, for example, U.S. Department of the Army, in *Counterinsurgency*, Dec. 2006. Available at www. fas.org/irp/doddir/army/fm3-24.pdf Hereafter cited as U.S. COIN Manual. See also British Army Field Manual Vol 1 Part 10, *Countering Insurgency* and National Defence Canada Land Force Publication B-GL-323-004/FP-003, *Counter-Insurgency Operations*. Allied Joint Publication (AJP) 3.4.4, *NATO COIN Doctrine*, is in the ratification stage.

[6] For example, some French Army officers made this argument during the War of Algerian Independence. See Lou Dimarco, "Losing the Moral Compass: Torture and the *Guerre Révolutionnaire* in the Algerian Civil War," in *Military Review*, pp. 70-72, Summer 2006. Available at www.carlisle.army.mil/usawc/parameters/06summer/dimarco.pdf

[7] COIN Manual p. 7-2.

insurgent forces are likely to retain the initiative and control over the population. Decentralization requires that commanders devolve decision-making downward and forward consistent with the concept of mission command or the execution of decentralized operations based on mission orders. Effective decentralization under mission command, however, does not just happen. Senior commanders have to prepare their organizations and leaders for decentralized operations and develop plans that integrate decentralized operations into a common approach that contributes to the achievement of policy goals and objectives.

Effective decentralization also requires a common understanding of the nature of the conflict, clearly articulated objectives, a comprehensive operational plan, and close coordination between levels of command, civil authorities, indigenous leaders, and adjacent organizations. Perhaps most important, NATO senior leaders must prepare small units and junior leaders for the considerable challenges of decentralized operations in the context of counterinsurgency campaigns. Particular attention must be paid to the training and education of junior officers and noncommissioned officers, who must develop a high degree of competence in combat and civil-military skills, understand the environment in which they will operate, and lead their soldiers aggressively while maintaining the highest moral and ethical standards. Decentralized operations place a great deal of responsibility on the shoulders of junior leaders for ensuring moral conduct; it is junior officers and noncommissioned officers who will enforce standards and make critical time-sensitive decisions under pressure.

Preparing leaders for this grave responsibility should begin with an understanding of the causes of breakdowns in discipline that can result in immoral or unethical conduct in war. These include ignorance, uncertainty, fear, and combat trauma. These causes are interconnected and, if not addressed, can become mutually reinforcing. Ignorance concerning the mission, the environment or the professional military ethic can erode the trust that binds NATO soldiers to their societies and to one another. Ignorance can exacerbate the inherent uncertainty of armed conflict and uncertainty, in turn, can lead to mistakes that risk harming civilians unnecessarily. Uncertainty combined with the persistent danger inherent in counterinsurgency operations tends to magnify fear in individuals and units. Fear experienced over time or a harrowing experience can lead to combat trauma. And combat trauma often manifests itself in rage and actions that risk compromising the mission and the professionalism of the unit.

To inoculate soldiers and units against the potential debilitating effects of ignorance, uncertainty, fear, and combat trauma, leaders must make a concerted

effort to prepare their soldiers and units in four areas: applied ethics or values-based instruction; training that replicates as closely as possible situations that soldiers are likely to encounter; education about cultures and historical experiences of the peoples among whom the wars are being fought; and leadership that sets the example, keeps soldiers informed, and manages combat stress.

Applied ethics and values based instruction

Ethical training in preparation for combat must go far beyond classes on the Law of War. While it is important for leaders to understand that the Law of War codifies the principal tenets of Just War Theory, especially *Jus In Bello* principles of discrimination and proportionality, they must also recognize that individual and institutional values are more important than legal constraints on immoral behavior because legal contracts are often observed only as long as others honor them or as long as they are enforced. [8]

The values of NATO militaries are strikingly compatible and are consistent with Aristotelian virtue, the ancient philosophy of Cicero, and the modern philosophy of Immanuel Kant. It is easy, for example, to identify the similarity between the U.S. Army's definition of respect as beginning "with a fundamental understanding that all people possess worth as human beings" and Cicero's exhortation in *On Duties* that "we must exercise a respectfulness towards men, both towards the best of them and also towards the rest."[9] NATO military values have obvious implications for moral conduct in counterinsurgency, especially in connection with the treatment of civilians and captured enemy.

Applied ethics indoctrination for new soldiers may be even more important today than in the past because of the need to differentiate between societal and military professional views on the use of violence. In much of the Western media to which young soldiers are exposed, such as action films, video games, and 'gangster rap' music, violence appears justifiable as a means of advancing personal interests or demonstrating individual prowess.[10] In contrast, the Law of War as well as the military's code of honor justifies violence only against combatants.

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[8] Christopher Coker, *The Warrior Ethos: Military Culture and the War on Terror,* London: Routledge, pp. 135-138, 2007.
[9] Marcus Tillius Cicero, *On Duties*, ed. and trans., M.T. Griffin and E.M. Atkins, Cambridge University Press, p. 39, 1991.
[10] Coker, p. 92.

To inculcate soldiers with a determination to use force with discipline and discrimination, NATO militaries should emphasize collective rather than individual ethics education. Collective education and training helps soldiers to understand that the institution and their fellow soldiers expect them to exhibit a higher sense of honor than that to which they are exposed in popular culture. As Christopher Coker observed in *The Warrior Ethos*, "in a world of honor the individual discovers his true identity in his roles and to turn away from the roles is to turn away from oneself."[11] Particularly important is the expectation that soldiers take risks and make sacrifices to accomplish the mission, protect fellow soldiers, or safeguard innocents. Use of force that reduces risk to soldiers, but places either the mission or innocents at risk, must be seen as inconsistent with NATO forces' code of honor and professional ethic.

Values education can ring hollow unless it is pursued in a way that provides context and demonstrates relevance. While NATO military leaders should emphasize ethical behavior as an end, leaders must also stress the utilitarian basis for sustaining the highest moral standards. Showing soldiers enemy propaganda is useful in emphasizing the importance of ethical behavior as a means of countering disinformation. Respectful treatment, addressing grievances, and building trust with the population ought to be viewed as essential for mission success. Leaders might also use historical examples and case studies of how excesses or abuse in the pursuit of tactical expediency corrupted the moral character of units and undermined strategic objectives. These are particularly poignant. The use of films or videos can spark useful discussions that highlight the need for soldiers and units to preserve their nation's professional military ethic despite the difficult counterinsurgency environment.

Training

No matter how effective, applied ethics education alone cannot steel soldiers and units against the corrosive effects of missions that entail persistent danger and uncertainty. Training our new troopers and integrating them into cohesive, confident teams must remain the first priority for NATO leaders. Tough realistic training builds confidence and cohesion, qualities that serve as bulwarks against fear and psychological stress in battle. Much of the stress that soldiers experience in combat stems from uncertainty. Training must replicate the conditions of combat as closely as possible and thereby reduce soldiers' uncertainty and doubts about the situations they are likely to encounter. Exercises must replicate the confusion and intensity

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[11] Coker, p. 137.

of battle to prevent soldiers and units from succumbing to fear. Fear can cause inaction or, in a counterinsurgency environment, might lead to an overreaction that harms innocents and undermines the counterinsurgent's mission. This recognition is as old as war itself. In her book *Stoic Warriors,* Nancy Sherman quotes Seneca to emphasize the importance of training as a form of "bullet-proofing" soldiers against the debilitating effects of fear and combat stress: "A large part of the evil consists in its novelty," but "if evil has been pondered beforehand the blow is gentle when it comes."[12] NATO militaries should base training scenarios directly on recent experiences of units in Afghanistan. Units must also train consistent with Aristotle's observation that virtues are formed by repetition. Repetitive training under challenging and realistic conditions prepares units to respond immediately and together to encounters with the enemy using battle drills – rehearsed responses to a predictable set of circumstances. A well drilled, confident unit is unlikely to become paralyzed by fear in even the most challenging conditions of combat. Units that demonstrate in training their ability to fight and operate together as teams will build the confidence and cohesion necessary to suppress fear and cope with combat stress while preserving their professionalism and moral character.

Training must also prepare units to operate in and among the population. Civilian role-players can help replicate ethnic, religious, and tribal landscapes of the areas in which units will operate. If role players are not available, cultural experts might train soldiers to play the role of civilians while their fellow soldiers are trained and evaluated. Using soldiers as civilian role players has a secondary benefit as soldiers learn from viewing their own force from the perspective of the civilian population. Exercises that include civilian role players help soldiers understand better the importance of restraint and respectful, professional conduct as well as learn how to gain visibility of an enemy that attempts to blend into the population. Role players and soldiers should conduct "after action reviews" to identify lessons and consider how the unit might apply those lessons to future training and operations. In general, it is no longer useful to think of training and education as separate activities. Training must also educate soldiers and leaders about the population as well as the enemy.

Cultural and historical education

Because unfamiliar cultures can compound the stress associated with

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[12] Nancy Sherman, *Stoic Warriors: The Ancient Philosophy Behind the Military Mind,* New York, Oxforod University Press, p. 117, 2005.

physical danger, ensuring that soldiers are familiar with the history and culture of the region in which they are operating is critical for mission success and sustaining combat effectiveness. In addition to using realistic training as a means of educating leaders and soldiers, NATO commanders must establish professional reading programs and create forums to discuss books and articles. Additionally, excellent documentaries are available on relevant historical and cultural subjects. It is important to develop education programs with practical objectives in mind. An understanding of ethnic, cultural, and tribal dynamics allows soldiers to evaluate sources of information and anticipate potential consequences of their actions. Leaders who have a basic understanding of history and culture can also recognize and counter the enemy's misrepresentation of history for propaganda purposes.

Perhaps most important, education programs should aim to promote moral conduct by generating empathy for the population. The U.S. COIN Manual describes "genuine compassion and empathy for the populace" as an "effective weapon against insurgents."[13] If soldiers understand the population's experience, feelings of confusion and frustration might be supplanted by concern and compassion.

A critical examination of history also allows soldiers to understand the fundamentals of counterinsurgency theory and thereby equips them to make better decisions in what are highly decentralized operations. Soldiers need to recognize that the population must be the focus of the counterinsurgent's effort and that the population's perceptions – of their government, the counterinsurgent forces, and the insurgents – are of paramount importance. This recognition highlights the need for soldiers to treat the population respectfully and to clarify their intentions through their deeds and conduct. Historical understanding can also help leaders evaluate their efforts and place contemporary operations in context of previous experience. Learning about previous counterinsurgency experiences allows leaders to ask questions about contemporary missions, avoid some of the mistakes of the past, recognize opportunities and identify effective techniques.

While it is important that all soldiers possess basic cultural and historical knowledge, it is also important that leaders and units have access to cultural expertise. If time and resources permit, units might develop basic language capability by sending selected soldiers to undergraduate history, anthropology, or regional studies courses or immersion language training. Education efforts should aim to prepare soldiers to listen and learn effectively upon arrival and to improve soldier's ability

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[13] COIN Manual, p. 7-2.

to interact positively with the population. Because soldiers tend to share what they learn with other members of their team, sending just a few soldiers to language, culture, or history courses can have a broad positive effect on an organization.

In a counterinsurgency environment, cultural expertise can help units distinguish between reconcilable and irreconcilable groups through an analysis of each group's fears and aspirations. Education in negotiation and mediation techniques is also valuable in addressing fundamental causes of violence and achieving enduring security. NATO leaders are likely to serve as mediators between factions that are willing to resolve differences through politics rather than violence[14]. In short, cultural and historical understanding contributes to the ethical conduct of war by helping units determine how to apply force discriminately and identify opportunities to resolve conflict short of force. Cultural and historical understanding also reduces cultural stress that can contribute to breakdowns in discipline and standards of conduct.

Leadership

Education or indoctrination in professional military ethics, realistic training, and knowledge of the cultural and historical education are vital, but insufficient for preserving moral character under the intense emotional and psychological pressures of counterinsurgency operations. Leaders must help their units cope with the stress of continuous operations; it is combat stress that often leads to unprofessional or immoral behavior.[15]

Military education is often thin on the psychological dynamics of combat, perhaps because its importance only becomes obvious in wartime. Leaders must regard control of combat stress as a command responsibility. Leaders must be familiar with grief counseling and "griefwork". Grieving losses must be valued, not

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[14] For relevant work conducted in this area by the Harvard Negotiation Project, see www.pon.harvard.edu/research/projects/hnp.php3 For a book that is useful in connection with preparing for negotiation and mediation in a counterinsurgency environment, see Roger Fisher and Daniel Shapiro, *Beyond Reason: Using Emotions as You Negotiate,* New York: Viking, 2005.

[15] Evidence for this conclusion comes from the business world. A 1997 survey on the Sources and Consequences of Workplace Pressure, for instance, found that workers responded to workplace pressure by resorting to unethical behaviour (for instance, 'cutting corners on quality control, engaging in insider trading, falsifying reports, accepting kickbacks, and having an affair with a business associate'). Edward S. Petry, Amanda E. Mujica, and Dianne M. Vickery, 'Sources and Consequences of Workplace Pressure: Increasing the Risk of Unethical and Illegal Business Practices', in *Business and Society Review*, vol. 99, no. 1, p. 26, 2003.

stigmatized. Leaders must understand how to "communalize" grief so units can get through difficult times together. If units experience losses, they must receive combat stress counseling. Leaders must also watch soldier behavior carefully to identify warning signs such as social disconnection, distractibility, suspiciousness of friends, irrationality and inconsistency. Soldiers who become "revenge-driven" are particularly debilitating to unit discipline and can do significant damage to the mission and their fellow troopers. Commitment to fellow troopers and mission must be the motivating factors in battle – not rage. Moreover, soldiers' knowledge that they have behaved in a professional, disciplined, moral manner when confronting the enemy is one of the most important factors that prevents post traumatic stress and various dysfunctions that come with it.[16]

Lack of effective leadership has often contributed to combat trauma. Effective communication is vital. Explain to troopers the importance of their mission and make sure that they understand the higher commander's intent and concept for defeating the enemy and accomplishing the mission. A key part of the psychological well being critical to preserving discipline and moral conduct in combat depends, in large measure, on preserving soldiers' sense of agency or control.[17] It is vital that troopers understand how the risks they take and sacrifices they make are contributing to the achievement of objectives worthy of those risks and sacrifices. Ultimately, positive feedback in the form of success in combat reinforces ethical and moral conduct.

Senior commanders must establish the right climate and send a simple, clear message continuously to their troopers such as "every time you treat a civilian disrespectfully, you are working for the enemy." It is, however, junior officers and non-commissioned officers who will enforce standards of moral conduct. Preparing leaders at the squad, platoon, and company levels for that responsibility is vitally important.

Conclusion

NATO soldiers engaged in Afghanistan are confronting brutal enemies in complex environments. Ethical conduct under the complex and trying conditions of counterinsurgency operations is critical to mission accomplishment as well as

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[16] David Grossman, *On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society* (paperback), New York: Back Bay Books, pp. 222-227, 1996.
[17] Sherman, p. 126.

preserving the military's professionalism and sense of honor. Ensuring ethical conduct will require NATO forces to overcome ignorance, uncertainty, fear, and combat trauma through effective leadership, cultural and historical education, realistic training, and applied ethics instruction.

While the principal responsibility for preserving the professional military ethic under the strain of combat lies with military leaders, the societies in whose name soldiers fight have a role to play as well. As Christopher Coker observed, "When we are valued by others we value ourselves. It is this fusion of inner and outer worlds which gives the warrior ethos its appeal. It is this identity that makes the warrior 'happy.'"[18] Indeed, the value that society places on the courageous, selfless, and ethical service of NATO soldiers will help determine how well the militaries of member nations are able to preserve their ethos, their effectiveness, and their relationship to their societies. NATO military organizations and soldiers must retain a sense of "external honour" bestowed upon on them through reputation and prestige and "internal honour" earned through personal integrity and their own conscience.

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[18] Coker, pp. 14-15.

CHAPTER FIVE

Culture matters:
improving security force assistance
to Iraq and Afghanistan

Florence Gaub

NATO strategy in Afghanistan places great emphasis on the need for indigenous forces to take responsibility for security as soon as is reasonably practical. This places huge pressure on Security Force Assistance (SFA) to deliver training that is both timely, but more importantly, effective. In spite of experience in the Balkans and Iraq and an increasing acknowledgement that cultural differences matter, there continues to be a lack of clear policy and a consistent and holistic approach to cultural training of NATO troops engaged in SFA. This not only continues to undermine the effectiveness of such training, but can also detract significantly from other campaign objectives. This is even more so the case in Iraq and Afghanistan, where culture differs from NATO's 28 cultures (which also differ to considerable extent among themselves) in many ways. Among the notable examples are clashes between British and American soldiers on the one hand, and Afghan policemen they were on patrol with on the other, resulting in ten casualties. In one of the cases, the cause of the incident was an American drinking water out of a fountain during Ramadan rather than political or ideological "insurgent" motivation.[1]

Although there is increasing acknowledgement of the importance of culture in military operations, implementation of it still proves to be difficult. This article identifies the problems associated with an incorrect grasp of what culture actually is, as well as where it affects multinational cooperation, as the sources of the problem. While many current efforts focus on the visible elements of culture, the invisible but more important elements are frequently neglected. Simply put, the focus is on how people act rather than why. Miscommunication mostly takes place because of the difficulty in understanding and grasping the invisible, and intangible, aspects of culture which, however, underlie everything else. Worse, the existence of the

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[1] "Troop Deaths in Afghanistan Stir Outcry in Britain", in *The New York Times*, November 5, 2009 http://www.nytimes.com/2009/11/05/world/asia/05afghan.html. Foxnews: "Afghan Policeman Kills Two U.S. Soldiers", October 3, 2009 http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,559524,00.html

invisible will be acknowledged yet misinterpreted – similar to "false friends" in linguistics, which sound alike but don't have the same meaning.

Experience shows that cultural differences may affect tasks such as planning, problem detection, situation awareness and uncertainty management as well as decision making. Multicultural military endeavours are thus running a serious risk if the cultural dimension is not taken into account correctly. In spite of this, NATO itself started addressing the issue of cooperation among its member states only recently as a result of a sharp increase in multinational missions.[2] However, it is even more relevant in this specific context since NATO itself is not a homogeneous cultural block. Not only is the Alliance coping with internal cultural communication issues, it is also facing a culture that differs largely from NATO nations' cultures.

Analysing the specific cultures, and military cultures, of each of NATO's 28 member nations would go beyond the scope of this article, which focuses on the cultural differences between NATO nations and Iraq and Afghanistan. While acknowledging the cultural differences that exist among NATO nations, this article assumes, on the basis of Soeters' study on value orientation among 13 NATO military academies,[3] sufficient cultural similarity for NATO nations' military organizations to work together efficiently. While it is clear that there is no such thing as a 'NATO culture' or a universal military culture, for the purpose of this analysis we assume that NATO nations share sufficient cultural traits to be treated homogeneously in this paper. Nonetheless, differences among NATO members may be the most illustrative examples for this paper's audience. The key question now is how intercultural communication between NATO forces on the one hand and local forces in Iraq and Afghanistan can go off track and where military efficiency is affected by this.

There are, obviously, other cases where NATO cooperated with local forces, notably the vast security sector reform in Bosnia, but for the purpose of this analysis I would like to focus solely on Iraq and Afghanistan because these cases more closely approximate traditional approaches to Security Force Assistance and require a greater degree of close cooperation between a larger number of personnel from different cultural groups. The key question is: how does intercultural miscommunication affect Security Force Assistance effectiveness in Iraq and Afghanistan?

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[2] NATO Research and Technology Organization, *Multinational Military Operations and Intercultural Factors*, RTO Technical Report 120, November 2008.
[3] Soeters, J. & Recht, R. "Culture and discipline in military academies: an international comparison", *Journal of Political and Military Sociology*, Vol.26, Iss. 2, pp. 169 – 190, Winter 1998.

Documents related to SFA either do not address culture and its impact on the mission at all or do not grasp its complexity. *The Commander's Handbook for Security Force Assistance*, for instance, issued by the U.S. Joint Center for International Security Force Assistance, recognises that "the first component of rapport is understanding, which <u>may</u> include host nation cultural studies, language training and Host Nation military equipment and doctrine".[4] While the handbook makes an effort to integrate the importance of culture, it only scratches the surface. Other publications approach culture merely in the linguistic sense, recognising that language training might be useful.

Language is, however, only one element of culture. Another example of short-sightedness is reflected in assertions such as: "some academicians claim that one must 'go native' in order to truly understand the host nation and its challenges. In the military, however, it is appropriate to assume enough of the customs of the host nation to be effective."[5] Customs and culture are, however, not identical. Failing to adequately appreciate the role of culture and take it into account during SFA can jeopardize mission success.

Culture is frequently misunderstood as a collection of graspable embodiments, such as language or music, yet it is a much more virtual construct. "The Cultural Awareness Factsheets on Arab Culture" issued by the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command[6] are a good example of how the military is recognising the importance of culture as such, while failing at fully apprehending its dimension. Culture is not, as the factsheets suggest, merely hygiene and eating habits, dress or tradition. These aspects are all elements of a wider cultural system, which is less palpable.

Culture and intercultural communication become a problem when not taken into account properly. While it is true that recent developments have led to an increase in the military's interest in the cultural dimension of operations, the

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[4] *Commander's Handbook for Security Force Assistance*, Joint Center for International Security Force Assistance, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, July 14, 2008, p. 12.
[5] *Commander's Handbook for Security Force Assistance*, Joint Center for International Security Force Assistance, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, July 14, 2008, p. 14.
[6] Arab Cultural Awareness: 58 Fact Sheets, U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, January 2006. http://www.fas.org/irp/agency/army/arabculture.pdf

current state of research[7] clearly suggests that the way the military in general, and NATO more specifically, are addressing cultural differences is inadequate and is not producing the highest degree of efficiency in SFA and other missions that require cross-cultural collaboration.

So, what is culture?

This rather basic question requires a series of complex answers. While some might think of culture in terms of language, religion or food, and all these elements might be part of a certain cultural setting, they are not culture as such. It is here where the confusion begins: culture is hard to define. While some see it as a patterned way of thinking, feeling and reacting, others define it as a set of shared meaning systems, or as a set of standards of perceiving, believing, evaluating, communicating and acting. To Talcott Parsons, culture is a patterned system of symbols that direct the orientation of action, while it could, according to Edgar Schein, be also defined as a pattern of basic assumptions which help one to cope with problems. Most famously, Geert Hofstede defined culture as the collective programming of the human mind that distinguishes the members of one group from another."[8] However, there are other regional, functional and affiliational groups which have cultures. Broadly speaking, culture is an amalgam of visible and invisible inputs that give meaning and motive to human behaviour.

One could also say that culture is an acquired set of tools which helps humans to create order in a chaotic world, and to differentiate one's group from another. It thus reinforces identity, includes and excludes, and helps individuals to cope with change. Yet culture has to be understood as a phenomenon that works on different levels; it can act nationally and regionally, yet also organizationally. Distinct organizational culture can be found, for instance, in military institutions. Thus, an individual working in a military organization might carry not only national

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[7] McFate, M. "The Military Utility of Understanding Adversary Culture", in *Joint Force Quarterly*, issue 38 Summer 2005, http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/jfq_pubs/1038.pdf. Hajjar, R. "A New Angle on the U.S. Military's Emphasis on Developing Cross-Cultural Competence: Connecting In-Ranks' Cultural Diversity to Cross-Cultural Competence", in *Armed Forces and Society*, Vol. 36, No.2, January 2010, pp.247 – 263.

[8] Kluckhohn, F. & Strodtbeck, F., (1961) *Variations in value orientations*. Evanston, IL: Row Peterson; Schweder, R. (1991) *Thinking through cultures: Expeditions in cultural psychology*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press; Goodenough, W. (1971). *Culture, language and society*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Modular Publications, No.7; Parsons, T. (1951) *The social system*. New York: Free Press; Schein, E.H. (1985) *Organizational culture and leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass; Hofstede, G. (1980) Culture's consequences: international differences in work-related values. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

cultural elements, but also distinct organizational ones.[9] It thus has to be borne in mind that culture as a concept is not only multipurpose but also multifaceted.

Culture can be roughly divided into a visible and an invisible level. While the visible elements are easier to grasp, they are nevertheless incomplete without the invisible ones. Thus, culture is like an onion with different, interconnected layers. The basic level constitutes values which transcend all other layers. The invisible elements of culture thus are values, while the visible elements are effectively embodiments of these. Hofstede describes three levels of visible culture: rituals, such as ways of greeting and paying respect; heroes, such as admired persons who serve as an example for behaviour; and symbols, such as words, colour or other artefacts that carry a special meaning to other group members. Language, music or food are thus visible elements of culture, yet do not tell us enough about the values that underlie them. How can we measure these values and, more importantly, their impact on multicultural military cooperation?

Going off track: intercultural communication and Security Force Assistance

Security Force Assistance inevitably entails close cooperation among soldiers from different cultures, and cultural differences can impact negatively on the mission. A widely known result of cultural differences is culture shock, which can range from anxiety, frustration and anger to resentment and disgust.[10] Soldiers suffering from culture shock show signs of helplessness, withdrawal, excessive drinking and eating as well as stereotyping host nationals. These symptoms are particularly to be found in three cases: in soldiers who have to cope with a considerable cultural difference, in high-ranking soldiers, whose intercultural encounters are quite intense, and in soldiers in multinational missions who don't have comrades from the same culture around them.[11] Thus, a rather large group of NATO soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan are concerned.

Yet intercultural communication can go off track in less visible ways than culture shock, simply because the process of exchanging information across cultural

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[9] Thus, in NATO a largely shared "military culture" helps to bridge national divides.
[10] Furnham, A.& Bochner S. *Culture Shock: psychological reactions to unfamiliar environments*, London: Methuen, 1986.
[11] Layes, G. & Kammhuber S. "Development of Intercultural Competence for German Military Personnel", paper presented at NATO / Partnership for Peace Workshop: Psychological Readiness for Multinational Operations: Directions for the 21st Century, p.3 Vienna July 7-9 1997, http://www.nato.int/docu/colloq/w970707/m01.rtf

boundaries is in peril at several, barely perceptible stages. While messages are likely to be sent and decoded accurately in similar cultural environments, individuals from different cultures encode and decode messages differently, increasing the chances of misunderstanding. Intercultural communication thus has a higher chance of failure than communication within the same cultural setting. However, these codes can be acquired and internalized and can lead to fruitful intercultural communication.

A study among officers from nine nations (six of them NATO nations) found that 38% of officers experience problems in relating with officers from other national contingents.[12] As depicted in the charts below, the sources of the communication problem were generally very varied, yet point to the important role of culture, and intercultural communication:
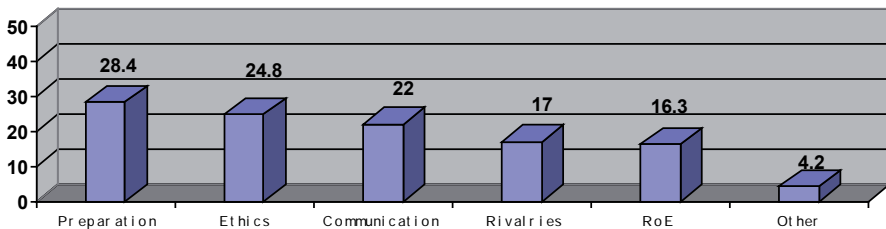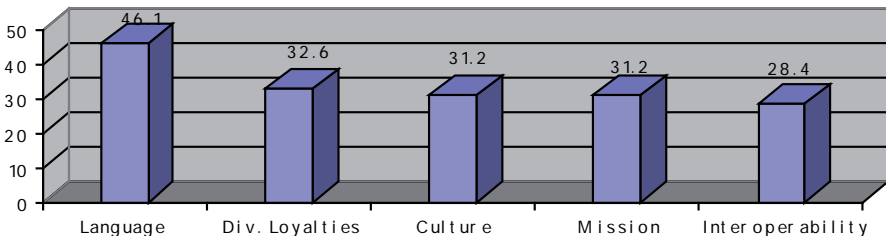
Although not exclusively cultural, language is where intercultural communication struggles the most visibly, although language fluency does not guarantee accuracy of intercultural communication. The use of acronyms, slang, dialects and even humour can affect communication beyond fluency. Information gets lost even in intracultural communication settings, where 75% of information is

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[12] Boene, B. "Relations with Officers from other nations in military operations other than war and the impact of comparisons on professional self-perceptions", in *The Flexible Officer*, ed. Giuseppe Caforio, Gaeta: Artistic and Publishing Company, 2001, p.91 The countries reviewed were Bulgaria, France, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Russia, South Africa, Sweden and the United States.

on average retrieved, as opposed to 50% in intercultural communication settings.[13] Language training and reliance upon interpreters is thus not enough; without a wider cultural embedment, it is merely a tool that is frequently not used correctly. Thus, language without culture is merely an empty shell.

The most reputable approach to measure culture remains, in spite of some criticism, Geert Hofstede's model. Based on the analysis of employee values in over 70 countries Hofstede clustered culture into five dimensions, namely Power Distance, Tolerance for Uncertainty, Masculinity – Femininity, Individualism – Collectivism, and Long-term and Short-term Orientation. Further studies by Edward Hall added the dimensions of monochronic versus polychronic and high- and low context to these, as explained below.[14] It is along these lines that this paper will analyse the breaking points in military cooperation between NATO and Iraq and Afghanistan respectively.

First, according to the Hofstede model:

1) Power distance: the degree of inequality among people that the populace of a country considers as normal. Low power distance cultures value flat hierarchies and transparent decision making, while high power distance cultures have a more directive style in the military sense. A country ranking high on the Power Distance Index is one where inequality within society is rated as normal. Elites in general, hence also commanders, are expected to distance themselves from society. If they don't, as expected, they might be considered by people from a high power distance background as less influential and less authoritarian. High power distance also implies, in multinational teams, that people from high power distance groups will not dare ask questions when they did not understand something, because it is considered rude or might give the impression that they are challenging the supervisor. Information sharing is particularly affected in such cases.

In a work environment with high levels of power distance, individuals

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[13] Gass, S. & Varonis, E. (1991). "Miscommunication in non-native speaker discourse", in N. Coupland, H. Giles, & J. Wiemann (Eds.), *Miscommunication and problematic talk*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage. Hammerly, H. (1991). *Fluency and Accuracy. Toward balance language teaching and learning*. Clevedon: Multilingual matters. Scollon, R. & Scollon S.W. (1995). Conversional inference: Interpretation in spoken discourse. In R. Scollon & S.W. Scollon (Eds.) *Intercultural communication: A discourse approach*. Oxford, England: Blackwell.
[14] Hofstede, G. (1991) *Cultures and organizations. International differences in work-related values*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage. Hall, E.T. (1966). *The Hidden Dimension*, New York: Doubleday. Hall, E.T. (1976). *Beyond Culture*, New York: Doubleday.

will submit suggestions and problems through indirect channels rather than use the direct route. Rank affects to whom they talk, while information will be offered only in formal settings. Respect for superiors might result in avoidance of open criticism, the withholding of frank feedback and the exact observation of rules. Critical information might not be passed on because it is believed that it is the leader's responsibility to make decisions. Conflict potential arises when cooperating with cultures that are low on power distance. Individuals from cultures with a high power distance index might perceive criticism of superiors as offensive and showing lack of respect and arrogance.

On the other hand, individuals from a low power distance background are comfortable with open criticism, look out for innovative problem solutions and favour informal communication channels.[15] There are differences in power distance among NATO nations as well. The United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, Norway and Denmark, for instance, have low levels, while Turkey, France, Greece and Belgium have rather high levels - even when taking the military background into account.[16] Iraqi and Afghan cultures are high on the Power Distance Index as well, and tend to prefer strict hierarchies to flat ones. Iraqi senior officers thus tend not to delegate much to their subordinate officers.[17] Problem potential thus resides especially in cooperation with NATO nations with low Power Distance. The fact that the three biggest ISAF contributors (U.S., UK, Germany) rank low on the Index indicates a rather large pool of personnel with diverging power distance attitudes, thus a large window of potential misunderstandings. The need for greater social etiquette when interacting with Iraqi elders, for instance, was recognised quite early by the U.S. Air Force.[18]

2) Tolerance of uncertainty: the degree to which people in a country prefer structured over unstructured situations. Structured situations are those in which there are clear rules as to how one should behave. In High Uncertainty tolerant cultures, norms and rules are not as clear cut and rigid as in Low Uncertainty tolerant cultures. High Uncertainty tolerant cultures accept dissent and conflict as natural and useful.

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[15] Riedel, S.L. & Karrasch, A. (2002). *Training communication competence for multinational teams*. Paper presented at the 44th Annual Conference of the International Military Testing Association, Ottawa, Canada.

[16] Soeters, J. "Value Orientations in Military Academies: A Thirteen Country Study", in *Armed Forces and Society*, Vol. 24, No.1, Fall 1997 p.15.

[17] Markiewicz, R. "Mitt Team Leader: 7th Division Iraqi Army", in *CAOCL Report*, September 14, 2006, p.19.

[18] Ali, F. "Developing a Framework for Foreign Language and Foreign Competencies" in *RAND Project Air Force* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, October 2006), p.7.

In a military setting, this affects mostly planning: Low Tolerance Uncertainty usually implies a thorough search for details in order to avoid as much uncertainty as possible, whereas high tolerance groups can live with unknown factors for decision making. This becomes a problem when groups from low and high tolerance backgrounds have to work together, with one half moving quickly and the other slowly.

A commander who is high on uncertainty avoidance may be a follower of rules regardless of circumstances, while one that is low might be more innovative. Low uncertainty tolerance cultures tend not to notice situations that deviate from the plan or fail to communicate them. Cues that may call for change might be ignored or not recognised because they threaten the individual from a low uncertainty tolerant culture. Tasks become so structured and detailed that the team has very little room for manoeuvring and innovation, while the team members ask for so much guidance and information that their unique contribution to the task is nil.[19]

NATO nations that are high on uncertainty avoidance are for instance Portugal, Germany, France, Italy and Greece, while Denmark, the United Kingdom and the United States are rated as low. On the other hand, Iraqi as well as Afghan cultures tend to rate high on uncertainty avoidance. Where high and low uncertainty tolerance cooperate, a high degree of specialisation coupled with the avoidance of decision making without the maximum certainty might clash with those cultures that value quick decisions, risk-taking and innovation. Uncertainty tolerant individuals might perceive low uncertainty tolerant individuals as slow, obstructive, bureaucratic and inefficient. High uncertainty avoiders prefer clear instructions, guidance and cooperation in groups, and opt for specialised rather than generalist careers. The divergence between Iraq and Afghanistan on the one hand, and the United States and the United Kingdom on the other, is especially of concern given the fact that cooperation between these nations is a daily fact. A particularly salient example is the attempt to implement a decentralized military structure in Iraq, where strong centralization has been the norm in the past. The Iraqi officers were rather inflexible and exercised little autonomy in a new system that did not correspond to their past and culture.[20]

3) Masculinity-femininity: the degree to which values like assertiveness, performance, success, and competition (values that are mostly associated with men)

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[19] Ilgen, D.R., LePine, J.A., Hollenbeck, J.R. "Effective decision-making in multinational teams" in *New perspectives on international industrial/organizational psychology* ed. P.C. Early & M. Erez, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1997.
[20] Markiewicz, R. "Mitt Team Leader: 7th Division Iraqi Army", in *CAOCL Report*, p.19, September 14, 2006.

prevail over values like quality of life, maintaining warm personal relationships, service, care of the weak, and solidarity (considered as mostly female values). While some NATO nations rank high on the masculinity index – such as Germany, Italy – gender roles might overlap in others, such as Denmark, the Netherlands and Norway. However, the military in those countries tend to rank higher on the masculinity index than their civilian counterparts.[21] Arab and Afghan cultures tend to rate high on these indices and might have difficulties accepting a female commanding officer. In some cases, however, they are scaled as a 'third gender' and accepted as such.[22] While there are virtually no female commanding officers in Germany, for example, there are in other NATO nations, where gender is a politically sensitive issue.

4) Individualism-collectivism: this comprises the identity definition by individual choice and achievements or by the character of the collective group to which one is more or less permanently attached. Individualists often view a mission as primary and personal relationships as secondary, while collectivists see personal relationships as key to success. People from different groups might perceive each other as inefficient or as cold. Since the group is crucial to collectivists, so is intergroup harmony. As a consequence, conflict will be avoided in order to uphold this harmony. In this setting, face-saving techniques are used to avoid confrontations, such as avoidance or intermediaries. Collectivist groups also have less direct communication with the team leader but more with the team members, while it is the other way around in individualistic cultures.

Collectivists are hesitant when it comes to feedback because of its conflict potential. Conducting "frank, honest assessments" as suggested by the Handbook for Security Assistance will backfire in such a setting since it is considered face-loss.[23] Anonymous feedback, or developing sensitivity for the softened criticism, might be a better option in this context.

In individualistic cultures, personal goals take precedence over the group goals, while collectivist groups value group goals higher. Collectivists avoid hurting feelings and imposing on others. Harmony and cooperation within the in-group are key, and the attempt to save face of the group and its members is the norm. In collectivist cultures, direct requests are seen as the least effective way to

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[21] Soeters, J. & Recht, R. "Culture and discipline in military academies: An international comparison" in *Journal of Political and Military Sociology*, Winter 1998, Vol.26, Iss. 2, pp. 169 – 190.

[22] Broadwell, P. "Women at War", in *New York Times*, October 21, 2009. http://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/21/opinion/21iht-edbroadwell.html

[23] *Commander's Handbook for Security Force Assistance*, Joint Center for International Security Force Assistance, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, p. 9, July 14, 2008.

accomplish goals – as an example, Nato Training Mission - Iraq staff experienced frustration because they feel their Iraqi counterparts do not make clear demands.[24] Important distinctions are made between in- and out-groups. As a result, members of multinational teams who are considered as being very dissimilar might be considered as part of the out-group. In consequence, less communication, information sharing and interaction take place. In conflict situations, leaders do not reprimand a person in front of other group members. An indirect and implicit communication style is preferred, which the U.S. Army cultural awareness sheets warn of. They suggest: "check the facts after being briefed by an Arab soldier because he may be sugar coating a bitter pill"[25].

In collectivist cultures, personal relationships are highly important, which leads to looser schedules and devoting the first encounter to getting acquainted. Where collectivist and individualist cultures cooperate, the latter might perceive the former as spending too much time on personal relations. What is more important, individualists do not perceive a large psychological distance between in-group and out-group member. They often inadvertently offend other members because they did not take time to learn about cultural differences or because they were focused on task rather than social amenities.[26]

While Arab countries and Afghan tribes rate very low on individualism, the U.S., the UK, Netherlands, Germany, France, Canada and Italy rate very high on it. The Western military tendency to underestimate culture could be attributed to the fact that individualist backgrounds do not perceive cultural difference as a problem. Security Force Assistance has to take into account that in these cultures, collective training strategies will work better than individual approaches (e.g. sending a group rather than an individual to school in order to acquire new skills).[27]

5) Long-term versus short-term orientation: long-term orientation focuses on the degree to which a culture embraces or does not embrace future-oriented values such as perseverance and thrift. Values associated with Short Term Orientation are respect for tradition, fulfilling social obligations, and protecting one's reputation. Similarly to collectivist cultures, those ranking high on the Short Term Orientation Index will avoid open conflict and perceive individuals with very long-

[24] Author interview, Naples July 2009.
[25] "Arab Cultural Awareness, 58 Fact Sheets", U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command: Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, January 2006. http://www.fas.org/irp/agency/army/arabculture.pdf p. 23.
[26] Gudykunst, W.B. & Mody, B. (2002) *Handbook of intercultural training* (2nd ed.) Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage.
[27] Salmoni, B. "1st Battalion, 6th Marines", in *CAOCL Report*, July 24, 2006, p. 18.

term orientation as ignoring or not respecting family, friends and traditions. While long-term oriented cultures regard past experiences as most important, and thus also respect for elders, short-term oriented cultures emphasise planning and believe the future to be in their own hands. Other cultures might find the latter unreasonable and hard to deal with. Past-oriented cultures tend to see long-term oriented cultures as slaves to efficiency. Future-oriented cultures include, for example, Germany, the United States and the United Kingdom, while Arab and Afghan societies are more past-oriented. A key issue between these two orientations is the difference in time management, since future-oriented cultures see schedules as firm and important.

Subsequently, Hall added another two dimensions: monochronic versus polychronic and high-low context.

6) Monochronic versus polychronic dimension: monochronic cultures perceive time as linear, segmented and compartmentalized. This assumes planning and respect for planning. Polychronic cultures see time as an endless continuum, in which one can do many things at a time. In this context, human interaction is valued over time and material things as such, and 'getting things done' is not as important. Although difference in time perception is commonly known as a key cultural difference, its impact on intercultural communication and cooperation is not. Monochronic cultures, such as the United States or Germany, regard time as valuable. By the same token, these cultures tend to organize their thoughts and communications into a linear sequence of fact, generalisation and conclusion. In contrast, polychronic cultures have an associative line of thought that goes around the point so that the listener understands almost intuitively, zeroing finally in on the conclusion. Group members from a monochronic culture may the find circular and intuitive way of thinking difficult to understand and work with. Iraqi and Afghan cultures are polychronic and thus have a very different understanding of time and its use.

Cooperation between monochronic and polychronic cultures can be hampered because of different planning styles, unmet expectations and misunderstanding of each other's concepts. Meetings might be delayed, whereas frustration over such delays might not be understood. This can be problematic when one culture tries to change the other, as suggested in the SFA Handbook: "The advisor must (…) gain influence on the timeliness of his indigenous forces. Appeals to honor, brotherhood, and explaining, in particular, why time is important."[28]

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[28] *Commander's Handbook for Security Force Assistance,* Joint Center for International Security Force Assistance, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, p.15, July 14, 2008.

7) High-low context: In high-context cultures much of the information is implicitly expressed, and the exact meaning is deduced from the context. Low-context cultures take very little for granted and concentrate on what is being communicated rather than how and in what context. Additional explanations are often needed, while misunderstandings are, as a consequence, less frequent. In contrast, individuals will need to know the 'unwritten rules' in order to understand high-context communication. Countries with high-context cultures, such as Afghanistan or Iraq, tend to use more indirect communication styles, while those with low-context cultures, such as the United States or Germany, tend to use a more direct communication style. Overlapping with individualism-collectivism, high-context cultures correlate with collectivist cultures. Low-context cultures are usually explicit and easily observable. However, high-context cultures communicate more through non-verbal cues, relying less on verbal communication. This is a particular challenge in multinational teams from high- and low-context cultures, because parts of the message tend not to be read and decoded correctly by the interlocutor. High-context cultures don't need to be communicated explicitly verbally, while reactions tend to be reserved in order to save face or social esteem.

Intercultural communication can go off track on several other levels as well. The most important one would be non-verbal communication. Although most facial expressions are by and large interpreted similarly throughout different cultures, specific facial expressions do vary among cultures.[29] Likewise, movement, body positions, postures, eye contact, vocal intonations, gestures, touch, time and spatial requirements can be misinterpreted and leave ample room for error. High-context cultures draw a lot of information from these details, while low-context cultures do not. While a steady gaze is considered important in Anglo-American cultures, for instance, it is considered rude and aggressive in others. By the same token, personal space is usually larger in cold climates, whereas it is lesser in warm ones. While North Americans prefer larger amounts of space between conversationalists, Europeans, for instance, do not, and are thus perceived as pushy. The same is true for touch. Middle Eastern cultures touch much more than European and North American ones, and find it acceptable for instance for men to touch each other, while this is less acceptable in Europe and even less acceptable in the U.S. Generally speaking, non-verbal communication rules are outside of conscious awareness, yet they are especially important in multinational communication settings. Where verbal

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[29] Ekman, P. (1972), *Emotion in the human face*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Halberstadt, A.G. (1985). "Race, socioeconomic status, and nonverbal behavior", in A.W. Siegman & S. Feldstein (Eds.) *Multichannel integration of nonverbal behavior* (pp. 227 – 266). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

cues are not clearly understood, individuals will watch out for non-verbal cues for clarification.

The frustrations experienced by cultural miscommunication frequently lead to stereotyping which can result in generally negative perceptions of the host nation. Cultural insensitivity and frustration have led, in Iraq for instance, to racist attitudes towards the local population.[30]

And now what?

Most NATO nations suscribe to cultural dimensions that are directly opposed to Iraqi and Afghan culture. As a consequence, interplay between NATO forces and host nation forces has had, and still has, a great risk of miscommunication across cultural barriers that might affect the missions' effectiveness. Security Force Assistance works, according to the Joint Center for International Security Force Assistance, through influence.[31] Yet one has to wonder how individuals from one culture will efficiently influence an individual from another one if the cultural differences are not taken into account, or when they are, may be misinterpreted. Security Force Assistance clearly needs to integrate intercultural communication, and its challenges, into its modus operandi if it wants to succeed. The misunderstanding of culture will ultimately lead to a loss in efficiency and obstruct the future of Security Force Assistance as an important capacity building tool. There are several steps ahead on the way to cross-cultural competence:

Awareness

Intercultural communication begins with the awareness that there is the chance of miscommunication. Awareness of difference in social values, status symbols, decision making customs, time management, personal space and cultural context is the very first step to improve intercultural communication. While individualist cultures, i.e. most NATO nations, tend to be blind to intercultural communication issues because they are generally more at ease with out-groups, collectivist cultures are on the contrary ill at ease with differences. Faulty apprehension of cultural

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[30] See Foster, N. "Changing the Army for Counterinsurgency Operations", in *Military Review*, November-December 2005, p. 3, 2005.
[31] Thornton, R. "What is Security Force Assistance & What is JCISFA?" March 2, 2008, in *Small Wars Journal* Op-Ed http://smallwarsjournal.com/blog/2008/03/what-is-security-force-assista/

differences and their impact on cooperation efficiency is where Security Force Assistance is bound to fail.

Knowledge

Individuals involved in Security Force Assistance need the maximum amount of knowledge of other cultures, language, communication rules, and rules for specific contexts. Without this knowledge, individuals will misinterpret messages, choose incorrect communication strategies, violate rules of etiquette, and cause loss of trust. Without this kind of knowledge, individuals will also not understand why the errors they made occurred and how they can be prevented in the future. However, knowledge does not equal understanding. In order to acquire and use the necessary knowledge, individuals need to understand the importance of culture, and they need to have an open-minded, non-judgmental approach and problem-solving ability.

Motivation

The key for effective communication is the willingness to communicate, to understand and be understood. Anxiety, as well as stress which is often caused by multicultural communication in a different language, can affect the individual's motivation for communication. If seen as too difficult, team members might give up communication efforts altogether. Obviously, the motivation is heavily influenced by a predisposed mindset and skills. Flexibility in behaviour, social intelligence, maintenance of one's own cultural identity, and the ability to establish personal relationships are all skills that vary between individuals. Cognitive flexibility, the ability to construct a message in the interlocutor's frame of reference or to react in it are key elements in intercultural communication. Selection of appropriate personnel, especially team leaders, is thus pivotal for this kind of setting.

Training

While diversity training prior to deployment exists, it is frequently voluntary, thus sending a clear message of unimportance. Since the multinational component of military operations, and Security Force Assistance especially, is likely to increase, training in multinational communication and cooperation should be part of the standard military programme. Specific courses in multicultural awareness are not enough, however. Cultural issues should be integrated into all military training

courses, starting at the most basic level. Ideally, they should be observed, rehearsed and demonstrated so those involved have the training necessary to accomplish the Security Force Assistance mission.

Conclusion

Although it is true that culture and its importance for mission effectiveness are being taken into account more and more, it is obvious that the tools today are not sufficient. Invisible elements of culture have to be understood and their impact on multinational military cooperation grasped fully. Only by approaching culture in a holistic manner can NATO forces train foreign troops effectively and develop the tools that will help them identify, and solve, intercultural communication issues. Training in this context is not only the transfer of knowledge; it is also sensitization and, more importantly, the continued study of culture in a general and specific context. Establishing cultural competence firmly takes more than one course; it needs repeated practice and exposure in order to remain relevant and honed. The benefits of this are multifold: NATO as a multicultural endeavour needs to develop cultural interoperability, and its future missions will likely take place in culturally divergent places as well. Aside from that, cultural diversity is an issue that, for several NATO forces, is also an in-house subject seen on different levels within the armed forces. Thus, the need for cultural understanding is definitely not limited to Security Force Assistance.

CHAPTER SIX

Reframing
Security Sector Reform for counterinsurgency
-Getting the politics right-

Andrew Rathmell

Security Sector Reform (SSR), and the building of military and police forces in particular, has become a central plank in NATO's strategy for Afghanistan, as for the coalition in Iraq.[1] Indeed, the "standing up" of local security forces and strengthening of justice systems, so as to allow international forces to "stand down",[2] is at the heart of international state and peacebuilding strategies from Haiti, through Sierra Leone, to East Timor. The criticality of this activity both within and beyond Afghanistan has been recognized by NATO strategists. In the words of the authors of NATO's *Multiple Futures Project* (2009), the Alliance needs to: "use the lessons learned in Afghanistan and other engagements to develop an Alliance concept and doctrine on mentoring and advising indigenous forces in order to support the stabilisation, democratisation, and self-sufficiency of a nation's security sectors."[3]

Superficially, NATO is well placed to support such initiatives. NATO and many of its members were at the cutting edge of defence reform initiatives in Central and Eastern Europe after the Cold War and NATO's various partnership arrangements provide the framework to replicate such successes further afield.

However, Afghanistan has been a salutary reminder to the wider NATO community, as Iraq was to the U.S. and coalition partners, that SSR means something

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[1] DFID, one of the early proponents of SSR, now uses the concept of "security and justice development" since this better captures the elements of rule of law and access to justice that are sometimes forgotten when addressing the security aspects of SSR. While this is a useful conceptual shift, this paper uses the term SSR since it is currently more familiar to non-UK audiences. DFID, *Eliminating World Poverty*, p. 75.

[2] To paraphrase former President Bush's succinct elucidation of his strategy for Iraq - "as they stand up, we stand down." President George Bush on *Jim Lehrer PBS Newshour*, 16 December 2005, http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/white_house/july-dec05/bush_12-16-05.html

[3] NATO Allied Command Transformation, *Multiple Futures Project: Navigating Towards 2030 – Findings and Recommendations*, p. 11, April 2009.

quite different in the context of an ongoing conflict in which international forces are actively engaged, in which indigenous institutions have to be built from scratch, and where the political settlement is violently contested.

Since 2001 in Iraq and Afghanistan, efforts to build local security forces have involved a massive investment of international resources but have met with repeated disappointment.[4] The Obama, and NATO, plan for success in Afghanistan is predicated on building up Afghan security forces and rule of law institutions. To avoid further disappointment, we need to think more critically about the nature of security assistance, and SSR more widely, in the midst of conflict. This paper argues for the need to reframe our approach to SSR in these particularly testing environments.

Context and definitions

Iraq and Afghanistan are quite different from one another and different again from other contemporary cases that have combined ongoing conflict with international peacebuilding and state-building efforts – e.g. Sierra Leone in the late 1990s, the Democratic Republic of Congo today.[5] In all of these cases, the fact of operating in a conflict environment means that many of the longer-term and citizen-focused reforms characteristic of post-conflict SSR are simply not achievable. Iraq and Afghanistan specifically display three critical characteristics that make SSR particularly challenging:

- International forces are seeking to quell large-scale insurgencies. Hence, international forces are not neutral peacekeepers but rather are actively engaged in supporting one side in a conflict.

- The political settlement is contested. The form and distribution of power, which the security sector is intended to underpin, remain contested. Hence, part of the role of the international intervention is to work towards a more robust political settlement.

- The state, and the security and justice sector in particular, have very low

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[4] Ongoing complaints over the performance of the EU policing mission in Afghanistan are symptomatic of these disappointments but are hardly sui generis. Judy Dempsey, "Europe's Afghan mission still in disarray," in *International Herald Tribune*, 18 November 2009.
[5] Peter Albrecht and Paul Jackson, *Security System Transformation in Sierra Leone, 1997-2007*, February 2009, GFN-SSR.

initial capacity. This is not a question of, as the British did in Malaya in the 1950s, bolstering the capacities of a fairly effective security and judicial bureaucracy, but rather of bringing about sometimes very basic human capital and institutional development.

Many SSR practitioners, who note that the whole point of the SSR concept was to encourage donors to go beyond capacity building of security forces, understandably refuse to label what has taken place in Iraq and Afghanistan as SSR. Some argue that it would be more honest to characterise this as a new variant on the age-old colonial tactic of building local auxiliary forces to police their own people.[6]

Alternative short-hand terms may be "armed nation-building" in Cordesman's phrase or "armed state-building" in Jackson's phrase.[7] As Cordesman argues, "armed nation building is very different from aiding an ally with effective governance and an established force structure. It must address all key aspects of what happens when force development must take place under nation building conditions, in fractured or divided states."[8]

Whatever we call it, the importance of security sector assistance in a COIN environment and the evident failings to date are undeniable. For instance, in Afghanistan, NATO and the U.S. have responded to circumstances by experimenting with various strategic approaches (moving from the original 2002 concept of lead nations to one of de facto U.S. dominance); have engaged in extended discussions of the appropriate structure, roles and missions for the Afghan security sector (e.g. over the proper balance between police and army in the COIN fight); and have applied a wide range of techniques to boost the quantity and quality of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF).

At the time of writing, the bulk of the international discussion on the way forward focuses on programmatic solutions. Steps include boosting numbers of

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[6] Especially where there is an international interest in having the local security forces deal with terrorism, there is certainly some truth in this characterization. Seth Jones et al, *Security Tyrants of Fostering Reform?* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2006); Yezid Sayigh, *"Fixing Broken Windows": Security Sector Reform in Palestine, Lebanon, and Yemen*, Carnegie Papers no 17, October 2009.

[7] Jackson refers primarily to post-conflict states but, since nation-building only really has resonance in the U.S., it may be useful to adopt his phrase for those more familiar with the European and OECD-DAC terminology. Paul Jackson, *SSR and Post-Conflict Reconstruction: Armed wing of state-building?,* May 2009, GFN-SSR.

[8] Anthony Cordesman, *Afghan National Security Forces: Shaping Host Country Forces as Part of Armed Nation Building*, Center for Strategic & International Studies, p. 63, November 2009.

trained Afghan security force personnel; increasing international capability to deliver assistance (whether by filling embedded advisory billets in Afghanistan or ensuring better approaches to unit partnering); and improving the coherence between international agencies (for instance, ensuring that aid agencies or foreign ministries are directing adequate support to justice or oversight mechanisms while the military channels direct support to the security forces).

Many of these programmatic improvements are needed. However, a focus on such programmatic issues distracts attention from one of the fundamental problems with the current paradigm – a failure to internalise and operationalise the fundamental truth that SSR is not at heart a technocratic but a political issue.

On paper at least, development and defence practitioners now violently agree on the importance of making development more political,[9] on putting influence activities at the heart of COIN and stabilization[10] and on the role that building effective and accountable security and justice sectors plays in state-building, peace-building, development and stabilization. In practice, however, NATO and its members are poor at teasing out just what this means and at tying together the various strands of activity.

This paper explores what it means to take these issues seriously and makes the case for configuring future SSR and security assistance programmes, in COIN contexts, first and foremost as political influence operations and only secondarily as technocratic state-building activities.

SSR, State-Building and COIN: a long history

SSR is a term that has come into vogue over the past two decades. While varying definitions abound, the UN's definition reflects the general view of what the concept comprises: *"Security sector reform describes a process of assessment, review and implementation as well as monitoring and evaluation led by national authorities that has as its goal the enhancement of effective and accountable security for the State and its peoples without discrimination and with full respect for human*

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[9] Department for International Development, *Eliminating World Poverty: Building our Common Future* (July 2009); OECD-DAC, INCAF Task Team on Peacebuilding, Statebuilding, *Security, Policy Guidance Note: State-building in Fragile Situations,* October 2009.
[10] See for instance: Ministry of Defence, Development Concepts and Doctrine Centre, *Joint Doctrine Publication 3-40: Security and Stabilisation: The Military Contribution*, 2009.

rights and the rule of law". [11] In theory at least, SSR differs from the various flavours of security, policing or judicial assistance in that it goes far beyond efforts to build the operational and institutional capacity of state security forces or justice systems to address governance and oversight, citizen participation and security and justice systems other than those provided by the central state.

SSR has come to be accepted by the international community as a key activity necessary to support the transition from authoritarian rule, to address state fragility, to foster development, and to counter violent threats to state authority, such as insurgencies, criminality and terrorism. [12] It is increasingly enshrined in military doctrine as an essential element of peace support operations, stabilization missions and COIN operations.

It is useful to be reminded, however, that elements of what we now call SSR have long antecedents. Reform of military forces, internal security agencies and legal systems, along with attendant governance structures, has been an important part of the story of "modernization" at least since the dawn of the modern European era. Looking back only as far as the eighteenth century, we can point to plenty of examples whereby "modernising" regimes imported foreign expertise. Examples include the military (and naval) modernizations introduced by Russia's Peter the Great; the Ottoman legal and administrative reforms of the nineteenth century; Japan's importation of modern military methods and administrative structures in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These examples naturally did not involve some of the central tenets of today's SSR – support for citizen accountability and democratic governance – but they do represent important examples of demand-led importation of security sector modernization programmes. More recently, during the Cold War, both East and West sought to build local security forces in developing countries. This in part represented "simple" capacity building to counter perceived external or internal threats but, more often, it was seen as part of a broader process of modernization and construction of a "modern" bureaucratic state. At times, notably in Afghanistan and Vietnam, this involved very large scale and extremely intrusive international efforts to reform and restructure local security sectors. For both East and West, this paradigm of "modernization" included the promotion of specific forms of governance. [13] Since the Cold War, SSR and security assistance have boomed.

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[11] http://www.dcaf.ch/issat/about_ssr.htm

[12] In 2009, U.S. Government agencies endorsed the concept of SSR, even though the U.S. has undertaken similar activities, notably in Latin America, since the 1950s albeit without using this label.

[13] William Rosenau, "The Eisenhower Administration, U.S. Foreign Internal Security Assistance, and the Struggle for the Developing World, 1954-1961," in *Low Intensity Conflict and Law Enforcement*, Vol. 10, No. 3, Autumn 2001.

Countries in the former Soviet bloc engaged in extensive defence transformation and security sector reform as part of their accession process to NATO and the EU. In the developing world, donors pioneered many of the concepts associated with SSR in countries like Sierra Leone and Liberia starting in the late 1990s.[14] Meanwhile, and especially since 9/11, the U.S. and its allies have expanded assistance programmes focused on internal security forces in a number of transitioning states.[15]

This long history of what now falls under the rubric of SSR provides some useful lessons. First, that even "simple" programmes of security force capacity building have long been intimately linked to the process of building "modern" bureaucratic state institutions and strengthening state control over territory. Second, that building and "modernising" militaries is far easier than, in Fukuyama's words, building and "modernising" "embedded" and "high transaction" institutions – such as police and justice institutions.[16] Third, that foreign expertise can play a vital role in such reform and modernization but that true success comes from the local demand-side rather than the external supply-side. One important observation is the role played by emulation and norms. One of the drivers for reform and modernization, for instance among militaries, has been the desire to emulate the "professionalism" of their advanced nation peers.[17]

This history also draws our attention to a fairly extensive history of foreign assistance in the context of active insurgencies – akin to the experiences in Afghanistan and Iraq today. Both the Soviets and the West provided such assistance against internal foes during the Cold War; including the USSR's efforts to build the Afghan state and security forces during the 1970s and 1980s, the U.S.'s attempts to do likewise with the Vietnamese in the 1960s and 1970s or with El Salvador in the 1980s.[18] Numerous examples can also be drawn from the retreat from colonial

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[14] International Crisis Group, *Liberia: Uneven Progress in Security Sector Reform*, Brussels, 2009.

[15] Jones, *Security Tyrants or Fostering Reform?*

[16] Francis Fukuyama, *State-building: Governance and World Order in the 21st Century,* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004.

[17] This has of course often not been helpful. Witness the desire of South Vietnamese military to emulate the conventional military mindset and structure of the conventional U.S. military. Lewis Sorley, *A Better War: The Unexamined Victories and Final Tragedy of America's Last Years in Vietnam* (Mariner Books, 2007). For more on military norms and emulation, see Theo Farrell and Terry Terriff, eds, *The Sources of Military Change: Norms, Politics, Technology,* Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2002.

[18] On Vietnam, Bob Komer's comment is apposite: "perhaps the most important single reason why the U.S. achieved so little for so long … was that it could not sufficiently revamp, or adequately substitute for, a [local]… leadership, administration, and armed forces inadequate to the task." R.W. Komer, *Bureaucracy does its Thing: Institutional Constraints on U.S.-GVN Performance in Vietnam,* Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1972, R-967-ARPA, p. vi.

empire from the 1940s onwards. An important difference, however, for European counterinsurgents was that they had built and still ran the state and security force structures which they were using metropolitan troops to bolster – from Indochina and Algeria through Malaya and Aden. Likewise, when the British brought COIN home to Northern Ireland in the 1970s, they could build on fairly robust, if dysfunctional, state structures. The Royal Ulster Constabulary did not have to be established from scratch, even if it had to be significantly reformed, whilst being protected by the British Army.[19]

Recent experiences of SSR within COIN

In Afghanistan and Iraq since 2001/3, Western agencies took on what were perhaps uniquely difficult challenges. In both cases, for different reasons, local security forces and justice systems barely existed. Faced with having to impose basic levels of order and counter insurgencies and counter terrorist campaigns, the Western powers focused the bulk of their efforts on building the basic combat capabilities of (para)military light infantry forces; some in green (army) and some in blue (police) uniforms. There has been considerable work on other elements of the security sector, but the effort devoted, and success achieved, in these broader areas has been a fraction of that devoted to lower-level (para)military capacity building.

U.S. and UK military doctrine clearly make the case for why security force assistance needs to be embedded in wider SSR and indeed wider state-building. However, if the state-building mission is defined as building a "capable, accountable and responsive" state,[20] then it is very clear that the bottom-up security force capacity building that has been the focus of effort addresses only a small part of the issue.[21]

Moreover, while state-building is a critical goal of the international stabilization/COIN actors in theatres like Afghanistan and Iraq, an equally critical goal is peace-building. In the simplistic paradigms of doctrine writers, peace and

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[19] It is worth noting that, even in this relatively benign environment, the reconstruction and reform of Northern Ireland's police service has taken over two decades.

[20] OECD-DAC, *State-building in Fragile Situations*.

[21] The U.S. and UK militaries have become quite progressively better at low-level military capacity building, for instance using the MiTT concept, in Iraq and Afghanistan. The results in Iraq at the divisional level and below are testimony to this progress.

state-building are mutually reinforcing.[22] This can often be the case since a weak state unable to deliver security, justice or other services is more likely to face internal conflict. However, there are plenty of cases in which the demands of state and peace-building are in conflict. Or, perhaps put more precisely, the exact nature of state and peace-building will interact in ways which can either be stabilising or horribly destabilising.[23] Iraq and Afghanistan have provided further instances of this truth.

Perspectives from Iraq

The story of the coalition's efforts to build Iraq's security sector after 2003 is now well-documented.[24] The coalition's knowledge and understanding of the Iraqi security sector before the war was woefully inadequate; the initial dissolution of the armed forces was badly managed; and the efforts to rebuild the security forces and security institutions were under-resourced from the outset and driven by wildly optimistic timelines. As coalition strategies for Iraq changed, so did plans for Iraq's security sector. For instance, initial long-term plans to build a small external-defence focused army and defence ministry from the ground up were ditched in light of the pressing need to rush Iraqi ground forces into combat against insurgents. Even where progress was made in helping to build the capacity of Iraqi security forces, at times these forces actively undermined broader efforts at forging a new political settlement. The police commando units run by Interior Minister Bayan Jabr in 2005 were the most egregious example of this tension.[25]

Looking back from 2010, it is striking how much progress has been achieved in Iraq. The Iraqi military has developed a level of operational effectiveness and even the police have moved in the right direction. Progress in these areas can in part be credited to the massive expenditure of international (and Iraqi) resources but, no less, to the emerging political settlement that has brought Iraqi political

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[22] DFID, *Building the State and Securing the Peace*, Emerging Policy Paper, June 2009; Alina Rochal Menocal, *State-building for peace: Navigating an arena of contradictions*, ODI Briefing Paper 52, August 2009.

[23] Examples are provided in: Charles Call and Vanessa Wyeth, eds, *Building States to Build Peace* (Lynne Rienner, 2008) and Roland Paris and Timothy Sisk, eds, *The Dilemmas of Statebuilding: Confronting the Contradictions of Postwar Peace* Operations, London: Routledge, 2009.

[24] Anthony Cordesman, *Withdrawal from Iraq: Assessing the Readiness of Iraqi Security Forces* (Washington DC: CSIS, 2009); Andrew Rathmell, et al, *Developing Iraq's Security Sector: The Coalition Provisional Authority's Experience,* Santa Monica, RAND, 2006.

[25] These paramilitary police units, although logistically supported by the Coalition, became notorious for carrying out sectarian abuses and killings targeted largely at the Sunni population and suspected Ba'ath party sympathizers.

extremes into the political process since 2007. Although slower than expected and still tenuous, it seems that "the surge" did indeed help to provide political space to enable reconciliation. However, the Iraqi security sector remains critically short of strong institutions of governance and has limited public accountability – all reflected in the country's pitifully weak rule of law. The bottom line is that Iraq's security institutions, having spent much of the period 2005-2007 contributing to the country's destabilization, are now in a position to enforce the writ of the government of the day even if their increasing proficiency at enforcing order is not matched by a substantial capacity to administer justice or the impartial rule of law.

For the purposes of this article, Iraq provides us with four salutary lessons. First, the coalition forgot that SSR is all about politics.[26] In general, the coalition treated SSR as a technocratic issue concerned with training personnel, providing equipment, and building (imported) management systems. This approach shifted somewhat during 2007 when the new Campaign Plan explicitly connected the security assistance effort with a political influence effort aimed at fostering political accommodation. However, even this effort to tie SSR directly to the peacebuilding process, for instance by using the security forces to provide a pathway "into the fold" for Sunni insurgents, was implemented patchily.

Second, the coalition too often disassociated SSR from the broader state-building agenda. This was in part a result of the bureaucratic division within the coalition between the agencies responsible for building the Iraqi military and police – namely the U.S. Department of Defense and NATO – and those responsible for the other elements of state-building – the State Department, USAID and their international peers. This bureaucratic divide was reflected in a massive resource imbalance between the advisory and assistance efforts directed at the ISF versus that directed at other Iraqi state institutions. The inevitable result is that, as with many post-colonial states, Iraq's most effective bureaucracy is the defence ministry and army; once again repeating a pattern of state building that risks leading to the construction of a praetorian rather than a developmental state.

Third, at least in this particular aspect of its campaign, the coalition focused too much on bottom-up capability building, primarily seeking to turn out large numbers of light infantry "boots on the ground". Practitioners still differ on the issue of "quantity vs quality" but it took too long for the bottom-up approach to be

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[26] This recognition was not wholly absent from the international effort. When the interior ministry was handed back to an Iraqi minister in the autumn of 2003, a system of political balance was designed into the administration with the conscious intention of dampening down political tensions.

supplemented by sufficient focus on developing the management and governance mechanisms needed to support and oversee these forces.[27]

Fourth, the coalition focused almost exclusively on state and regime security rather than trying to build a security sector that would provide security and justice for the population. This focus was highlighted, for instance, by the coalition's unwillingness for a long time to focus on measures of population security, such as civilian casualty rates. In general, too, the coalition tended to prioritise security force capability building over building local accountability mechanisms. It was only after 2008, for instance, that due attention began to be given to the building of internal disciplinary systems for the Iraqi police and army that sought to hold security force personnel to account.

Perspectives from Afghanistan

Armed state-building in Afghanistan posed very different challenges from that in Iraq but it is striking that, by 2010, we have adopted many of the same solutions. By comparison with Iraq, Afghanistan's central state hardly existed and its state security institutions, while they had a past pedigree, hardly functioned by 2001. This lack of state capacity, combined with the coalition's light footprint approach and reliance on warlords, meant that the internationally supported SSR effort did not advance rapidly after the overthrow of the Taliban. The 'lead nation' approach to SSR, combined with a relatively limited commitment of international resources from 2001-2006, meant that even this limited effort made marginal progress.[28]

Nonetheless, by 2010 the international community has adopted an SSR model lifted largely from the Iraq playbook. The U.S. military, supported by NATO, has taken the de facto lead for building the Afghan National Security Forces through: a large-scale train and equip programme; mentoring and advising in the field; and institutional development of the defence and interior ministries. The central goal of the effort is to deploy large numbers of light-infantry equivalent military and police personnel in order to impose central state authority, to secure the population and to replace international forces.[29]

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[27] Andrew Rathmell, *Fixing Iraq's Internal Security Forces: Why is Reform of the Ministry of Interior so Hard?* Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2007.

[28] Ali Jalali, "The Future of Security Institutions," in *The Future of Afghanistan*, ed Alexander Thier (Wasington DC: USIP, 2009); Anthony Cordesman, *Winning in Afghanistan: Creating Effective Afghan Security Forces* Washington DC: CSIS, 2009.

[29] Centre for International Governance Innovation, *Security Sector Reform Monitor: Afghanistan*, November 2009.

The results of this approach also bear striking resemblance to what has happened in Iraq. While building the ANA is much harder than building the Iraqi Army, the ANA has begun to demonstrate some capability at the small unit level when supported by international forces.[30] Afghanistan's police forces are floundering but are being pushed to deploy ever more recruits who receive too little, and often inappropriate, training, into paramilitary combat positions. In the absence of sufficient numbers of effective police and military, various experiments continue with local self-defence forces, such as the Afghan Public Protection Programme. Justice sector institutions able to hold the security forces accountable or to provide swift and accessible justice remain notable by their absence. Security and justice governance mechanisms at the national and local levels reflect the generally poor state of governance more widely. The state of international coordination of SSR efforts likewise reflects the inchoate nature of much of the international effort in the country.

The lessons identified above from Iraq can be seen at work in Afghanistan:

- SSR as politics. In a polity at least as fractured as that of Iraq, SSR needs to be treated as a central part of the peacebuilding process. Efforts have been made along these lines in Afghanistan, for instance by seeking to promote ethnic balances in the ranks and within the officer corps.

- SSR and state-building. The dangers of an overmighty military may loom less large in Afghanistan given the weakness of the central state, but there are real questions as to whether the state-centric assumptions that underlie the Afghan SSR model are contributing positively to state and peacebuilding. For instance, in many parts of the country, the police have traditionally been regarded as unwelcome predators operating on behalf of a distant central government. By supporting this institution on the assumption that an expansion of state authority will be desirable, international forces have too often alienated local populations.

- Bottom-up focus on numbers. Debates over the ANSF, as with Iraq, have tended to become focused on end-strength numbers. Mistakes made many times over in Iraq, such as shortening already inadequate training programmes in order to put "boots on the ground", are in danger of being made again in Afghanistan. While it is clear that there are inadequate

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[30] However, some observers are more sceptical. Antonio Giustozzi, The Afghan National Army: Unwarranted Hope?" *RUSI Journal*, Vol. 154, No. 6, p. 37, 9 December 2009.

numbers of international or Afghan security forces to execute the current COIN strategy, it should also be evident that deploying larger numbers of ill-trained, badly-led, poorly supported, corrupt and potentially disloyal police and army personnel is unlikely to contribute to stability.

Drawing out the lessons

Much of the debate over SSR in Iraq and Afghanistan has focused on the difficulties that the international powers have faced in delivering their assistance. In relation to Afghanistan, the current hot button issues are the shortage of NATO and American embedded advisory teams for the ANA and ANP, the difficulties being faced in building true partnerships with ANA units, and the challenges of using a mix of Western civilian police officers and military police officers to partner with the Afghan police. Looming over the debate are fundamental resource questions - including a critical shortage of literate Afghan recruits and the evident inability of the Afghan state to fund its security sector. While these issues, rightly, absorb much of our intellectual and managerial effort, they risk distracting attention from some of the more fundamental underlying problems with our approach.

In both Afghanistan and Iraq the international community has adopted the orthodox paradigm of state-building, which concentrates on building the capacity of the state to gain a monopoly on the use of force through its security forces.[31] This approach is inspired by a fairly traditional view of state-building, derived from our understanding of how Western European states emerged through a process of consolidation of central authority through a monopoly on force.[32] More recent perspectives on state-formation in the post-colonial world remind us that state-building in these environments is much more about negotiated political settlements within society and with external actors.[33] Hence, the way in which we have implemented armed state-building has been problematic. We make three crucial mistakes: focusing on numbers rather than transformational change of the system of systems; adopting a technocratic rather than political economy approach; and compartmentalising SSR within our campaign plans.

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[31] USIP, *Guiding Principles for Stabilization and Reconstruction,* Washington DC: USIP, 2009.
[32] Charles Tilly, Coercion, Capital and European States, AD990-1990, Wiley Blackwell, 1993.
[33] Paul Collier, *Wars, Guns and Votes: Democracy in Dangerous Places* (London: The Bodley Head, 2009); Mark Duffield, *Development, Security and Unending War: Governing the World of Peoples,* Cambridge: Polity, 2007; Alan Whaites, "States in Development: Understanding State-building", DFID Working Paper. London: 2008.

First, the bulk of the international effort has gone into turning out large numbers of "front-line" boots on the ground – mainly in the form of (para)military light infantry forces. In some cases it is true that "quantity has a quality all of its own", for instance, where large numbers of troops are needed to mount presence patrols or man checkpoints. The problem, however, has been an over-focus on this dimension at the expense of ignoring the fact that building such forces, let alone engendering SSR, is really about transformational change of the security (and justice) system of systems. At a minimum, this involves proper institutional development of the ministerial structures that oversee the forces. It also involves a recognition of the interdependency of the formal governance systems. There is little point in building an effective defence ministry if the finance ministry does not function or an effective interior ministry if the justice ministry or criminal justice system is failing. This does not mean that reform of the security actors needs to wait on the emergence of perfect public administrative systems or local or national governance mechanisms; it does however point to issues with sequencing and prioritization. Quite early on there comes a point when throwing more international resources at bolstering the security forces is wasteful or even counter-productive if these other mechanisms of government are not also progressing.

Second, the approach taken has too often been apolitical and technocratic. The focus of international planning, in particular by the U.S. and NATO militaries, has been to treat the task as a programme management one of producing trained personnel and management structures. The generic model, even where the interveners have avoided simple mirror-imaging, has been centralized, Weberian security bureaucracies. This has often involved attempts to introduce the full panoply of modernization by "shock therapy." With the best of intentions, Western agencies have sought to transplant their own bureaucratic structures, processes and practices. Organizational tools such as formalized hierarchies and discipline, merit-based promotion, and strategic planning and programming have all been imported by enthusiastic advisors.

As the history of development has however amply demonstrated, the key to bringing about change, especially in such conflicted, traumatized and fragmented societies lies not in these bureaucratic forms but rather through shaping the underlying political economy – i.e. the power relations, shadow state, networks of influence and patronage networks (what we often, too superficially, label as corruption). We say that our campaigns are politically-led and that development assistance, including SSR, is inherently political. We rarely act on these observations. The truth is that the international assistance is inevitably sucked into the vortex of local power dynamics,

of which interveners can only ever have a partial understanding.[34]

In Iraq and Afghanistan, international advisors tend to view SSR through the prism of PowerPoint slides replete with bar charts, capability matrices, formal wiring diagrams or programme milestones. International advisors may get a glow of pride when their local protégés act like them – whether running a high-tech command post, drafting a training schedule, or conducting a textbook advance to contact. Often, advisors completely miss the point. Technical skills, such as marksmanship, running a payroll system, or running a forensic lab, may be fairly transferrable. What the internationals miss are the lenses of the political dynamics and influence maps through which local actors perceive such actions. For instance, a meritocratic recruitment and vetting system may be wildly inappropriate to a patronage-based political system within which the security forces sit. A technically excellent cordon and search operation conducted by a Kurdish army battalion in al-Anbar or a Tajik *kandak* in Helmand may be politically counter-productive. Often we are blinded to these realities by the West's own success at building "rationalist bureaucracies". Failing to shape our SSR efforts around these political realities and influence maps can be disastrous.

Third, our planning frameworks and mental maps have tended to compartmentalize SSR rather than treating it as a cross-cutting part of a stabilization/ COIN campaign plan. In both Afghanistan and Iraq, our planning constructs have led us to build linear, segmented campaign plans. One strand has typically been labeled "security" – e.g. countering insurgents/spoilers and protecting the population. Building local security forces as a means to extricate international forces has been placed within this line of operations. Furthermore, to make matters worse, we have often brigaded "justice" or "rule of law" under a different line of operations, reinforcing the tendency of our delivery agencies to work in parallel rather than as one whole.

We would do better to regard SSR as a critical strand in the influence campaign that should be woven throughout our COIN and stabilization efforts. If we recognise the need to address the wider dynamics of Iraq or Afghanistan's security "ecosystem" and the need to put politics at the heart of the SSR effort, we can reclaim SSR from the process-driven technocrats and ensure that we use it intelligently as part of the influence campaign. An example of what can be achieved

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[34] De Waal usefully characterizes this as a "political marketplace." Alex De Waal, "Mission without end? Peacekeeping in the African political marketplace", in *International Affairs*, Volume 85, Issue 1, 2009. See also Jackson, *SSR and Post-Conflict Reconstruction: Armed Wing of State-Building?*

was the 2007 Iraq Joint Campaign Plan, drawn up by MNF-I and the U.S. Mission-Iraq. At least on paper, this plan aligned support to the Iraqi security sector with a nuanced political-military strategy that targeted selected actors, including within the government, while promoting reconciliation and a political settlement.

Implications

The most high-profile stabilization and COIN efforts that the international community faces today involve rapidly (re)constructing security sectors as part of a wider agenda of state-building and peacebuilding.[35] The challenge this poses should not be underestimated. Even the more positive recent cases of SSR in the context of stabilization (such as Sierra Leone and Liberia) highlight the gradual pace of change, the fragility of progress, the vital importance of embedding technical assistance within wider institutional reforms and of ensuring that assistance is fine-tuned to support emerging political settlements.

If we accept that an important part of state-building involves the extension of state control, the question remains in situations like Afghanistan and Iraq in exactly what form the coercive and judicial apparatus is built, how it is governed, whom it protects and whom it targets. These latter questions point to the dilemma of pursuing state-building as a means to peacebuilding. Defining the "out group" too broadly (perhaps to include Sunnis in Iraq or numerous Pashtun tribes in Afghanistan) will mean that the state can only rule through construction of a massive coercive apparatus and live in a state of siege. Conversely, allowing too many others to share in the monopoly of force, as happened with Afghan warlords after 2001, can undermine the very core of the state.

These dilemmas remind us that any SSR programme must be intensely political; driven and shaped by the political environment and the political purposes of the campaign. In these contexts, SSR must be seen as a tool of COIN and of

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[35] Outside Iraq and Afghanistan, Somalia has the most similarity to Iraq and Afghanistan in terms of the challenge of state-building and security sector development. Yemen, Palestine and Lebanon display many of the challenging characteristics highlighted here in terms of state capacity and political settlement. See Yezid Sayigh, "Fixing Broken Windows": Security Sector Reform in Palestine, Lebanon, and Yemen, in *Carnegie Papers* no 17, October 2009. Pakistan faces much more serious insurgency challenges but has a security sector that requires reform rather than reconstruction. Hassan Abbas, *Police and Law Enforcement Reform in Pakistan*, Institute for Social Policy & Understanding, April 2009. Colombia provides a positive example of where Pakistan could get to. Peter DeShazo, Johanna Mendelsohn Forman, & Phillip McLean, *Countering Threats to Security and Stability in a Failing State: Lessons from Colombia*, CSIS, September 2009.

political engagement.

This sounds easy in theory. What may it mean in practice? This paper has focused on diagnosis rather than prescription but concludes with four guidelines for policymakers and practitioners.

First, be honest about the role of politics and manage the resultant tensions. Political tensions in the host country need to be actively managed rather than wished away. For instance, if it is politic to carve up control of the security apparatus amongst multiple political factions, then do not pretend that the resultant ministers and officials are seeking to operate an ideal Weberian bureaucracy in the national interest. On the donor side, accept that donors may be more interested in demonstrating they are contributing than in any results achieved on the ground. By explicitly recognizing these political factors, SSR practitioners will be more able to shape their interventions accordingly.[36]

Second, transform our SSR programmes within COIN or stabilization contexts from technically-oriented capacity building programmes into comprehensive and nimble influence activities in which intelligence, political, development and military activity are properly integrated.[37] This requires a well thought out, integrated and adaptive influence campaign designed to shape the host government's behaviours and incentive structures at multiple levels.[38]

What this means in practice is that the internationals need to strive towards better understandings of how influence and power relations work in the particular environment.[39] SSR interventions need to combine lobbying at the diplomatic level with offers, and withdrawals, of assistance. Ensuring that the SSR effort underpins political accommodations, including integration and reconciliation efforts, will be

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[36] The principles to adopt here are the standard ones of "do no harm", manage risks and plan ahead. For instance, if a donor insists on supporting a particular security sector initiative for its own political purposes, then at least ensure this intervention is designed so as not to harm the wider effort. If there is a short-term need to build local security forces, then put in place a transition and demobilization plan at the outset.

[37] Hence, delivering SSR abroad truly does start with SSR and the Comprehensive Approach at home to ensure that our approaches are better aligned. "Security & Justice Development – What Next?," in *Journal of Security Sector Management*, November 2009.

Daniel Korski, "British Civil-Military Integration: History and Next Steps," in *RUSI Journal*, Vol. 156, No. 6,9 December 2009.

[38] Andrew Rathmell, "Adapting Government for Stabilisation and Counter-insurgency Operations," in *RUSI Journal*, Vol. 154 No. 6, December 2009.

[39] Michael T. Flynn, Matt Pottinger, Paul D. Batchelor, *Fixing Intel: A Blueprint for Making Intelligence Relevant for Afghanistan,* Washington DC: CNAS, 2010.

important. At times, assistance efforts will have to go hand in hand with intelligence-led targeting of key individuals in the security sector. Overall, our thinking about the SSR effort should start not from numeric or "capability maturity" end-states but rather by thinking through analyses of power relationships. In other words, how can concepts such as reciprocity, dependency, incentive structures and cultural attraction be mobilized to bring about the behaviour changes among local security actors that will help achieve our objectives? Constructing and managing such integrated influence campaigns is not easy but needs to become the organizing principle for our efforts.[40]

Third, we need to more frankly explore what local ownership and partnership really mean in these environments. It is true that achieving partnership at all levels is important and that local ownership of reforms is vital if success is to be achieved.[41] Often, our SSR programmes struggle to implement effective and sustainable forms of local ownership.[42] In a COIN environment, the dilemmas are worse than usual. The internationals are deeply embedded in the conflict system and should not be shy about exercising the influence that they have. One view from both Iraq and Afghanistan is that the coalition became too accommodating of local power-brokers and spoilers, many of whom will be using their positions in the security sector in ways which are inimical to our interests.

Finally, the U.S. and its NATO military partners should consider carefully whether it is indeed best to pretend to be undertaking SSR, as laid out in OECD-DAC and UN orthodoxy, or whether instead to accept that what they are engaged in is some other activity (COIN, stabilization or armed state-building) within which elements of SSR serve our purposes.[43] Even when undertaking low-level security assistance, it is important to adopt many of the principles and good practices of SSR. The three critical principles that many military-oriented SSR efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan still tend to violate include: starting from what exists rather than imposing external models; addressing the sector as a whole rather than only its constituent elements;

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[40] Steve Tatham and Andrew Mackay, in "Behavioural Conflict; From General to Strategic Corporal: Complexity, Adaptation and Influence", *Shrivenham Paper* No. 9, December 2009; Alex Evans and David Steven, "Towards a theory of influence for twenty-first century foreign policy: diplomacy in a globalised world", in FCO, *Public Diplomacy in a Globalised World,* London: 2008.

[41] Timothy Donais, ed, *Local Ownership and Security Sector Reform,* DCAF, Lit Verlag, 2009.

[42] Volha Piotukh & Peter Wilson, *Security Sector Evolution: Understanding and Influencing How Security Institutions Change,* London, Libra Advisory Group, July 2009.

[43] As argued forcefully in Mark Sedra, 'Security Sector Reform in Afghanistan and Iraq: exposing a concept in crisis', in *Journal of Peacebuilding and Development*, Vol. 3, No. 2, pp.7-23, 2007.

and focusing on governance and management as much as capacity-building.[44]

However, adopting these principles is not the same as doing holistic SSR. If NATO acknowledges that, for the purposes of stabilization, it is only providing a partial solution, then it may be easier for more neutral bodies, sometimes but not always including the UN, to take a broader, longer-term and more people-centred approach to SSR. Such an approach will eventually be needed so as to lay the foundations for true post-conflict security sector reform in order for the gains of a successful stabilization or counterinsurgency campaign to be consolidated.

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[44] Albrecht Schnabel provides useful advice as to how to bridge the gap between ideal SSR principles and the realities of difficult political and conflict-affected environments. Albrecht Schnabel, "Ideal Requirements versus Real Environments in Security Sector Reform", in Hans Born and Albrecht Schnabel, eds, *Security Sector Reform in Challenging Environments,* pp. 3-36, DCAF, Lit Verlag, 2009.

CHAPTER SEVEN

NATO and Complex Operations:
the challenge of responding to mass atrocity

Sarah Sewall

This essay argues that NATO is largely ignoring a particularly complex military mission: intervention to halt mass atrocities. By mass atrocities, I mean the significant use of violence by state or non-state armed groups that is aimed principally against non-combatants. Less important than the *type* of mass atrocity (genocide or a crime against humanity?) or its *scale* (a number killed or wounded, the rate of harm, or the potential future harm?) is the primary *purpose* of the violence, the civilian nature of the victim, and the response it triggers. When intervening political authorities determine that the atrocities can no longer be tolerated and direct forces to *halt the violence against civilians*, the result is a Mass Atrocity Response Operation (MARO).

My claim is that a MARO is a different type of military operation than those currently recognized by NATO. The MARO mission poses unique military and political challenges that require advance planning and consideration and are discussed in detail below. Accordingly, this essay concludes by urging NATO to incorporate MARO into its future mission concept.

MARO in strategic context

During the 1990s, NATO transitioned from a counter-USSR alliance focused on nuclear and conventional deterrence of a Soviet invasion of Europe into a pro-Western consortium promoting political and military integration of the continent while using military force to promote regional stability and protect human rights in Bosnia and Kosovo. Since 2001, NATO's dramatic out-of-area engagement in Afghanistan now tests member states' military capabilities, political sensibilities, and doctrinal distinctions.

In the future, NATO must balance several competing roles: defense of European partners from aggression, defense of the international system against

terrorism, support for humanitarian and democratic principles, and maintaining the unity of the Alliance – all in the context of a relative decline in the material power of Europe and the United States and the continuing changes in the external threat environment. Why, then, complicate the picture by talking about a new mission?

There are at least three reasons for this. First, sustaining domestic and international political support for defense capabilities generally and for the use of force in international politics in specific cases increasingly hinges upon perceptions that force is being or can be used for "good" (read legitimate) purposes. Stopping mass atrocities is perceived as a "good" use of force, carrying the moral and political legitimacy of peacekeeping and operations that have been authorized by the United Nations. NATO member states have been among the most ardent supporters of humanitarian interventions, as well as the subsequent development of the norm of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P).[1] Even where militarily engaged in operations for other purposes (e.g. U.S. requests to assist in operations in Afghanistan), NATO members stress the humanitarian reasons and benefits. Preparation for the most widely accepted normative purposes can instrumentally strengthen the support for maintaining armed forces generally.

History also indicates that this is a mission for which NATO forces should be prepared. NATO forces were directed to halt mass atrocities in Kosovo. Because the strategy and means of intervention in Kosovo – the coercive use of air power against Serbia – bore no direct relationship to civilian protection, one might overlook this as an example of a MARO. In fact, the apparent disconnect underscores the need to consider carefully the implications of alternative MARO strategies and tactics. More fundamentally, Kosovo suggests that NATO members may in the future intervene specifically to prevent or halt widespread violence against civilians.

Finally, mass atrocities may crop up unexpectedly. While violence against civilians may emerge clearly as an independent problem demanding response, a MARO may also develop from, or even coexist with, other types of military operations in which NATO members are involved. The widespread murder of civilians could grow out of an initially uncontested peacekeeping or humanitarian relief operation. The targeting of non-combatants, which is often an element of insurgency or civil war, could overtake other political objectives in such conflicts, becoming the overriding purpose of the armed groups. Mass atrocities could arise from a security vacuum, as well, such as that created by the withdrawal of a foreign counterinsurgency force.

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[1] For an overview of recent developments on R2P, as well as links to background documents, see the website for the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect: http://www.globalr2p.org/

Therefore NATO may not face a momentous political decision about intervening in the next mass atrocity. NATO forces might simply find themselves in the middle of one. Because MAROs may be unavoidable for political or pragmatic reasons, they should be part of NATO's lexicon and mission.

As will be explained in greater detail below, neither NATO nor its members currently recognize mass atrocities as a unique operational challenge. There is no operational concept or doctrine that might help commanders understand the dynamics and demands of responding to mass atrocities. As a result, NATO is not fully prepared to intervene effectively in a mass atrocity situation.

MARO similarities to other missions

This is not to argue that everything about a MARO is different. Most tactical tasks comprising a MARO will be familiar. This is true almost across the operational spectrum; convoy escort, direct fires, and detainee operations are features of both peacekeeping and war. More broadly, MARO involves a dynamic mix of offense, defense and stability operations. Many familiar operational concepts, such as no-fly zones, protected enclaves, or separation of forces may be elements of a MARO operational plan.

The fact that the tasks and concepts are familiar reveals little about the dramatically different context in which those tasks must be performed. Consider the U.S. experience in Operation Iraqi Freedom, in which the context changed from major combat operations to counterinsurgency. Although many of the tasks and concepts remained the same, U.S. forces were inadequately prepared to carry them out.

Some comparisons can be drawn between MAROs and other uses of military force that are recognized as types of operations requiring their own doctrine and training. However, in each case, there are sufficient distinctions to consider MARO a separate type of operation. For example, the civilian is critically important in both MARO and in humanitarian and relief operations (HUMRO), but HUMROs generally occur within a permissive (non-violent) environment. Food, shelter, and medical and other assistance is required; the force is not organized or equipped to provide civilians protection from armed attack.

MAROs may combine elements from high-intensity conventional combat with aspects of non-combatant evacuation operations (NEO). But a MARO is

obviously neither of those missions. For example, a MARO could require massing force, maneuvering and closing with a well-organized and equipped enemy as in conventional operations. But in conventional operations, that enemy aims first to defeat opposing forces, not slaughter the defenseless. A NEO occurs in the face of external factors (e.g. competing sides in a civil war, a natural disaster) that have created the emergency requiring civilian evacuation. A NEO also requires identifying and protecting civilians at risk; but NEO success is defined as transporting the civilians back to safety in their host country. Defeating combatants, protecting civilians from continuing attacks or creating stable conditions is not part of the NEO mission.

Superficially, a MARO resembles what some nations envision a robust peace enforcement operation to be, but this is more appearance than reality. In recent years, the United Kingdom, Canada and other NATO members began embedding civilian protection language in UN peacekeeping operations mandates.[2] The blue-helmeted Congo operation, MONUC, even has civilian protection as its central mission. In notable cases, courageous UN field commanders have pushed the envelope of their mandates and capabilities to protect civilians in specific tactical circumstances.

But civilian protection as a mission has not been effectively realized. This reflects in part the lack of common understanding of what it means to "operationalize" civilian protection. The gap also reflects the shortfalls in the troop contributor capabilities and forces available to UN missions. The weakest link appears to be the distance between a desire to protect the vulnerable and a willingness to use significant levels of force for that purpose. The brief but assertive French-led EU intervention in the Democratic Republic of Congo suggests that even in a permissive intervention, the will and ability to fight is essential for protection of civilians.

There is no reason why a MARO could not be conducted under UN auspices, but it would require more – in both political and military capital – than what the UN currently calls civilian protection. More fundamentally, mass atrocities situations may arise where there is no government to provide permission, or the government itself may be responsible for them. In such cases, the stakes are higher and force requirements may be even more demanding. For these reasons, UN peace operations, even when given tasks of civilian protection, remain conceptually and operationally distinct from intervening in ongoing mass atrocities for the primary purpose of halting civilian killings.

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[2] Holt, Victoria and Glyn Taylor with Max Kelly, *Protecting Civilians in the Context of UN Peacekeeping Operations: Successes, Setbacks and Remaining Challenges,* New York: United Nations, 2009.

Counterinsurgency also offers a suggestive parallel to a MARO. COIN prominently features the civilian, along with bad guys (insurgents) and good guys (counterinsurgents, local and/or foreign). Insurgent and counterinsurgent forces compete for civilian loyalties using positive (protection/assistance) and negative (threats/violence) actions. Some civilians will be allied more closely with the competing groups, but in the end, all civilians are instrumental and relevant to the forces' competition for legitimacy.

At the macro level, what distinguishes a MARO and a MARO situation is the character and dynamics of the conflict and the mission's primary objective – ending against civilians. Let us unpack these distinctions in greater detail.

Distinctions of a MARO situation

Perpetrators may use violence against civilians as a means to an end – gaining political power, access to resources, or other objectives – rather than as the sole end in itself. This explains the difficulty in identifying the centrality of mass atrocity amidst other types of conflict (e.g. insurgency, civil war) in which civilians are often targeted by one or both parties. Thus it is critical that the intervener understand his posture and priority in relation to the perpetrator's goals.

An intervener may decide to support one side in a civil war, or to help a government defeat insurgents. The intervener may even make this choice because it believes this is the most effective way to end violence against civilians. But where it makes this choice, it is involved a civil war or a counterinsurgency, not a MARO. In both cases, protecting civilians may be an important objective, but it will not be the primary objective of military forces.

In a MARO, one armed party aims to kill or otherwise harm civilians, while the intervener's *primary* goal is to halt or prevent those actions. It may even be the case that the intervening force was previously operating under different guidance (e.g. foreign internal defense, peacekeeping, counterinsurgency). Once assigned a MARO mission, however, the focus and tactics of that force change.

The intervening force nonetheless has many choices regarding how to conduct the MARO. It may decide – for reasons of urgency, politics, effectiveness or resources – to pursue largely offensive operations aimed at perpetrators. This might be done directly, by attacking the means of violence, or indirectly, as was the case in Kosovo. An intervening force may seek to saturate the area of operations,

focusing on defensive measures to protect civilians. Depending upon available time and resources, it might seek to isolate perpetrators from victims through a zone of separation or the establishment of safe havens. The potential range of intervention options also includes a powerful set of deterrent measures, seemingly overlooked by policymakers and military forces.

In thinking about a MARO, we can define those initiating violence as perpetrators and the object of their violence as victims. Perpetrators may be government troops, militias, paramilitary groups, or citizens, and they may be carrying out well-planned and coordinated strategies while incorporating those who spontaneously join in the murders. Perpetrators may use economic status, a racial or ethnic grouping, faith, political ideology, or any or all of these things to differentiate their civilian victims.

Identifying the characteristics of mass atrocity and the particular challenges of MARO is a prerequisite for developing relevant planning tools and the supporting doctrine, training, leadership, and materiel. I learned this in 2007, when I first convened a group of military planners to develop a concept of operations for genocide intervention. We ultimately couldn't create tools for tackling the challenge until we had better articulated the dimensions of the problem, and particularly the dominant - and in some cases unique - requirements of MARO. While our current thinking is preliminary and undoubtedly incomplete, I offer the major insights below.

Multi-party dynamic

A MARO situation is a multi-party affair, complicating planning and operations. At least three major categories of actors – the perpetrators of violence, the victims of violence, and the interveners – interact with unpredictable results. The core dynamic of MARO remains *at least tripartite by definition*. The complex dynamics of these groups must be factored into operational planning from the start.

Warfare has long been considered a two-party game between enemy and friendly forces. Accordingly, military war games have typically involved two actors: a red team (enemy) and blue team ("good guys"). In the last few years, U.S. war games have begun adding a "green" team to represent non-state actors, civilian governmental actors, or "others" with the capacity to affect the battlefield.

In a MARO scenario, this "green" team of "others" also exists, in addition to the three categories of perpetrator, victim, and intervener listed above. "Others" in

a MARO might include local civilian bystanders, a neighboring country, the United Nations, or NGOs. In a MARO, the reaction of these "other" actors can be highly significant, affecting the pace of violence or the speed or perceived legitimacy of outside intervention.

As noted earlier, perpetrators attack victims while interveners seek to stop the killing of non-combatants. In fact, it is possible that multiple armed actors will commit mass atrocities against civilians rather than focus on fighting armed opponents. The numbers and types of perpetrators will be specific to the circumstance, but in any MARO there will be at least one armed group committing violence against civilians.

The victims, too, have a vote. The victim response is not likely to be strategic or coordinated but rather ad hoc and reactive, varying across geography and time. Victims' choices – fleeing, hiding, organizing to defend themselves, appealing to other citizens or nations to intervene on their behalf – will affect the strategies of the perpetrator.

Victim actions will also affect the MARO force, whose mission to stop the killing may then become a shield behind which victims can take revenge or a force that neighboring states or external actors fight for their own reasons.

Understanding these dynamics will be critical as the intervening force begins planning for an appropriate course of action. Any particular plan to address the mass atrocity will be shaped by a variety of traditional planning factors including available resources, speed of required response, degree of acceptable risk, etc. But a choice from among competing courses of action should also be informed by analysis of the likely effect of intervention upon the calculations and actors of other parties, and the third-order effects of their adjustments upon each other.

Further, by entering the equation, the intervening force transforms itself into a combatant that has taken sides in a (largely one-sided) conflict. The intervening forces' entry into the mass atrocity will affect the calculations of all parties, change their behavior in unexpected ways, and may even transform the conflict into something entirely different.

Illusion of impartiality

The intervener may be acting for what he considers impartial reasons (e.g.

defense of human rights), unrelated to the identities of the parties or the underlying conflicts. The intervener may believe himself opposed to *actions* - violence against civilians - rather than a party or force. Indeed, if there were more than one party inflicting mass violence upon civilians, the intervener might in fact oppose actions in an even-handed way, i.e. against all civilian attackers. Nonetheless, the perpetrators of violence and victims will perceive an intervening force as anything but impartial even where more than one party is restrained from acting.

Intervention to halt mass atrocity will inevitably be hostile to the party committing the violence, effectively putting the interveners in alliance with the victims against the perpetrators. The perpetrators may turn their vengeance against the interveners, transforming the mission emphasis from civilian protection to enemy neutralization. Concomitantly, the victims may regard interveners as protectors, and they may also use the intervening forces as a means for extracting vengeance. Victims may use the implicit shield of protection offered by foreign intervention to carry out reprisals against perpetrators or those outside the victim group.

Other actors in and outside the region may come to see the interveners as threats to the pre-existing power balance, or as threats to their own aspirations to change the constellation of power. Examples might include countries allied with the interests of the perpetrators, or armed groups seeking to overthrow a government conducting mass killings. These actors may then decide to use force against the intervening party.

Thus, even as a MARO may arise out of other types of operations as explained earlier, there is also high potential for a MARO to quickly metastasize again into another type of conflict - civil war, insurgency, interstate conflict - and to dissolve its original distinctions between victim and perpetrator such that the intervener can no longer enjoy an operationally or morally pure role.

Escalatory dynamic

Mass killing of civilians can intensify and expand very quickly once they begin. This is particularly true when the ranks of potential perpetrators are elastic. The number and capabilities of those carrying out the killing may expand as the result of a de facto *levée en masse* among citizens or because additional internal or external military or paramilitary forces join in the massacres.

Yet at the same time, the start of massacres (often coupled with a deliberate

strategy to incite the population or allied actors) can unleash emotions and fear with exponential effects. Consider, for example, that the Rwanda massacres had largely ended in 100 days. Perpetrators may consciously speed their killing in anticipation that they may be either discovered or stopped. One military analyst has argued that perpetrators of genocide recognize that they have a limited window of opportunity for their criminal actions, so that once their crimes become known, their commission will hasten.[3]

However, there is no single pattern or explanation for the intensity or spread of mass killing. Mass killing can also simmer slowly and flare episodically, as has been the case in Darfur, where the initial wave of killings in 2003 was followed by more sporadic attacks over time which depended on the current political climate, constraints placed on perpetrators by other actors, and even the seasons. This constrained dynamic will be more common where perpetrators have limited capability or believe that they can escape intervention as long as level of violence stays below a particular threshold. Furthermore, instigators may try to hide their role or publicly offer promises to end the violence in order to preempt or minimize an international response.

Nonetheless, genocide, once unleashed, may swell and quicken beyond recognition in a matter of days. The potential for such a rapid escalation raises acute challenges for an intervening force. Individual states are generally slow, and the international community is even slower, to reach decisions about the use of force, particularly in situations that remain as controversial as humanitarian intervention.[4] Even when states choose to intervene, U.S. Air Force officer Clint Hinote contends that "their approach tends to be gradual, as more potent measures are only adopted after it becomes apparent that lesser measures are not working".[5] This certainly was the case with NATO intervention in Kosovo.

Indeed, the asymmetry between a rushed genocide and a graduated response has important - and somewhat contradictory - implications for intervention. "The asymmetry works against those who want to stop mass atrocities", Hinote argues. "To be successful a model of military intervention must account for it."[6]

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[3] Hinote, Clint, "Campaigning to Protect: Using Military Force to Stop Genocide and Mass Atrocities" in *Carr Center for Human Rights Policy*, 29, March 2008.
http://www.hks.harvard.edu/cchrp/maro/pdf/Clint_Hinote_Campaigning_to_Protect_Third%20Draft.pdf
[4] Sewall, Sarah "Do the Right Thing: A Genocide Policy that Works." in *Boston Review*, September/October 2009.
[5] Hinote, 29
[6] Ibid

Operational and Political Implications

In this section, I attempt to summarize for military and political authorities some key implications of the above discussion about the character and dynamics of a MARO situation.

Different information, from the outset

The difficulty of predicting either the onset or course of mass atrocity, the complexity of the operating environment, and the potential for unanticipated consequences of intervention all highlight the critical role of information from the outset of considering a possible MARO.

The first indications of potential mass atrocity are likely to require immediate reprioritization of collection assets and analytic resources simply to stay informed about the tangible and intangible conflict indicators.

In addition, MARO planners have an immediate need for non-traditional types of information from non-traditional sources. They will want to know the motivations, strengths, and weaknesses of each of the relevant parties. They will therefore seek to change the typical information the intelligence community gathers in support of conventional combat operations – asking for psychological profiles of non-state actors, cultural assumptions and practices, conflict analysis, and tracking of small arms flows. They will want to exploit open-source information from non-traditional providers ranging from NGOs to the diaspora community.

Nations will likely require greater capacity to provide rapid assessments of the "human terrain" in what may have been considered low priority parts of the world. At the tactical level, the U.S. military is moving in this direction as a result of its missions that focus on counterinsurgency and irregular warfare. The Intelligence Community should be forewarned about the need to quickly shift its intelligence collection priorities and efforts in the event of a potential MARO.

Advance interagency planning

Because of the difficulty of predicting a mass atrocity and its potential speed of onset or escalation, advance planning and preparation for intervention will be critical. At the same time, MARO tabletop exercises reveal the intimate relationships

among diplomatic, economic, information and military efforts – placing a premium on coordinated intergovernmental efforts to deter or halt mass atrocity. Indeed, while the need for coordination is significant throughout a MARO, this is particularly acute prior to the widespread outbreak of violence and as the violence is halted.

Because a MARO responds to an external dynamic, it is reactive. Warnings and indicators of mass atrocity may well be evident, but in many cases where the prerequisites of widespread atrocities appear to exist, violence does not evolve as feared. Historically, the conditions for widespread violence have often appeared to exist, yet violence has occurred in a relatively small proportion of these cases.[7] We have a limited ability to predict where prevention or response efforts are most necessary; and, it is impossible to plan for every potential MARO. At the same time, once a MARO is contemplated, it has great urgency. There will be little time for multiple iterations of plans, long negotiations about transit or overflight through neighboring countries, and the build-up of bases and equipment at staging bases. A MARO will often be a contingency that requires adapting an existing deliberate plan or – worse – starting from scratch with minimal political guidance. By the time military forces are directed to undertake such a mission, they will be challenged to figure out what they are getting into or how best to achieve success. The generic aspects of MARO planning must be well understood in order to develop plans effectively in the moment.

This speaks to the importance of developing doctrine, leader orientation, and conducting routine planning exercises, and developing common national and coalition concepts, vocabulary, and expectations. Any multi-national execution of this type of mission will require a high degree of coordinated political and military effort.

Speed vs. mass

A MARO may stand traditional planning precepts on their head. US operational design has generally sought to assemble sufficient force to ensure success as measured by minimal risk to strategic objectives and, often, the intervening force. Yet in a MARO, the potential for rapid escalation and a daily increase in civilian casualties may privilege speed of response over mass. Equally, the alacrity of an initial show of force can have an effect that exceeds the combat power of the initially

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[7] Straus, Scott "Second-Generation Comparative Research On Genocide" in *World Politics* 59, 481, April 2007.

deploying force.

Certainly, time always matters in military operations. Yet because of the strategic objective, "lateness" can be more problematic in a MARO than in many other operations. In a conventional conflict, if an intervention arrives late, certain aspects can be "undone" – territory may be recaptured or prisoners released. In a MARO situation the perpetrator has achieved success if the civilians it wishes to have killed are killed; no subsequent victory against perpetrators will undo the fact of civilian deaths. Since the primary purpose of a MARO is to stop the killing, speed of response can determine success.

In terms of capabilities needed for a MARO, this implicitly puts a premium on capabilities such as transportation assets and mobile forces to reach and move within the area of operations. It also suggests the need to leverage quickly deployable and non-kinetic resources to serve as efficient "force multipliers." The potential uses of intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) are discussed in greater detail below.

The very different planning calculus implied by a MARO suggests another reason why military planners must be familiar with this unique mission before they confront one. A well-thought-out effort will be superior to merely attempting to muddle through.

The power of witness

In a MARO situation, transparency or witness can be a particularly important alternative or adjunct to using force. The nature of mass atrocities suggests that the ability to expose – and be known to be witnessing – evidence of it may be surprisingly useful for deterring or mitigating violence against civilians. Because mass atrocity is indisputably criminal and potentially shameful, the very fact of exposing it may have an impact quite different from exposing the conduct of war among combatants (assuming that the threat of prosecution or retribution is real and understood). Surveillance is also a capability that has utility before an intervention and retains that utility throughout. For these reasons, witness deserves special attention from political and military leaders.

To further unpack this argument, consider the complementary respects in which witnessing or recording acts of genocide can be powerful.
1) Transparency can actually halt the acts of violence if perpetrators decide

that the risks of being subsequently held personally responsible (either as a matter of justice or physical violence) are significant.

2) Transparency can convince "others" not to join in the violence against civilians for similar reasons, or to do something to prevent it. Witness shatters the illusion that "everyone's doing it" by demonstrating that outsiders have an interest in knowing precisely who is committing crimes. It can also put pressure on potentially influential actors who may be turning a blind eye to the situation.

3) Witness can shape international understanding regarding the nature of crimes and need for action to stop or ameliorate their impact. While it is rarely the case that outside states and organizations are unaware of mass atrocities, they have historically been reluctant to believe sporadic reports, or unwilling to take action until sufficient consensus regarding the brutality and impact of the crimes has emerged.

4) Transparency can help national leaders predict the onset and course of violence and consider how armed forces might help prevent its spread. Greater visibility regarding trends of violence may increase options for preventing its spread.

5) Witness can be critical for obtaining evidence that can be used in future national or international processes for legal redress.

6) Tactically, witness can help political and military authorities better assess the dynamics of the conflict in order to allocate diplomatic, humanitarian and military resources more effectively.

ISR – provided by satellites, aircraft, or drones - is the most sophisticated, flexible, and immediate form of witness available to NATO nations.[8] But witness need not be high-tech. Witness on the ground – people observing violence, handheld video recording perpetrators, or cell phone cameras documenting crimes - offers a lower-tech "democratized" version of witness. These may entail more risk to the

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[8] It is worth noting that the value of sophisticated ISR for other purposes may be limited. It cannot substitute for human intelligence. Furthermore, where mass atrocities are committed by irregular forces or citizens wielding machetes, the relative utility of ISR for the actual application of force will be lessened. Indeed, many tactics and concepts that advanced militaries have refined – standoff destruction of massed forces, coercion of state leaders by jeopardizing their hold on national allegiances or institutions, sanctions to deny weapons transfers – may be less useful during MAROs.

recorder of violence and the data may not be transmitted as reliably or immediately, but they can be critical for enhancing visibility and ensuring accountability. This point also has implications regarding the value of military forces embedding members of the media, given their potential to contribute to witness and thereby advance mission objectives.

The above discussion suggests that a different use of familiar tools can be critical in identifying, deterring, and responding to mass atrocity. It also suggests that deterrence may be viable in the context of mass atrocities, even where states are not the primary actors.

Symptoms or root causes – can there be a hand off?

One of the most important questions related to MARO planning is the intervening force's measure of responsibility for civilians. This question of limits pertains to both scope of tasks and length of time. Will the intervening force simply stop the killing, providing whatever emergency assistance it can until relative stability has been restored? Or will the force be expected to sustain its efforts beyond the cessation of mass murder, to include the provision of services and restoration of governance? Essentially the issue is whether it is possible to limit a MARO to dealing with the symptoms rather than the underlying causes of mass violence.

There are severe challenges with either approach, yet the choice makes a huge difference for the military (and accompanying civilian agencies). It is ironic that states with advanced military capabilities may be best suited for the high-end kinetic phase of a MARO, even though the post-violence nation-building phase may be more challenging in terms of manpower and other resources and the need for integrated civil-military activities.

On the one hand, limiting the responsibilities of the intervening force should make it easier to garner political will to intervene in the first place. Additionally, an initial force with a circumscribed mission might be lighter and more rapidly deployable, thus facilitating the speed of the response. However, there is a danger that assumptions about a future "handoff partner" will prove false, or that the partner may be inadequately prepared for the responsibility. In this case, the intervening force will find itself either withdrawing without ensuring enduring security or assuming responsibilities for which it was ill-prepared. Alternatively, an intervener's willingness to accept long term nation-building responsibilities following a MARO may require a long-term commitment and a broad range of governance, economic,

social support, rule of law, and other capabilities. It is therefore a more weighty decision. If there were a viable "relief" force on the horizon, nations with greater military capability may be less reluctant to consider taking on the initial MARO mission.

There is thus a potential international division of labor on MARO, akin to that sought in the early 1990s on peacekeeping responsibilities. The United States and capable NATO forces were envisioned as assuming the most demanding humanitarian challenges while other peacekeepers – coming together under the UN blue helmet – were to take over once the violence had been diminished significantly. Unfortunately, international capacities to provide follow-on peacekeeping and nation building have not increased appreciably in the past decade. Moreover, some situations will remain sufficiently violent that only leading powers could hope to maintain stability. MARO forces and their political masters may not know which is which until the intervention plays out.

Immediate non-military requirements

While there may be continuing uncertainty regarding the ability of a MARO force to hand off future nation-building requirements, it is also likely that many non-traditional military tasks will fall to that force in the short term, certainly while the level of violence remains high. A MARO plan must account for the particular combination of humanitarian, public order, criminal justice, and governance challenges that accompany mass atrocities and it will be best served by early integration with civilian actors and agencies in order to facilitate the transition of specific responsibilities to others.

In concrete terms, the humanitarian challenges of mass atrocity include not only burying the dead and helping the wounded but aiding, reuniting and resettling internally displaced persons, managing identity and safety issues in IDP camps, and addressing the unique psychological harms that accompany mass civilian slaughter.

Judicial processes will differ from those that armed forces typically apply regarding criminal detainees or prisoners of war. In a MARO, the tasks include identification and imprisonment of alleged perpetrators (to include separate identity processing), the ongoing prevention of vigilante justice, and collection and preservation of any evidence of mass murder.

Restoration of credible political authority may be similarly complicated. Mass criminal activity will likely have removed legitimacy from individual leaders

and tainted segments of the population by association. Reconciliation processes may need to proceed in conjunction with formal or informal judicial remedies. Depending upon the political status quo ante (peace agreement, representative government, *de facto* dictatorship), the restoration of government may require a dramatic break with the past.

It is also essential that any MARO force coordinate with (and learn from) organizations that are already active on the ground in the area of conflict. There are several potential categories of actors here, with varying degrees of coordination possible. One group comprises civilian governmental agencies able to provide assistance in key areas in which military forces are less expert, particularly providing services to displaced and traumatized civilians, implementing civil criminal justice, and facilitating political reconciliation and governance. While these agencies are easier to involve in information sharing and planning by virtue of shared status as U.S. or other government actors, the ability of these agencies to both plan and conduct operations in their areas of assigned responsibility remains a notable weakness.

It is therefore vital to engage other categories of actors in MARO planning and operations. International and regional organizations such as UNICEF, UNDP, UNHCR and ECHO may already be operating in country and well-positioned to take on tasks that are crucial as killing is halted. Non-governmental organizations also have an important role to play. It is worth noting that many of these actors rely on local employees, who have been part of the local social fabric, and accordingly may find themselves in constrained roles in the aftermath of mass atrocity. It is important for the MARO force to be cognizant of these factors as they plan operations.

Moral dilemmas

In a MARO, the difference between doing right and wrong will be strategically crystalline and tactically elusive. Moral dilemmas will proliferate. They are likely to be the least appreciated dimensions of MARO planning and operations, yet they may create the most significant political vulnerabilities for the intervening parties.

The categorization of persons is perhaps the *a priori* moral dilemma facing interveners. Where the distinctions between victims and perpetrators cannot be easily recognized or verified, how can interveners determine who is which party? One can easily think of historical examples where the predominant dividing lines were unclear – Nazi Germany murdered not just Jews but also other groups; Rwandan

genocidaires killed moderate Hutu in addition to Tutsi. Even where the distinctions can be discerned, does the intervener accept and work with the distinctions or refuse to honor them, crafting responses based solely on the actions or choices of individuals?

In practice, these choices will affect everything else the intervening force undertakes. Will they aid or abet the separation of groups of persons in safe zones or refugee camps? Will this penalize neutral parties or endanger dissenters within categories?

Interveners must not only anticipate these dilemmas, but prepare themselves for criticism from interested parties – to include neighboring countries, human rights groups, and diaspora communities. The potential ethical backlash can be debilitating. Instead of producing the pride and satisfaction anticipated, a MARO may cause service members to question the morality of their actions and nations to second-guess their decisions to intervene.

Doing the right thing without being prepared for tough choices and potential ethical backlash can undermine the effectiveness of the operation and dissuade actors from future interventions.

Political guidance

In a MARO, a high degree of politico-military interaction in the planning process is critical. Most of the vexing issues related to a MARO – e.g. how to identify perpetrators, whether to treat just the symptoms or also the root causes, the degree of risk to assume in moving swiftly – are properly resolved by civilian authorities. In particular, the political sensitivities and potential moral backlash require careful consideration of alternative courses of action and second and third-order effects of intervention.

The above discussion highlights particular challenges for those who would intervene in mass atrocities. Any planning effort must take these issues into account as it identifies a particular concept of operations for the force.

NATO and MARO

The danger of examining MARO too closely, of course, is that its challenges

will dissuade nations from the task. However real this risk, it is preferable to the alternative – a MARO that meets with failure and dooms future efforts to save civilian lives. Moreover, the most important investments in MARO preparation are intellectual – in the development of doctrine and education of leaders who might face a MARO on its own or as part of a mission that rapidly changes.

This is why the MARO Project has developed a planning handbook to help civilian and military actors understand and prepare for the challenges of halting mass killings. The Project, a joint effort of the Carr Center for Human Rights Policy at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government and the Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute of the U.S. Army War College, has also developed a tabletop exercise and engagement plan to educate interested parties and support their efforts to adapt doctrine and training for MARO requirements.[9]

Precisely because a MARO is a difficult mission, NATO is among the most promising candidates for conducting a MARO. Widely acknowledged as the most capable regional military alliance in the world, NATO is nonetheless relatively new to Complex Operations. The Alliance's challenges in Afghanistan reveal uneven member state capabilities and political sensibilities. Thus, NATO members can be expected to have different proclivities and abilities to protect civilians from mass murder.

Yet the clearly humanitarian purposes of a MARO can support NATO's continued viability as a military alliance. Specifically for nations that are reluctant to undertake military action or to invest significantly in the national defense, MARO may provide a compelling and politically palatable mechanism for maintaining national capabilities and engagement in military operations.

I've argued that NATO forces may find themselves in a MARO without having decided to conduct one, and for this reason NATO as an organization should devote time and resources to understanding the mission. Moreover, NATO has already chosen to stop incipient mass atrocity in Kosovo. And while, in many ways, air power proved effective in the case of Kosovo, future interventions may require a broader commitment.

What kind of future role might there be for NATO to respond to a stand-alone crisis that clearly presents itself as a MARO? The NATO Response Force provides one vehicle for a quick reaction capability. It is envisioned as a collective

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[9] More information on the MARO Project and access to *Mass Atrocity Response Operations: A Military Planning Handbook* can be found at: http://www.hks.harvard.edu/cchrp/maro/index.php

defense, crisis management/ stabilization force or an initial entry force. It has yet to take on a high-intensity mission. To date it has secured the 2004 Olympic Games and Iraqi elections, and provided humanitarian relief to Afghanistan, to the U.S. in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, and in Pakistan's earthquake disaster. But at least in theory, a joint, sustainable, full-spectrum and high-readiness force is ideally suited for a MARO.

Other options for quickly engaging NATO members in MARO are NAC-endorsed operations. NATO is not the only vehicle, of course, as the European Union and United Nations also regularly endorse or organize NATO member states in military activities. In any intervention model, a key question for political leaders is whether they understand the need for rapid decision-making and the implications of their choices. This suggests yet another reason why NATO should educate itself far in advance of a crisis situation in the complexities of this most Complex Operation.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Force structure requirements
for complex and conventional operations:
the case of the Bundeswehr

Timo Noetzel and Martin Zapfe

"*The one thing we know about the future is that we never get it quite right,
and that we can only aspire not to be too wrong.*"[1]
General George W. Casey, Chief of Staff of the United States Army

As NATO is in the process of finding consensus over a new Strategic Concept, its forces face huge and diverse challenges.[2] NATO member states' forces today are engaged in two major counterinsurgency campaigns in Iraq and in Afghanistan. They are conducting important stabilization operations and various large and small other operations. Thus, NATO forces operate across the whole "spectrum of operations"[3] and intensity, except symmetrical, state-against-state conflicts, for which NATO's armies need to be prepared nonetheless. Overall, NATO members are confronted with a puzzle of how to adequately prepare forces for these diverging and heterogeneous challenges. The United States have issued towards a new Quadrennial Defense Review, and numerous Allies, such as Germany[4] and the United Kingdom[5], have identified the need for or initiated a review of what missions their forces need to prepare for and the kind of force structure and equipment that would suit de facto operational needs most.

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[1] Gen. George W. Casey, *Complex Operations and Counterinsurgency*, Presentation at the Atlantic Council in Washington DC, May 28, 2009.

[2] See Klaus Wittmann, "Towards a new Strategic Concept for NATO", in *NDC Forum Paper*, pp. 16-18, Rome 2009.

[3] See U.S. Department of the Army: *Field Manual 3-0 Operations*, p. 3-1, February 2008.

[4] See *Wachstum. Bildung. Zusammenhalt. Koalitionsvertrag zwischen CDU, CSU und FDP, 17. Legislaturperiode*, http://www.cdu.de/doc/pdfc/091024-koalitionsvertrag-cducsu-fdp.pdf (accessed on October 26, 2009), p. 116.

[5] See *Ministers to start defence review*, BBC-News, July 7, 2009, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/politics/8137934.stm (accessed on October 26, 2009).

In recent years so called "Complex Operations" have come to preoccupy operational planners increasingly. The concept of Complex Operations refers to a variety of diverse and overwhelmingly operational challenges, each confined to specific operational theatres. The deriving challenge for defense planners is that given scarce financial resources, to design "full-spectrum-forces" for all contingencies is de facto not an option.[6] Hence, operational planners are trying to come to grips with the diverse challenges posed by Complex Operations whilst also having to maintain conventional warfare capabilities.

Throughout the military, political and academic circles of NATO member states, debate on future force structure has stirred considerable controversy, since the issues concerned are not only about organizations and military philosophy, but also about the maintenance of weapons programs, inherent inter-service rivalries and career perspectives of individual officers.[7] Not least for this reason close to all NATO member states have settled on arrangements of diverging, and sometimes unique, needs, factors and constraints impacting on force structure.

This article intends to contribute to NATO's inner debate by dint of examining potential options for future Bundeswehr transformation and deducing implications and evolutionary potential for the Alliance as a whole. Are there lessons to be learned from Germany when it comes to designing force structures for Complex Operations? The puzzle this article seeks to address concerns the required combination of forces NATO member states should hold in order to enable the Alliance to cope with existing Complex Operations and those to come, as well as traditional, conventional warfare scenarios.

The article accepts the proposition that endeavoring to shape force structure towards potentially very different challenges such as both conventional and Complex Operations poses serious difficulties for NATO force planners which requires them to think about adopting radical measures. In order to prepare forces for Complex Operations more adequately, Germany, and most probably all continental European NATO members, will have to radically adapt their force structures. However, trying to square the circle of defense planning offers opportunities as well. Over time, the complexity of challenges NATO forces need to prepare for could become a catalyst for an effective increase in multinational force integration. Thus, eventually NATO's

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[6] See Andrew F. Krepinevich: *An Army at the Crossroads*, CSBA-Strategy for the Long Haul Series, 2008, http://www.csbaonline.org/4Publications/PubLibrary/R.20081117.An_Army_At_The_Cro/R.20081117. An_Army_At_The_Cro.pdf (accessed on December 3, 2009), p. xii.
[7] See Stephen Peter Rosen, *Winning the Next War. Innovation and the Modern Military*, pp. 19-21, Ithaca 1991.

overall multinational force structure might profit. Structural reforms might provide synergy effects that could become even more crucial with NATO defense budgets coming under pressure due to ever growing budgetary constraints.

Therefore, this article will proceed as follows: it first discusses the challenges for defense planners arising from requirements to prepare forces for both conventional and Complex Operations. Secondly, it analyzes German structural reforms since 1994. This could be of interest since the Bundeswehr, with its Cold War heritage, is a suitably representative example for a dogmatically "conventional" force that has entered a process of transformation. Thirdly, several options for Bundeswehr force structure reform are discussed and analyzed with regard to their potential benefits for the Alliance. The conclusion will summarize findings and provide potential starting points for further debate within NATO member states, to enable Alliance forces "not to be too wrong" on future challenges.

Conventional vs. Complex Operations and force structure

"*The trouble is that preparing for threats across the spectrum is extremely expensive [...]*".[8]

The nature of warfare does not change – only its character may vary.[9] Thus, there is a certain danger of "*overcategorizing*" war. This issue becomes even more sensitive in the context of decreasing defense budgets that produce growing pressure for setting priorities. A "conventional" army consisting overwhelmingly of mechanized brigades may be considered necessary to address the high end of the operational spectrum, but is at the same time very cost-intensive in the face of other scenarios. Indeed, when discussing the changing character of warfare NATO forces are struggling to adjust to, it is important to keep in mind the conceptual and doctrinal focus point of most Western militaries: conventional warfare. Only then can the challenges provided by Complex Operations be understood adequately.

To approach the concepts of conventional and Complex Operations, one has to distinguish manifold characteristics of warfare that can be – and have been – subsumed under them. Such characteristics are, for example, the center of gravity;

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[8] See Thomas Donnelly/Frederick W. Kagan: *Ground Truth. The Future of U.S. Land Power*, p. 34, Washington 2008.
[9] See United States Joint Forces Command: *The Joint Operating Environment 2008. Challenges and Implications for the Future Joint Force*, Part 1, pp. 5-6.

the relationship between military and civilian leaders; the role of strategic goals that can be achieved by military means; the applicability of traditionally well-respected, but specifically Western concepts of the laws of war and humanitarian law; the annihilation of enemy forces; technological capabilities potential enemies can bring to bear on NATO forces, etc. The working definitions used in this article are built on those outlined in the U.S. Irregular Warfare Joint Operating Concept from September 11th, 2007.[10]

Since this article will focus on the future structure of NATO forces adequate for both Complex and Conventional Operations, it confines itself to factors and characteristics that are of direct relevance to it. Those are, most importantly: (1) the different needs, armaments and operational schemes to fulfill the respective missions and (2) the different time scope of such operational scenarios. Subsequently, (3) the difficult assessment concerning the probability that each would occur. While the first category is crucial for the type and structure of arms necessary, the second informs the required manpower. The third category, finally, influences decisions regarding different levels of readiness, training and presence of forces suited to each scenario.

Conventional Operations

For the purpose of this article, **Conventional Operations** *are defined as those that are waged between states or comparable actors, most commonly either to destroy enemy forces and/or to capture territory.* Historical examples include the Korean War, Operations Desert Storm and Iraqi Freedom,[11] but also smaller wars such as the Falkland War, the Second Lebanon War, and the Russian-Georgian War in 2008.[12] Thus, conventional operations are in no way easier than so-called Complex Operations, yet in a way less complex *from the point of view of the involved organizations*, since there is less need of integration between the civilian and the military efforts than in "complex" scenarios. Most of these conflicts share the following similarities that are essential for force structure:

All of them have been fought using combined arms and fire and maneuver to destroy enemy forces throughout the whole theater of operations. They thus had a

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[10] See United States Department of Defense: *Irregular Warfare (IW) Joint Operating Concept (JOC)*, pp. 7-8, September 11th, 2007.
[11] OIF only lasted until the announced end of major combat operations on May 2, 2003, thus not including the counterinsurgency/civil war-phase stretching until today.
[12] See Gian P. Gentile: "A Strategy of Tactics: Population-centric COIN and the Army", in *Parameters*, pp. 1-17, p. 13, Autumn 2009.

clear goal for the military to achieve and to contribute to overall strategy. The often cited Second Lebanon War shows the potential value of the above given definition – although in some cases described as a "hybrid war"[13] or as an example of war's changing character[14], the focus of the Israeli Defense Forces *should* have been a quite clear one: to destroy or sufficiently damage Hezbollah's capability to fire rockets against Israel. Although combat between a state and a state-like actor was new in this intensity, during the six weeks of the war the "asymmetry [that] has been sought in operational terms [was] within traditional military dimensions",[15] thus falling well into the spectrum of classic conventional operations. That is even true with regard to the "social" characteristics of Hezbollah – targeting the will and cohesion of the social organization behind an organized force has been a recurring feature of conventional warfare in the 20th century.

Since the defining characteristic of these scenarios is the need to physically overpower a potentially powerful enemy, one can generalize that the pursuit of conventional warfare, in the sense of this article, relies on the theater-wide use of combined arms and thus heavily mechanized forces, the extensive use of tactical and strategic airpower as well as joint fire support. All of this, and numerous known operational schemes, are consistent with Western doctrine of the Cold War. Because of their geographical characteristics, the Falkland and Lebanon Wars furthermore made obvious the importance of rapidly deployable air- and seaborne infantry in a conventional scenario.

Complex Operations

"*For his ground forces, he needs infantry and more infantry, highly mobile and lightly armed; some field artillery for occasional support; armored cavalry, and if terrain conditions are favorable, horse cavalry for road surveillance and patrolling.*"[16]

The term "Complex Operations" encompasses a wide and confusing array of concepts of conflict, whether they are called "operations other than war", "small wars", "hybrid wars", "irregular warfare" or "stabilization operations". For the

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[13] See Frank G. Hoffman: *Conflict in the 21st Century: The Rise of Hybrid Wars*, Potomac Institute for Policy Studies, December 2007, p. 35.
[14] Casey, *Complex Operations and Counterinsurgency*.
[15] Frank G. Hoffman, *Conflict in the 21st Century: The Rise of Hybrid Wars*, p. 24, Arlington 2007.
[16] See David Galula, *Counterinsurgency warfare: theory and practice*, p. 65, Westport 2006.

purpose of this article, **Complex Operations** *are operations that feature a specific form of civil-military* **integration***, and where military might is not thus "simply"* employed to do what it does best: to fight the enemy's forces and/or to capture or defend territory.[17]

What constitutes the distinctive character of Complex Operations is the scale of *integration*, not just the traditional interaction, of the civilian and military sphere. Within NATO, the imperative to integrate is embodied within the "Comprehensive Approach" aiming to "synchroniz[e] all the elements of national and international power."[18] In short: Complex Operations are necessarily "interagency warfare".[19]

This defining feature of Complex Operations can in various grades be observed in most UN-mandated operations such as classic peacekeeping missions, stabilization operations in the Balkans, in the Democratic Republic of Congo or East-Timor as well as in the counterinsurgency environments of Afghanistan and Iraq. Reapplying the categories from above, one can again draw certain conclusions from these conflicts.

Whereas most conventional conflicts are – depending mostly on geographical circumstances – fought by mechanized and armored formations, in conjunction with decisive air and naval power, most Complex Operations are confined to land warfare scenarios and, more specifically, infantry warfare.[20] Mechanized and armored troops, as well as air assets, are only used tactically and in a supporting role – albeit an important one.[21] The importance of combined arms thus does not diminish – to the

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[17] Again, this is another argument why the Second Lebanon War was not a "Complex Operation", since the military's contribution to Israel's strategic aim was conventional: destroy or sufficiently damage the military capacity of Hezbollah.

[18] See Christopher M. Schnaubelt, Introduction. Operationalizing a comprehensive approach in semi-permissive environments, in Christopher M. Schnaubelt (ed.), *Operationalizing a comprehensive approach in semi-permissive environments*, NATO Defense College Forum Paper 9, Rome, pp. 5-13, p. 7, June 2009.

[19] See Joseph R. Cerami/Jay W. Boggs (ed.), *The Interagency and Counterinsurgency Warfare: Stability, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction Roles*, December 2007, http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/pub828.pdf (accessed on December 2, 2009).

[20] See Max Boot, The Struggle to Transform the Military, in *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 84/No.2, pp. 103-118, p. 107, March/April 2005.

[21] As seen in Fallujah in 2004, armor is an essential enabler in urban warfare, to dominate the streets and protect dismounted infantry. However, armor mostly was not employed in generic units, but attached to advancing infantry. In the words of General David Richard: "*The key point is that the scale of employment and the context in which conventional weapons systems may be used in the future will be quite different to what may have been the case in the C20th.*" See General Sir David Richards, Chief of the UK General Staff, *Chatham House Defence Lecture*, September 17, 2009, http://www.army.mod.uk/documents/general/CGS_speech_to_Chatham_House_September_2009.pdf (accessed on November 20th, 2009).

contrary. But the scale and involvement of the joint force is of a decisively different dimension than in conventional operations.

This is the result of various factors: counterinsurgency operations focus on getting access to the population and "secur[ing] the people, where they sleep."[22] Stabilization operations regularly rely on presence and intensive patrols in potentially rugged terrain. Disaster relief operations naturally do not require the use of armored units. In addition, more recent Complex Operations tended to be conducted in demanding terrain favoring the enemy because it diminishes the advantage of conventional technological superiority (Congo, Afghanistan) – thus all of these are features that hamper the use of large armored or mechanized formations.

Having outlined the characteristics and distinctions between conventional and Complex Operations for the needs of this article, as the next step we will now discuss their implications for Bundeswehr force planning.

Possible scenarios and Bundeswehr force transformation

Germany is a key member of NATO. Despite the massive reduction of the armed forces following the end of the Cold War, the Bundeswehr still provides one of the most significant Alliance forces. During the first years after German unification, the Bundeswehr was preoccupied with the integration of the former National People's Army of the German Democratic Republic (East Germany), while at the same time reducing its strength and participating in its first armed out-of-area missions. Furthermore, since 2004, the Bundeswehr has been undergoing a process of force transformation.[23] This process is shaped by the three following political guidelines:

- Germany will never use military power unilaterally, but only as part of a multinational force under the command of the European Union, the United Nations or NATO.[24]

- The Federal Republic faces no short- or medium-term territorial threat.

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[22] See Multinational Force – Iraq: *Iraq Counterinsurgency Guidance*, http://www.ndu.edu/jrac/docUploaded/MNF-I%20COIN%20guidance%20summer%202007%20v7.pdf (accessed on December 3, 2009).

[23] See Timo Noetzel/Martin Zapfe, "NATO and Counterinsurgency: The Case of Germany", in Christopher M. Schnaubelt (ed.), *Counterinsurgency: the challenge for NATO strategy and operations*, pp. 129-151, pp. 136-138, Rome 2009.

[24] The only exceptions, for operational reasons, are Hostage Rescue Missions and Operations to evacuate personnel out of non-permissive environments worldwide. See Weißbuch, p. 68.

- Worldwide operations to assist allies, to avert conflicts and to cope with crises are the primary missions for the Bundeswehr and should define force structure.

In conclusion, Bundeswehr transformation rests on the assumption that future missions will in all probability be out of area. However, this does not prejudice the missions to expect – the Bundeswehr's key documents do not refer to concrete operational scenarios.

The commitment to mutual and common defense; i.e. Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty, still constitutes the basis of NATO. While it was only invoked once, and notably not in an instance for which it was originally designed, namely a direct enemy attack with conventional weapons,[25] the short war between Georgia and Russia in the summer of 2008 again amplified the ever present fears of Central and Eastern European NATO members.[26] Hence, a renewed commitment to Article 5 is likely to be expected as a part of the New Strategic Concept to come. What remains to be seen is how "defense" will be conceptualized according to the new Strategic Concept. In any case, Germany will most likely be expected to contribute a reasonable contingent to any major crisis – and thus also for conventional operations.

Scenarios for conventional operations involving German troops most likely would resemble the 1990/1991 Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm or something like the first phases of the Korean War: a multinational conventional operation authorized by a mandate of the United Nations. Thus, Germany will have to be able to contribute to a major operation of this kind at least at the level of the United Kingdom or France in 1991.[27]

However, more directly relevant for Bundeswehr planning than conventional warfare, and the actual challenges NATO is facing, are scenarios of Complex Operations. Here historical predecessors are even more important. Under operational control of the United Nations, Bundeswehr units have been deployed

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[25] See Philip H. Gordon: "NATO and the War on Terrorism – a changing Alliance", in *The Brookings Review*, Vol. 20/No. 3, Summer 2002, pp. 36-38, p. 37.

[26] See Michael Codner: *NATO's Strategic Concept – a View from Mars*, in: http://www.rusi.org/research/militarysciences/operationalstudies/commentary/ref:C49D0A29F1E7FF/ (accessed on October 29, 2009).

[27] The United Kingdom provided its 1st Armored Division numbering around 18,000 troops, while France deployed its 6th Light Armored Division, reinforced, inter alia, by Foreign Legion, Marine and Special Operations Forces, also totaling about 18,000 soldiers. See James F. Dunningan/Austin Bay: *From Shield to Storm. High-Tech Weapons, Military Strategy, and Coalition Warfare in the Persian Gulf*, pp. 49-50, p. 60, p. 332, New York 1992.

to Cambodia and Somalia. Under NATO command, they were and in part still are present in the Balkans, from Bosnia to Macedonia and Kosovo, and in Afghanistan as part of ISAF and (until 2005) Operation Enduring Freedom. Under EU operational control, the Bundeswehr is part of EUFOR Althea in Bosnia, and has deployed on the African continent. In addition, German Special Operations Forces fought against al-Qaida remnants in Afghanistan under the operational control of the United States.[28] Thus, Germany has already participated across the range of doctrinally conceived scenarios of Complex Operations: humanitarian assistance, peacekeeping, peace enforcement and stabilization, as well as counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations. Even though the conventional capabilities of NATO can be expected to receive renewed attention during the preparation process for the New Strategic Concept, Complex Operations in all variations seem to persist as the most probable challenge for NATO in general and the Bundeswehr in particular.

German structural adaption since 1994

"We cannot change the force structure for every new conflict."[29]

During the last 15 years, the political and military leadership of Germany has responded to the major changes in the European security landscape with numerous attempts at structural force adaptation. While the functional impetus for reform was clear, various factors, partly unique to Germany, and partly structural and thus similar to those faced by most NATO members, have hampered reform efforts.

On the political level, and fairly unique to Germany, is an emotional devotion to the concept of the "armed citizen" that, in contrast to Allied nations with similar traditions, has the effect of perpetuating general conscription. Compulsory service, however, now lasting only 6 months, has evolved from a factor not conducive to out-of-area missions to one that severely hampers Bundeswehr transformation. Because of their very limited time of service, regular conscripts can not be sent out of area. However, they still need to be trained and equipped, thus taking up precious resources without being of direct use for operations.[30] In addition, as a result of skepticism concerning the use of military power, political support for thorough force

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[28] See Timo Noetzel/Benjamin Schreer, *Spezialkräfte der Bundeswehr. Strukturerfordernisse für den Auslandseinsatz*, study conducted by the German Institute for International and Security Affairs 13/2008, pp. 14-15.

[29] Senior German Army General to the authors.

[30] The Merkel-led government has agreed to reduce service time of regular conscripts from already only 9 to 6 months beginning January 1, 2011. See *Wachstum, Bildung, Zusammenhalt*, p. 116.

transformation efforts has not materialized since unification.

These political factors are conducive to a "muddling-through" environment. Furthermore, well known hampering factors for military reform such as service "tribalism", long and difficult to change acquisition processes for heavy weapon systems, and economic interests influencing parliamentary decision-making, are as influential in Germany as in other Western nations as part of democratic processes. Nevertheless, German military planners have tried to accommodate the above-mentioned factors and to implement lessons learned into Bundeswehr force structure.

"Crisis Reaction Forces" and "Main Defense Forces": 1994 to 1999

Within a few years after the end of the Cold War in 1990, the Bundeswehr began to restructure according to changed threat perceptions. The *White Book* of 1994 acknowledged the existence of a transformed threat environment. Consequently, it defined the management of international crises and conflicts as well as the improbable, yet worst case of territorial defense of Germany and the Alliance as main tasks for the Bundeswehr.[31] The first practical experiences in operations came to define the "center of gravity"[32] of Bundeswehr planning. The armed forces even dropped below the threshold of 370,000 soldiers as defined in the "2+4-treaty" of 1990 to a planning goal of about 340,000 soldiers in all three services.[33] Furthermore, it began to distinguish between a core of rapidly deployable and highly trained "Crisis Reaction Forces",[34] while the "Main Defense Forces"[35] were to form the basis for a quick reconstitution and mobilization in the case of a renewed threat in the East.[36] The Crisis Reaction Forces were designed to constitute the German contribution to multilateral peace enforcement operations. This would have amounted to an army division, to be deployed on short notice and made up of two brigades with supporting air and naval elements. To achieve this level of readiness, up to five mechanized and light, air-mobile brigades were to be classified as Crisis Reaction Forces.[37] Within the

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[31] See German Ministry of Defense: *Weißbuch 1994 zur Sicherheit der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und zur Lage und Zukunft der Bundeswehr*, p. 89, Bonn 1994.
[32] See *Weißbuch 1994*, p. 95.
[33] See *Weißbuch 1994*, p. 87.
[34] "*Krisenreaktionskräfte*", KRK.
[35] "*Hauptverteidigungskräfte*", HVK.
[36] See German Ministry of Defense, *Konzeptionelle Leitlinie zur Weiterentwicklung der Bundeswehr, 12. Juli 1994*, p. 5.
[37] See *Konzeptionelle Leitlinie*, p. 7.

army (*Heer*), that totaled at most 37,000 soldiers.[38]

      This differentiation of high-intensity warfare intervention forces and units that were subject to mobilization plans provided the basis for post-Cold War German force structure. The threat posture that Crisis Reaction Forces were supposed to prepare for was still to be of a conventional nature – Germany had only just started to make limited contributions to low-threat environments such as Somalia[39] and Cambodia. Consequently, Bundeswehr planning rested on the assumption – important for the above-mentioned categories – that potential operations would be of limited duration.[40] Furthermore, the limited experience in out-of-area operations did not allow for structural implementation of lessons learned by the Crisis Reaction Forces. The structure of these units mirrored that of the Main Defense Forces, a fact that was exacerbated by the principle of interchanging the two components even amongst individual brigades. This made the potential deployment of whole brigade-sized units difficult; contingents had to be composed on an ad-hoc basis – a tendency that has only marginally improved until this day.[41] Furthermore, the numerical strength of the Crisis Reaction Forces compared to the Main Defense Forces mirrored territorial defense as the operational priority of the Bundeswehr – understandable, barely a few years after the end of the Cold War, but in contradiction to existing conceptual documents. The differentiation between Crisis Reaction Forces and Main Defense Forces was also the trademark of the "*New Army for New Missions*",[42] a force structure established in 1997 and officially valid until 1999.

The "New Army" – 2000 to 2003

      Efforts to further reform force structure resulted from the European Union's Headline Goal as defined at the 1999 Helsinki summit, which envisioned a rapidly deployable European ground force of 60,000 soldiers or a corps-equivalent. The German contribution was defined as amounting to around 20,000 soldiers or a reinforced division. This definition of capabilities derived from the experience

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[38] See http://www.deutschesheer.de/portal/a/heer/kcxml/04_Sj9SPykssy0xPLMnMz0vM0Y_QjzKLNzS L9zbwB8mB2RYGzvqRcNGglFR9X4_83FR9b_0A_YLciHJHR0VFAPZKkfY!/delta/base64xml/L3d-JdyEvd0ZNQUFzQUMvNElVRS82XzE2X0sxRg (accessed November 15, 2009).

[39] Since the German contingent was only meant to be a supporting effort for an Indian contingent that never arrived, and was stationed outside major trouble centers (notably Mogadishu), the qualification of a "low-threat-environment" seems appropriate.

[40] See *Weißbuch 1994*, p. 94.

[41] See Timo Noetzel/Martin Zapfe: *Aufstandsbekämpfung als Auftrag. Instrumente und Planungsstrukturen für den ISAF-Einsatz*, study conducted by the German Institute for International and Security Affairs 13/2008, pp. 25-26.

[42] "*Neues Heer für Neue Aufgaben*".

of the Kosovo war and the potential Allied ground offensive into the then-Serbian province that never materialized. Thus, this defined level of ambition was backward-oriented, focusing on the Balkan wars with respect to strength as well as the envisioned scenario. The German contingent to be deployed – again one armored or mechanized division plus supporting elements – was still designed to suit the needs of conventional operations, and was structured accordingly. This constituted an adequate force for a Desert Storm scenario. However, a potential contribution to Complex Operations was not a matter of debate, and the strains on "high-demand/low-density" forces needed today in Afghanistan make evident the downsides of this rather one-sided approach on force planning. The deployable force was suited for conventional operations; the rest of the Army was not supposed to be deployable at all, at least on short notice. In effect, the understandable "Balkanization" of German doctrine and defense planning, preparing the forces in effect for the kind of operational scenario experienced in the Balkans, becomes obvious.

"*Intervention Forces*" and "*Stabilization Forces*" – 2003 to today

While the years from 1995 to 2000 were the years of German involvement in stabilization operations in the Balkans, in late 2001 German defense policy faced unprecedented and unexpected challenges. Within a few months, German Army Special Operations Forces joined the U.S.-led Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan and deployed in operations against the remnants of the Taliban and al-Qaida in the mountains of Afghanistan. However, the nature of the overall German contribution to ISAF for a considerable time and at least until 2005 greatly reflected the operational pattern experienced within SFOR and KFOR in the 1990s. In addition, since army Special Operations Forces are operationally separated from the rest of the armed forces, their combat missions in Afghanistan had no immediate spillover effect into overall doctrinal thinking and force structure.

Against this background, German Minister of Defense Peter Struck issued the *Konzeption der Bundeswehr* in 2004, thus introducing the doctrinal backbone of German force transformation. The new *KdB* advanced the differentiation of the *New Army* and introduced the force categories of "*Intervention Forces*" and "*Stabilization Forces*". In continuation of the level of ambition of the Helsinki Headline Goal, the Intervention Forces, at a strength of about 20,000 army soldiers, were supposed to be able to deploy on short notice and contribute to operations throughout the whole spectrum, but especially to high-intensity, conventional ones. They were supposed to be able to contribute one armored division for multinational conventional operations against mechanized and armored opponents as well as to NATO and European Union

Rapid Reaction Forces.[43] This division of two mechanized and armored brigades was to be equipped and trained to the highest level in order to be able to operate amongst the armed forces of the United States, Great Britain and France. Furthermore, one airborne brigade, one light infantry brigade and a variety of supporting units were classified as Intervention Forces. However, this potential contribution to NATO/EU conventional combat operations had already been introduced back in the mid-nineties.

The defining innovation with regard to force structure was the introduction of a deployable category for conflicts below the threshold of conventional wars. The Bundeswehr was to become a force designed, if not solely, then primarily for out-of-area missions. The Stabilization Forces were supposed to be able to contribute 14,000 soldiers at any given time to worldwide stabilization operations. To ensure the dwell time seen as required at home, this amounted to a total of 70,000 soldiers within the army. They were organized into two divisions comprising three mechanized brigades, one brigade of mountain infantry and one airborne brigade.

Regarding doctrine, Complex Operations as defined in this article should fit into the mission spectrum that Stabilization Forces are designed for. However, even within the relatively small German ISAF contingent, roughly a brigade-equivalent contingent of 4,500 soldiers, Intervention Forces and Stabilization Forces are regularly deployed jointly to ensure and facilitate the sustainable deployment of critical, yet scarce capabilities, and the German armed forces overall are structurally incapable of maintaining 10,000 soldiers in theater for long durations, even though the Bundeswehr consists of 250,000 soldiers. At the same time, the Stabilization Forces still mirror the Intervention Forces in terms of structure and armament, and are thus becoming a kind of "Army Lite", without being "trained, equipped and used"[44] forto the specific missions they have been designed for and envisioned in the KdB. Thus, in the face of Complex Operations, Stabilization Forces inherit all the structural disadvantages of conventional forces and have thus been designed for operations they are neither intended for nor technologically equipped to fight. In addition, operational experiences in Afghanistan demand radical structural improvements, not only to achieve success in the missions the Bundeswehr and NATO today are involved in, but – perhaps more importantly – for the missions to come. Despite all these deficiencies, however, the Stabilization Forces should become the starting point of future structural reforms.

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[43] The *NATO Response Force* and the *EU Battle Groups* respectively.
[44] See German Ministry of Defense, *Konzeption der Bundeswehr*, p. 5, Berlin 2004.

Options for improvements

"To succeed, we must examine rigorously what capabilities we need and where we must rebalance our investment in Defence – and rebalance we must, not from one service to another but from one type of conflict to another, for we simply can't afford to retain a full suite of capability for all eventualities."[45]

As has been stated, Complex Operations in all their diversity offer common challenges: they are predominantly infantry-heavy, using combined arms as well as armor and fire support in a supporting role, they must be expected to be of long duration – and they are the most probable mission spectrum for the Bundeswehr. At the same time, any possible new force structure must fulfill the following criteria: (a) it has to be compatible with a defense budget that is shrinking even further. Moreover, it (b) has to develop the expeditionary dimension of the Bundeswehr for conventional *and* Complex Operations further. Last, but not least, it (c) should not fall prey to the over-simplification and categorization that might prove fatal in the future by limiting the Bundeswehr to the operational scenarios it is likely to deploy to (stabilization operations), while ignoring less likely but still potentially necessary major conventional operations (Second Lebanon War-type scenarios).

Against the background of the structural developments and shortcomings described, what are potential structural improvements?

Radically reform the stabilization divisions

Since the United States Army has diminished the role of its divisions as main maneuver units by creating Brigade Combat Teams, this trend seems to continue. Whilst the U.S.-BCT do combine all maneuver, fire and support elements necessary for independent operations, the Bundeswehr's main organizational unit remains the division. That may be adequate for the German First Armored Division, since it is designed for an organic contribution to scenarios like Operation Desert Storm. Aside from whatever independent logic there may be for brigade- versus division-based modularity, since Germany will never employ military power unilaterally, and since most Complex Operations require command responsibility to be pushed down

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[45] General Sir David Richards, Chief of the UK General Staff, Chatham House Defence Lecture, September 17, 2009, http://www.army.mod.uk/documents/general/CGS_speech_to_Chatham_House_September_2009.pdf (accessed on November 20th, 2009).

in the chain of command to cope with diverse conditions,[46] the role of divisional headquarters of the stabilization divisions is fundamentally different. Stabilization divisions are force providers for multinational Complex Operations – they have to be inherently flexible and modular.

The trend towards creating modular units below the level of divisions resulted from post Cold-War experiences and gained track during the so-called Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) – thus, it was designed to improve performance during Conventional Operations. However, since Complex Operations potentially require military action on a very low level, structural flexibility could prove essential in preparing for the whole spectrum of operations. The abandonment of stabilization divisions could go hand in hand with an empowerment of brigades or regiments by preparing these units for combined operations even down to the level of companies or battalions. To enable the German military leadership to deploy units tailored to missions, a structure roughly equivalent to the United States Marine Corps Divisions could be adequate, building on the infantry battalion or regiment as central unit and making combined arms support available as needed.

Create a more flexible mix – Convert and create more infantry

As has been described, despite the fact that most Complex Operations operationally do not suit heavily mechanized units, Stabilization Forces still rely on the basic structure of mechanized infantry brigades. At the same time, because of the lack of standard infantry battalions,[47] the Bundeswehr finds it difficult to continuously man the Provincial Reconstruction Team in Kundus, where fighting is relatively intense, with first role infantry units that, given the scarcity of this resource within the Bundeswehr, at some point will most probably have to be replaced by infantry-trained armored troops.[48]

At the time of writing, two platoons of mechanized infantry[49] are deployed to Afghanistan or are expected to do so soon, using their main weapons system, the Infantry Fighting Vehicle (IFV) "*Marder*". The rest of the mechanized infantry

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[46] The need for an adapted role of the divisional level in today's operations is also seen in the United States, see Alan Batschelet/Mike Runey/Gregory Meyer: "Breaking Tactical Fixation. The Division's Role", in *Military Review*, pp. 35-42, p. 35, November-December 2009.

[47] The Bundeswehr consists of only 17 infantry battalions (of all roles), in contrast to the British infantry of 36 regular battalions.

[48] See *Interview with a senior German General Staff Officer*.

[49] *Panzergrenadiere*.

deploys to Afghanistan using lightly armored patrol vehicles or armored personnel carriers. Thus, units in their "peacetime" structure are inadequately equipped for Afghanistan or comparable Complex Operations. Since providing mechanized infantry units with both their IFVs and the required patrol vehicles would be extremely expensive, Stabilization Forces again inherit the structural weakness of conventional forces without profiting from increased resources. To give an example: amongst the Stabilization Forces, which should be designed for infantry-heavy Complex Operations, there are only three battalions of classic "line infantry"![50]

An alternative could be a structure based on pooling the armored forces that are essential for the Stabilization Forces in one single unit, possibly modifying the brigade structure. This small pool of mechanized infantry and armored forces would be a force provider for Complex Operations, ready to supplement operations on the basis of platoons, companies or battalions. To make these changes effective, the remaining mechanized infantry units should be reflagged to their traditional role – infantry, or *Jäger*. This would allow for them to have armored personnel carriers and patrol vehicles in their organizational structure while focusing on the very essence of soldiering. Furthermore, these *Jäger* battalions could field more riflemen than mechanized units. Regarding the incoming new "Boxer" vehicle, resembling the United States Marine Corps LAV or U.S. Army Stryker, these infantry units could be adequately motorized and protected while counting on combined arms support where needed, as described above. This is especially important with regard to the increased threat of improvised explosive devices (IED) in today's theaters that demands that infantry be protected while on the move and, to a lesser degree, while on dismounted operations. In addition, converting mechanized infantry battalions into infantry units would be easier and more time-efficient than building new infantry units from scratch, since the former already have a distinctive infantry role. The conversion would strengthen this role and add more troops to these units.

Transfer these reforms into the whole Bundeswehr

Options for improvements in the Stabilization Forces can only contribute towards producing a capable, flexible and effective deployable army if they are supported by even more encompassing reforms. The army would have to sacrifice a portion of its "heaviness" for the sake of greater mobility and flexibility. To ease this sacrifice, doctrinal and practical improvements concerning combined arms scenarios,

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[50] Those three battalions are specialized mountain troops (*Gebirgsjäger*), which also accept non-deployable conscripts.

especially with regard to joint fire support, are essential. Steps in this direction have been made,[51] but concrete results are yet to be seen.

Many aspects of network-centric warfare, especially where mission and fire support are concerned, are no less important in Complex Operations than in conventional warfare – to the contrary. Only by further integrating the services and arms capabilities would even a relatively "light" force structure be assertive enough in any scenario. This would be decisive if the aim were to avoid the creation of a "two-tier-army" and enable the Stabilization Forces to contribute, with enough preparatory time, to conventional conflicts. Here, lessons learned by then comparable forces, like the United States Marine Corps 1st Marine Division, or US Army Stryker Brigades, would be highly important.[52] Thus, only by dint of further integration and integrated joint reforms could the Stabilization Forces become complementary to the Intervention Forces that have been built around the First Armored Division, and thus the Bundeswehr would then be coming as close to a "full spectrum force" as possible and affordable.

Conclusion – Potential benefits for NATO

In the wake of the New Strategic Concept, NATO will have to balance the needs to prepare for scenarios across the full spectrum of operations. Against this background, this paper posits that Germany will have to radically change force structures to address the challenges of preparing for conventional and Complex Operations at the same time, all of this under immense financial constraints. It is NATO's wide spectrum of available forces that makes it possible to design a balanced mix of forces adequate to both scenarios.

Complex Operations can, with all due caution, be expected to be infantry-heavy with heavy arms only in support roles. Furthermore, the underlying premise is that Complex Operations are the predominant challenge facing most NATO countries in the mid-term. A closer examination of the German case is therefore relevant for many other NATO members, since a variety of them share the German strategic advantage of the absence of a manifest territorial threat as well as the strains of ongoing stabilization operations and financial pressure. Furthermore, many other

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[51] Joint Fire Support has officially been a centerpiece of Bundeswehr transformation, see *Konzeption der Bundeswehr*, p. 39.

[52] The 1st Marine Division, though relatively low on armor and mechanized vehicles, nevertheless was, as combined-arms "I Marine Expeditionary Force", part of the thrusts into Iraq 1991 and 2003.

NATO members share the German dogma of participating in multinational operations only, thus limiting the need to provide forces for every contingency on their own and opening themselves up to transnational force cooperation.

The diminished importance of the divisional level, not only in Germany, opens possibilities for a reformed and replenished integrated command structure. Already, for years now the German-led ISAF Regional Command North effectively comprises representatives of a variety of troop-contributing nations, even though it is not designed as an integrated and multinational command in peacetime. Future missions are likely to repeat such a setting. Deployable and adaptive NATO Headquarters on divisional and corps level may regain importance – especially against the background of intra-Alliance wishes for a revitalization of NATO's command structure. Personnel that are set free by the disbandment of the divisional headquarters could be employed to bolster existing integrated headquarters or to form a pool of staff officers trained and prepared to enhance the sustainability of headquarters within areas of operations. Here, NATO forces could regenerate the process of integration and redevelop working ties that may have diminished over the last 20 years.

While reform options discussed in this article focus on the Bundeswehr, with all its unique characteristics, they can only be brought to full effect if implemented in an Alliance context. The operational challenges of ongoing Complex Operations and a potentially renewed emphasis on conventional deterrence make evident the need for comprehensive reforms. In addition to the reform options described, stabilization forces need enablers for scenarios of Complex Operations, perhaps integrated into stabilization brigades or as part of the reserves. This would entail cultural and political advisors, translators or personnel specialized in civil-military relations on the ground.[53] Such skill requirements should be considered as part of force structure reforms. Force integration at various levels could become a catalyst for NATO forces to jointly come as close to a "whole-spectrum-force" as different national priorities and financial constraints allow.

Thus, NATO's continental European members should seek to profit from the conceptual luxury of taking part in a military alliance that offers them cost-reduction integration and specialization, especially vis-à-vis diverse challenges. Nevertheless, this would require distinctive political leadership and the will to overcome traditional structures and organizational resistance in order to develop the capabilities needed to meet contemporary threats effectively.

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[53] See Noetzel/Zapfe, *NATO and Counterinsurgency*, pp. 137-138.

CHAPTER NINE

The Asymmetric Brigade Combat Team (ABCT)[1]

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Introduction

This paper presents a summary of the U.S. Army Global Concept for a unit that can quickly react to a counterinsurgency or stability contingency requirement by bringing a robust range of security and development capabilities. While the ideas it lays out are applicable to both military and non-military challenges, this initiative focuses on the potential requirement for a strong military response complemented by capabilities to perform normally "civilian" activities such as reconstruction and development.

One of the issues found as one travels around the different Areas of Responsibilities (AORs) is that each area location is very different from the other yet in many ways very much the same. Every area location has different people, customs, capabilities and social and economic stature. The "same" is a little harder to distinguish. The explanation for appearing the "same" is that in the contemporary operating environment U.S. personnel, as part of military units or civilian and contractor support elements, almost never run into conventional heavy enemy

combat formations that are fighting as the regular forces of a state. Instead, when placed in a conflict situation they are facing very real people with very real human problems in the midst of complex crises with a wide range of belligerents - many of them non-state actors with goals that range from opposition to U.S. policy, to neutrality, to supporting at least some elements of U.S. policy. This lack of a clearly defined and easy to identify enemy operating in the midst of the civilian population - and often creating a humanitarian crisis - creates a feeling of "sameness" nearly everywhere U.S. forces are employed in contingency operations. It feels the "same" because the U.S. is now dealing more frequently with everyday people requirements that come not so much from conscious action by a central government but from the area's version of a tribe, clan, group, village or assemblage and the complex interactions generated by conflict. Herein lays the necessity for at least some type of formalizing, which in many cases is being successfully done ad hoc by commanders in the field. Addressing this challenge is the purpose of the Asymmetric Brigade Combat Team (ABCT).

Definition

A key feature for the latest Army transformation that began in 2003 has been the "modular" Brigade Combat Team (BCT). This was a major shift from Division-centric to Brigade-centric; each Brigade with organic assets tailored for specific missions. The principle advantages of these modular Brigades have shown to have an increase in the rotational pool of ready units by at least 50%. Force design concepts can be readily applied with the creation of a deployable joint-capable headquarters. A bi-product can be the reduced stress on the force by utilizing a more predictable unit deployment cycle.

The Asymmetric Brigade Combat team (ABCT) is a brigade *contingency styled configuration* designed specifically for a countrywide insurgency or stability operations where there are insufficient friendly forces to control the entire country or to mount major offensive operations over an extended period. It is not intended to be a permanent Military Table of Organization and Equipment (TO&E) configured unit. The ABCT is constructed around an existing Brigade Combat Team (BCT) with the addition of Combat Support, Combat Service Support and other agencies not usually found in a line unit TO&E or typically accompanying it on initial combat deployment. It is a modular, self-sustaining unit with the capability to not only conduct combat operations against enemy forces but can also address local basic needs and provide limited economic development support – components that are critical to success in Counterinsurgency, Irregular Warfare, and Stability Operations.

Under this concept, the additional components and resources required to build an ABCT from a conventional brigade combat team can be brought together within 30 days from available assets. Pre-deployment planning can then be accomplished within 30 days. Thus, an ABCT can be fielded within 60 days of concept approval. Once its mission is accomplished, this temporarily configured brigade can be disassembled from the ABCT assets. The ABCT deploys and departs quickly. Ideally, there would be three ABCTs apportioned for a contingency, two of which would be deployed – with deployment staggered a few weeks apart - and one ABCT on Rest and Recuperation.

Background

According to the Army's 2006 Posture Statement, the Army is required to be able to conduct joint, multinational operations anywhere across the complex Spectrum of Operations. This spectrum ranges from the low end – emphasizing stability and civil support operations – to the high end – emphasizing major conventional combat operations.

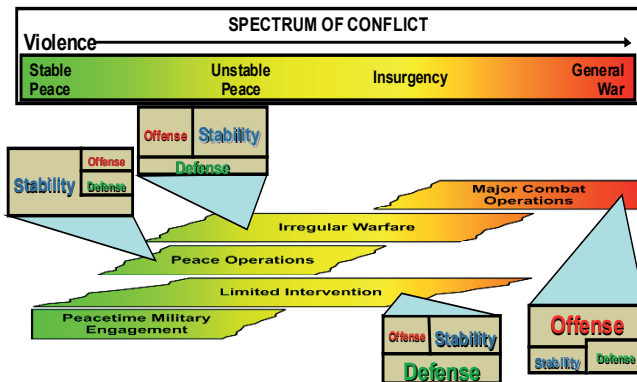# A Conceptual Framework

Figure 1. Military Operations and the Spectrum of Conflict[2]

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[2] See HQ Department of the Army G-35 Briefing on Stability Operations at: http://www.carlisle.army.mil/ietcop/sotew/Plenary%20Briefs/SSO%20Briefing.ppt

Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates has challenged the Army to prepare for asymmetric warfare. Yet its force structure has not kept pace. One of the initiatives to increase Army capability to accomplish missions across the spectrum was the Brigade Combat Team (BCT). This configuration was intended to be more flexible to deal with irregular, catastrophic, and disruptive challenges as well as traditional warfare.

However, the modular brigades have not significantly advanced the Army's capabilities in Irregular Warfare (IW). They continue to function tactically and operationally in the larger planning context of being one more "linear" component of a traditional campaign rather than a stand alone "asymmetric" asset. This paper outlines a theoretical "Asymmetric Brigade Combat Team" (ABCT) that would be capable and available for specific employment throughout the Global Spectrum of Operations. It envisions a "next-level" BCT.

Asymmetric Brigade Combat Teams would have the same basic configuration of a Brigade Combat Team to execute Full Spectrum Operations. However, the ABCT mission would essentially collapse Phases II through V into a *single phase*:

1. PHASE I-Deter, crisis defined;

2. PHASE II-Seize initiative, assure friendly freedom of action, access theater infrastructure;

3. PHASE III-Dominate, establish dominant force capabilities, achieve full-spectrum superiority, engage current primary activities;

4. PHASE IV-Stabilize, establish security, restore services;

5. PHASE V-Enable civil authority, transfer to civil authority, redeploy.

Campaign Phases: An Illustrative Framework
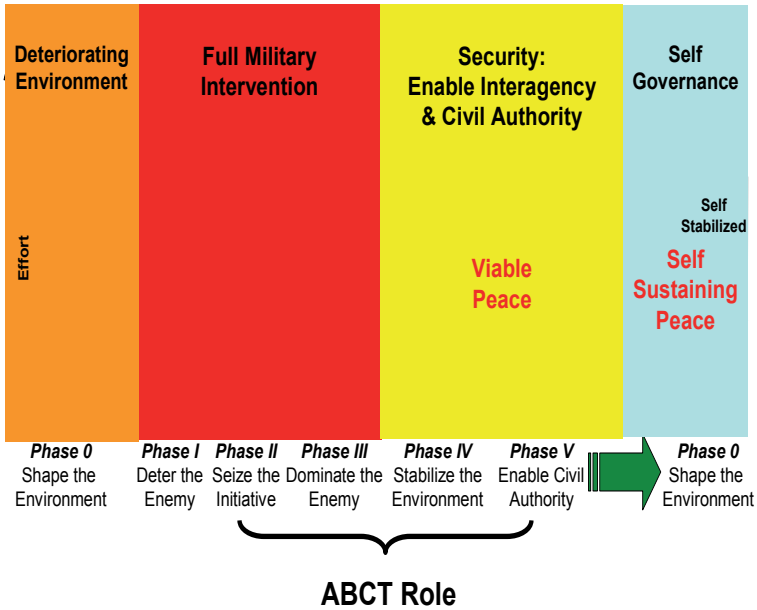
Figure 2. Example of Campaign Plan Phases[3]

An ABCT deployed to a strategic location would engage in all facets of Asymmetric Warfare from the moment it hit the ground, not as one piece of an incremental plan. Incremental is "linear." Linear is WWII 1945. The ABCT would operate autonomously in a hostile environment with little or no resupply (usually the largest and most critical resupply item is fuel). But the ABCT for this mission does not maneuver or perform reinforcement for at least 30 days after arrival and redeploys after not more than 120. Its mission would be considered completed when its security and/or stability responsibilities are transferred to Host Nation elements or a combination of Host Nation and intervening forces. It is essential that the mission is appropriately scaled for the ABCT's capabilities and can be completed with no resupply if possible.

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[3] Ibid.

Example: "ABCT Rome"

"What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun." Ecclesiastes 1:9-14

"It should be noted that the main reason for the Romans becoming masters of the world was that, having fought successively against all peoples, they always gave up their own practices as soon as they found better ones." Charles-Louis de Secondat, baron de La Brède et de Montesquieu

Probably the first to successfully employ an "Asymmetric Brigade Combat Team" (ABCT) was the Roman Empire two millennia ago. A Roman Legion, numbering an approximate "brigade" size of 4,000 and 6,000 troops, was a self-contained "modular" unit in the truest sense. No umbilical cord supply lines were required or in many scenarios even possible. There was no practical reach-back or request for this item of equipment or that skill set when they were deployed to a hostile environment. The ABCT Legion brought everything they needed with them, virtually on their backs and a few carts. Each legion had a complement of specialists and craftsmen: surveyors, medical and veterinary orderlies, weapons specialists, carpenters, hunters, even soothsayers. Roman organization was more flexible than those of many opponents. Over time, the legions effectively handled challenges ranging from cavalry, to guerrillas, to siege warfare, to policing the streets and to building a public bath. When historians are asked to list reasons for the success of Rome's armies, one word is on every list: "adaptability".

During one period of the Empire, the Roman military was broadly divided into two informal groups – the limitanei (the defenders of the lines) and the "mobile" field armies. Most Romans policed the roads and cities, protected political authorities, eliminated bandits and pirates, built engineering projects, intercepted raiders, and sometimes retaliated against enemy lands beyond the lines. The field armies were more of a political instrument. Their real use was to intercept larger invading armies, or to be redeployed across the empire as needed.[4]

However, Roman army engineering skills are well known and legend. The army also took part in building projects for civilian use. In addition, the quality of work delivered by the army tended to be better than that of civilian engineers. Of both military and civilian use was the construction of roads in which the army was

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[4] See Edward N. Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire from the First Century A. D. to the third*, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976.

heavily involved. But so too were soldiers put to use in the construction of town walls, the digging of shipping canals, the drainage of land, aqueducts, harbors, and even in the cultivation of vineyards. In some rare cases soldiers were even used in mining work. After construction of public works, the duty of maintenance fell to the local communities. But these communities often made arrangements to pay the army to maintain them, bringing in helpful sources of income to pay the army's huge costs.

Many times a legion found itself the "only cops in town." Several policing duties fell to the army in the provinces of the empire. Many such duties played an important role in trade. It was the army which inspected the weights at market and collected customs payments. Whenever there was a census (the counting of the people of the empire) it fell to the army as the only institution large enough to handle such a huge operation. Having no police force and no customs officials in the provinces meant that everything regarding law enforcement or border controls rested with the army.

Large numbers of soldiers were detached from their armies and, in small units, provided escort protection to traders, guarded provincial governors, patrolled country roads and towns. Some troops were even used as prison guards, but this was rare, as it was deemed demeaning work and hence was normally given to slaves. These activities naturally kept the army in close contact with local people and, one may assume, ensured it some degree of popularity, as it was seen enforcing law and order and protecting trade.

ABCT assumptions

a.   Even with approvals for more troops to be deployed to troubled areas, the number will be far too few to control the entire country or to inflict – by military definition – a sustainable defeat on an enemy.

b.   Military and civilian analysts and area experts conclude that only a "ground up" strategy emanating from the tribal areas can be successful in negating or rolling back enemy control and influence. Simply controlling major cities and operating from major bases will not work.

c.   There is a potential to ally or neutralize the majority of tribal chiefs and warlords under enemy influence or pre-empt them from joining militant organizations.

d.   The enemy has successfully honed guerilla tactics to adapt to terrain and "invader" doctrine and predominantly engage in cutting Lines of Communication (LOCs), attacking convoys and long-range patrols and overwhelming small bases.

e.   The number of troops that will be sent to conflict areas will be finite in the near future and probably considerably less, and will more than likely include multi-national forces - allied and/or NATO partners.

f.   The Iraq War suggests planners found they had to meet the asymmetric attack with phases that overlapped, were out of sequence, or had to be executed simultaneously.

g.   The majority of Host Nation people will reject the ideology and violence of the extremist (90% or greater) but have little faith in the ability of the government to provide security, justice, clean water, electricity, or jobs.

h.   "Asymmetric" warfare – potential threat 360 degrees – expands the threat beyond the kinetic insurgent to include language, power (influence), culture, custom, politics, health issues, rule of law, hunger, local economy and employment, societal dislocation, and history, all of which can enable, support and/or drive toward a kinetic result.

i.   Despite an Army organizational shift of emphasis from Division-centric to Brigade-centric, Combat Support (CS) and Combat Service Support (CSS) elements critical to Asymmetric Warfare continue to be deployed in sequentially ("linear" phases) well after initial Combat Arms deployment.

j.   The majority of the U.S. population and political leadership will be "casualty-averse."

ABCT objectives

a.   Gain the alliance or at minimum neutralize one or more tribal leaders or warlords in a selected key terrain region. Kick-start or prime the pump toward this objective by initiating and laying the groundwork for civil security, medical assistance, cultural awareness, infrastructure assistance and other quality-of-life issues.

b.   Instill a measure of trust and confidence on the part of the population and

leadership in U.S. Forces and the central government.

c.   Embed government support forces in the village(s)/region.

d.   Provide a temporary strategic/tactical blocking action for a region against enemy movement, recruitment and resupply.

e.   Keep the enemy off-balance by forcing them to redeploy, re-plan and otherwise reorganize not only in the ABCT target area but other regions as well. The enemy will immediately be forced to react to the inclusion of the ABCT in the area.

f.   Collapsing Phases II through V into a single phase, thus attacking an "asymmetric threat" with a true "asymmetric" offensive, leaving insurgent forces no time for a planning cycle or execution to counter each phase of an operation.

g.   Host Nation experts to train, work with the people inside the ABCT, and leave behind at the time of Change of Mission for the ABCT; enormous "value added" support is focused on the target area.

ABCT configuration

a.   The ABCT would contain significant-sized elements of Combat Support (CS) and Combat Service Support (CSS) personnel far in excess of what the Task Organization (TO) now are designed for the other BCTs. These oversized elements (from company to battalion-size) include Medical (to encompass dentists, veterinarians, and optical techs), Civil Affairs (to include Islamic chaplains), Linguists, Human Terrain Teams, Engineers, Law Enforcement Program, Information Operations, mobile laundry/ shower units etc.

b.   Significantly increased size of current standard BCT organic assets of Intelligence (HUMINT), Military Police and Rangers and/or Special Forces.

c.   The size and mix of CS and CSS elements in this hybrid, custom-manned and equipped ABCT would be entirely driven by the target requirements. The Combat Arms assets in type (i.e. artillery, SF, Ranger, rotary air support,

etc) and number are determined by the threat, terrain and specific mission requirements.

ABCT strategic/tactical deployment

a. The ABCT is equipped to deploy for a minimum of 30 days without significant resupply or ground convoy.

b. This Brigade is deployed to "Clear-Hold-Build" (on the Iraq Theater Model) but in a very compressed time frame and in concurrent stages. The "Build" stage is virtually nonexistent since we can only lay preliminary groundwork.

c. The target area for ABCT deployment would be determined by three factors that must be present:

> (1) A regional tribal chief or warlord and population which have been determined by intelligence analysis as having the greatest potential to be allied or neutralized.
> (2) A location whose key terrain blocks enemy movement (major and established transportation arteries), LOCs, and impacts on enemy presence and area influence.

d. This Brigade would operate virtually independently of its higher headquarters, with autonomous authority granted to the Brigade Commander except for the most critical exceptions. The asymmetric threat can be dynamic and often too fast for an effective response from the traditional U.S. military decision cycle that encompasses several echelons.

Discussion of ABCT Objectives

a. Gain the alliance or at least neutralize one or more tribal leader or warlord in a selected key terrain region.

Discussion – Recent studies and surveys, plus its own record of shortcomings, have shown that the ineffectiveness and corruption of governments has led to the assumption of tribal and warlord power in the countryside. It is generally agreed that only a "ground up" strategy will be effective in diminishing and rolling back enemy influence and control. The enemy influences tribal leaders through intimidation, civil

law enforcement and financing. But most of these alliances and subjugations are tenuous and have the potential to be broken by immediate and material support to the region coupled with a Host Nation government commitment of troops and support. While the following list is in relative order of significance, concurrent projects in as many as possible of the following areas need to be undertaken as necessary:

CIVIL SUPPORT LINES OF OPERATION	Potable water supply, properly scaled to conditions Sewerage, sanitation and waste management, properly scaled Shelter and housing Food marketing, distribution and production Electricity production and distribution, including fuel Transportation as required Communications Basic health and medical clinic services Local police and fire or other security Schools or education Local commercial and service enterprises to support and sustain economic activity

Indeed, properly scaling basic infrastructure projects in both urban and rural areas to provide for opportunities for entrepreneurial enterprise creation for this kind of physical infrastructure is a fundamental strategy. The participation of local leaders in the design, construction, operation, maintenance, marketing, distribution and protection of key infrastructure they own is essential to enterprise development, job creation, economic empowerment and growth in a highly unstable and violent environment.

b. Instill a measure of trust and confidence on the part of the Host Nation population in the leadership by U.S. Forces and the Host Nation central government.

c. Embed Host Nation government support forces in the village(s)/region.

d. Provide a temporary strategic/tactical blocking action for a region against enemy movement, recruitment and resupply.

e. Force the enemy to redeploy, re-plan and otherwise reorganize not only in the ABCT target area but other regions as well.

Possible reactions:

      (1)   **Surprise -** A large force dropped into the middle of an enemy controlled area with the profile (medical clinic, mobile laundry, Civil Affairs, Military Police, etc) of a permanent base being established does not follow any known doctrine.

      (2)   **Redeployment** – Of immediate concern to the enemy leadership will be the temporary redeployment of its fighters out of harm's way pending leadership meetings and decision-making to address this new development.

      (3)   **Decision-making** – Decisions must be made. They must decide whether to apply pressure on the new U.S. base through small unit harassment attacks, cut off resupply roads and attack convoys (there will be no resupply convoys), or mass for a major attack on the base. With current estimates of enemy strength countrywide at this time would require considerable mobilization and logistics. It would also take time. The real risk for the insurgents is that massing would provide U.S. air power with a viable – and rare – set of targets.

      (4)   **Re-planning** – The enemy must go through their decision cycle and either move in reinforcements or redeploy to another region and adjust with additional personnel, resources, supplies, financing and intelligence contacts. They must rebuild, maintain and repair their vital support "infrastructure". They must repeat the cycle when that Brigade, or another, deploys to another region. Disrupting their decision cycle and the dislocation requires revamping of supply lines, financing, and intelligence assets. In addition, there is the repeating of short-notice dislocation of personnel. They may also be surprised to find a local leadership better endowed to resist in terms of HN embedding, populace attitude shifts and – when deemed a probable ally – a better armed local war lord or tribal chief. They also will find a HN force in place that (because it is hand-picked and the best of the HN force) prepared to engage. A short time later (or overlapping if there are two ABCTs) the same scenario is confronting them. By the second ABCT deployment there will be negative ripple effects in the enemy network throughout the country. The insurgents would be making decisions under constant pressure, and that often leads to mistakes and misjudgments.

f.   Collapsing operational Phases II through V into a single phase, thus attacking an "asymmetric threat" with a true "asymmetric "offensive.
Discussion – Despite the fact that the transformed and modular "Brigade-centric"

concept was introduced and described as an answer to 21st Century Irregular Warfare, it remains merely a piece of the linear OPORD and takes its place in the phases of the operation.

Vietnam, and later Iraq, illustrate that the foremost vulnerably inherent in locked-in sequential Phase Lines to deploy Asymmetric Warfare assets is, of course, the time delay. In the time that elapses for us to reach the next phase, the insurgents have had enough time to counter exploit and counter the next phase. So we find ourselves always one jump behind. Collapsing Phases II through V has all of our asymmetric assets coming at the enemy simultaneously. They have probably never had to hurriedly plan against or react to that kind of multi-dimensional, true "asymmetric" offensive.

g.   Maximize the effectiveness of the limited U.S. military personnel in-country to shape and execute the strategy for success.

Discussion – Herein lays the immediate concern; what will be the criteria to gauge "success" in a supported country? In other words, "What is the picture of right"?

Observations

> a. **Configuration -** The modular BCTs, designed to be "adapted" for the specific theater and conflict, are still being integrated into "linear" planning. The "modularization" and reconfiguration to adapt to for IW remain more cosmetic than practical. Configuring an ABCT could be done from available assets. The pieces are already on the table and in the inventory. No need for retraining, refitting or waiting on weapons, communications or surveillance development. But, as important as it would be to reconfigure available material assets for a brigade custom-made for IW, is the reconfiguring of the leadership mindset to use this ABCT as intended.

> b. **Some Lessons Learned –** The Ft. Leavenworth Office of Foreign Studies and other students of the Soviet-Afghan War generally agree that lessons learned from that 10-year war include:

> (1) A guerrilla war is not a war of technology versus peasantry. The side with the greatest moral commitment (ideological, religious or patriotic) will hold the ground at the end of the conflict. Battlefield

victory can be almost irrelevant, since victory is often determined by morale, obstinacy and survival.

(2) Secure logistics and secure lines of communication are essential for the guerrilla and non-guerrilla force.

(3) Weapons systems, field gear, communications equipment and transport which are designed for conventional war will often work less effectively or fail completely on rugged terrain.

(4) Tactics for conventional war will not work against guerrillas. The most effective combatants are light infantry.

(5) Field sanitation, immunization and preventive medicine are of paramount importance in less-than-optimal sanitary conditions.

(6) Journalists and television cameramen are key players in guerrilla warfare.

(7) Logistics determines the scope of activity and size of force either side can field.

(8) Unity of command is very important, yet sometimes impossible to achieve.

(9) Domination of the air is irrelevant unless airpower can be precisely targeted.

(10) Seizure of terrain can be advantageous, but is usually only of temporary value.

(11) Control of the cities can be a plus, but can also prove a detriment.

(12) Support of the population is essential for the winning side.

c. **Internal Vice External Activity** – Almost all activities and energies of the ABCT are concentrated *internally* within its extended protective footprint: civil affairs, medical and dental assistance, minor infrastructure repair, HN embedded cadre training, addressing quality of life issues, regional intelligence collection and analysis, building HUMINT nets, etc. This is in contrast to a base of this size which would be focused primarily *externally*; putting out long-range recon or long-range search-and-destroy with the intent of killing the enemy and annexing additional territory or key terrain.

d. **Target Denial -** The guerillas honed their tactics during the decade of Soviet occupation and found their greatest successes came from targeting supply and troop convoys and long-range patrols and highway and mountain chokepoints. The mission, objectives and

duration of the deployed ABCT would largely deny the enemy these soft targets.

e. **ABCT IPB** – Intelligence preparation for this "battlefield" goes far beyond weather, terrain, kinetic threat and OPFOR Order of Battle. While all of the standard IPB boxes are on the checklist, the IPB for an ABCT mission increases the checklist to include village(s) leadership profiles, area (estimated) economic and quality-of-life indices, history of warfare involvement/insurgent relationships, etc. The quality and granularity of this vital Asymmetric IPB may determine the degree of success of the ABCT while everything is still on the drawing board.

Recommendations

a. Leadership of an ABCT – The commander of an ABCT, given the considerable autonomy of authority from higher headquarters and given the multi-dimensional essential tasks of the Brigade, would have to be a couple of notches above being a "very good commanding officer." The Commander and his Primary Staff should be "spatial" thinkers. Not "linear" thinkers. This Commander would be orchestrating many, many more moving parts and tasks than are found in the average maneuver brigade and be confronted with countless on-the-spot decisions, many traditionally pushed up for higher headquarters approval. Just as the military decision cycle was too slow to be effective in counterdrug work (as often was and is the law enforcement decision cycle), it remains too cumbersome and slow for IW.

b. ABCT METL – The Mission Essential Task List for this Brigade goes far beyond the average maneuver brigade. This deployment is not a pitch-camp-put-out-patrols-play cards proposition. There is no stand-down by anyone inside the perimeter. Once encamped, virtually every individual puts on his/her secondary "Asymmetric MOS," i.e. assisting Civil Affairs, Medical, Dental, Engineers (water purification, infrastructure repair), training embedded HN stay-behind cadre, etc.

ABCT Intelligence Preparation of the Battlespace

Intelligence Preparation of the Battlespace for an Asymmetric Brigade Combat Team for this "battlefield" goes far beyond the standard template of weather, terrain, kinetic threat and OPFOR Order of Battle. While all of the standard IPB

boxes are on the checklist, the IPB for an ABCT mission increases the checklist items to include those not commonly found on an infantry commander's IPB report. Obviously, to compile an ABCT IPB the Commander's G2 will need to reach out beyond the usual military intelligence assets to include Human Terrain Mapping Team personnel, medical and dental personnel, veterinarians, historians, social scientists, agriculturalists and others. The eventual success of the mission will hinge on the completeness and granularity of this document. This IPB template can serve a dual purpose: in addition to serving as an IPB of a targeted area, it can be a template on which the decision is made to *select* a target area. Examples of what would be contained in an ABCT IPB would include but not be limited to:

1.   **Weather –** Not just weather for window(s) of operation, but seasonal weather that impact on crops, drinking water, and livestock.

2.   **Terrain –** The priority here is not maneuverability of troops and equipment but defensive capabilities as the deployment will be static.

3.   **Order of Battle –** What are the last known locations of enemy fighters? What is their armament? What is the profile of the commander(s)? What is their strength? What is their range and mobility?

4.   **Town/Village(s) Leadership profiles** – What is known about the leadership of the towns/villages within the ABCT footprint? What is their history with the enemy? What are their attitudes toward the U.S.?

5.   **Economy –** What is the economic structure of the towns? What is their economic history in the past two to five years?

6.   **Political –** What is the political structure and who are the key figures?

7.   **Standard of Living** – How does it approximately rank with other parts of the Host Nation?

8.   **Ethnicity –** What are the tribes within the ABCT deployment footprint? What is their socio-cultural history? What are their relationships to those tribes inhabiting areas adjacent to the area being occupied by the ABCT?

9.   **Battle History –** What is the recent enemy battle history in the area? What level of local support did the enemy receive? How successful was their recruitment? How much damage and/or casualties did the enemy inflict?

10.   Host Nation Support – What, if any, support has this area received from the government? How did this area vote in the recent election?

11.   Local Militias – What do we know of their commanders? Their strength? Armament? Battle history?

12.   Local Infrastructure – What is the condition of bridges, culverts, water systems, vital roads and municipal structures, power grid?

13.   Health & Welfare – What are the locations, sizes, staffing and quality of medical facilities within the ABCT footprint? What is the availability of veterinarians and engine mechanics? What is the availability of dental facilities?

14.   Previous U.S. Contact – Have U.S. Forces operated or interfaced with any of the population in this area? Have there been local casualties as a result of U.S. target misidentification? Have there been any humanitarian projects or probes in this area by the military or NGOs?

15.   Critical Needs – In order of priority, what are the critical needs of the various towns/villages within the ABCT footprint?

Creating the ABCT Construct

A Command Working Group comprised of in-house Subject Matter Experts, supported by CINC priority, could quickly construct a working model of an Asymmetric Combat Brigade Team on paper which could culminate in a MAPEX or CPX. This portion offers suggested steps of development.

1.   **Assembling the Team:** At least one representative needs to be in the Working group from the following disciplines or units:

a. Ground Tactical	g. Medical (including veterinarians)
b. Airborne	h. Dental
c. Intelligence/SF	i. Agricultural
d. Logistics	j. Artillery
e. Civil Affairs	k. Engineers
f. Military Police	l. Human Terrain Teams
g. Medical	m. Any others deemed necessary

2. **Optimum Numbers**

Given a theoretical geographic location to include terrain, weather, size of ABCT "footprint," number and location of villages/towns and total population in AO, each discipline representative determines the optimum number to execute the mission from that discipline, which should constitute a piece of the ABCT.

3. **War Gaming the ABCT**

Once all paper deployment is made on the map, this deployed ABCT should be war-gamed Blue-Team/Red-Team. All of the disciplines involved in the planning should be participants in the CP Mapex to respond and recommend as injects come in.

ABCT Site Selection, Planning & SOPs for Attached Elements

Unlike the customary planning process of a maneuver brigade, the operations planners will be required to do more than solicit data and input from other sections and bury themselves in planning mode. The ABCT G/J3 Primary Staff planners will need to – literally – make room at the planning table and map boards for OICs, NCOICs , SMEs, supervisors, and contractors from the Special Attached Elements not usually found in a combat arms brigade that has this type of extraordinary mission.

Critical planning nodes in this operation encompass more than intelligence, weather, key terrain, OPFOR order of battle, personnel and logistics. The G/J3 will be fitting pieces into the brigade plan not usually on the planning table for an initial deployment: Civil Affairs, NGOs, Medical Units, Public Affairs, Human Terrain Mapping Teams and so on. To keep the brigade at its leanest for mobility

while at optimum efficiency, the G/J3, as the planning proceeds, will need to know information beyond his normal sphere of knowledge, i.e., the manning requirements and equipment payload of a mobile dental clinic. Participation of these Special Attached Elements actually begins in the Site Selection Phase when they provide input to build and answer the Site Selection Criteria.

In the Site Selection Phase the G/J2 would be the lead component responsible for drafting the IIRs, IRs and PIRs, tasking, collection and analysis for input to the G/J3. To collect data for the Site Selection Criteria List the G/J2 would have to reach out beyond customary brigade channels for information with RFIs to NGOs, DEA, DIA, NSA, Human Terrain Mapping Teams, State Department and other major agency players. Open Source Intelligence collection becomes as important as any secure channel collection we have access to at this time.

1.   **Site Selection** - The questions that need to be answered in selecting a deployment site would include but not necessarily be limited to:

a)   Does key terrain enable the ABCT to occupy a good defensive position?
b)   Are the regional tribal chief or warlord and town(s) leaders still "fence sitting" and/or can they be turned to be allies or at least neutralized?
c)   Is the geographic location of the ABCT deployment one that can block or threaten enemy movement (major and established transportation arteries) and LOCs?
d)   Would deployment in this area impact on enemy presence and area influence? If so, how?
e)   Are most of the villages and towns within the footprint free from having past "friendly fire" casualties? If not, what has been the effect and who will be responsible for attitude monitoring?
f)   Is it an area NOT containing heavy Black Market activity? There may be a cash flow in high Black Market activity areas which would overshadow any inducements the ABCT program can offer. This type of an area may be a target for active combat operations but not for an ABCT.
g)   Is it an area that shows significant voter turn-out in elections?
h)   Are villages and towns, within the footprint, within a distance that can allow reinforcement in a timely manner by either the ABCT main camp or the Larger Force if they come under attack by overwhelming numbers?
i)   What is the battle history of the target area?
j)   What are the personality profiles of leaders in the target area?
k)   What is the militia history?
l)   What is the history of enemy influence?

m) What are the tribal disposition, dynamics and history of the area?

n) What is the political structure?

o) What are the legal economic and principal revenue sources?

p) What is the breakout of Black Market activities, i.e. organizations, leaders, logistics, total dollars estimated, networks, etc?

q) What are the existing basic infrastructure elements of the main towns and villages to include roads?

r) Have the HN or local governments put any resources into this area or otherwise lent support in any way and what were the results?

s) Are there any Friendly (other than Host Nation) assets already in place in this area that could help the ABCT operation in the planning and/or execution phase of the operation?

t) Have any NGOs operated in this area? Who? What? When? Where? How? Why?

u) What is the recent history of U.S. Troop operation in this area?

v) Are there any significant health clinics or hospitals in this area?

w) Has this area recently had its economy impacted by any natural events: flood, drought, earthquakes, pests?

x) What are the major diseases or other health issues in this area?

y) Where and how strong are the nearest enemy threat forces?

z) Continue this detailed questioning and answering using each of the special elements involved in the ABCT.

2. Deployment Planning – Once a target area has been selected the various Special Attached Elements in the ABCT are given collected data pertinent to its specialty field. Each would be required to submit to the G/J3 information contained in a Mobilization Status and Requirements Report. It is in this report that the G/J3 might find, for example, that the attached Medical unit needs a mobile refrigeration apparatus in order to maintain a large vaccine supply.

3. Special Attached Elements SOPs – The G/J3 will be incorporating into the OPLAN the activities of the Special Attached Elements of which he/she may have little knowledge regarding how they function or what is required for them to operate in the field. To enable the G/J3 to know how all the pieces of the plan will operate, the Special Attached Elements should submit to the G/J3 its own Field SOPs, based on available information, regarding the scope and depth of the mission.

Conclusion

In summary, the ABCT process Collapses Phases II through V of "linear" warfare planning and execution into a single "Asymmetric" phase.

The ABCT model will instill a measure of trust and confidence on the part of the HN population leadership in US Forces and the HN central government, and gain the alliance tribal leaders or warlords. This is accomplished in a selected key terrain region by demonstrating *material support* in the form of:

- Clearing hostile forces

- Making rudimentary repairs to basic infrastructure

- Providing security

- Reinforcing local leadership authority

- Addressing basic local medical, dental issues and quality-of-life issues

- Providing local populace with essential, basic creature comforts

- Providing immediate economic assistance directly to the ABCT affected region bypassing potentially corrupt National Government officials

- Embedding HN government support and security forces in the village(s)/region

- Opening channels of communication and support with the central government

- Providing immediate law enforcement/civic support

- Installing a system that provides for future civic support and defense

- Embed HN government support forces (police and army) in the village(s)/ region.

- Embed U.S. cadre and Special Forces/Rangers and/or SEALs

- Provide a temporary strategic/tactical blocking action for a region against enemy movement, recruitment and resupply

- Force the enemy to redeploy, re-plan and otherwise reorganize not only in the ABCT target area but other regions as well, putting them in a "reactive," defensive posture

- Deny the enemy targets of opportunity and minimize exposure by eliminating convoys, long-range patrols and sparsely manned outposts

- Establish permanent HUMINT network in the deployed area and support a post-deployment alert and alarm system

- Maximize the effectiveness of the finite U.S. military personnel in-country to shape and execute the strategy for success

Selected ABCT questions and answers:

How is the ABCT different from the standard "modular" maneuver brigades?
The mission and objectives go far beyond the ordinary scope of brigades now online. Basically, the ABCT objective employs the "clear-hold-build" doctrine that was successful late in the Iraq War. But those three stages are folded into a single action and accomplished by add-on elements of Combat Support (CS) and Combat Service Support (CSS) personnel. The timeframe is also compressed. Once encamped, virtually every "line" soldier puts on his/her secondary "Asymmetric" MOS.

What are the sizes of these CS and CSS add-on elements?
The size of the add-on elements is determined during the planning phase and is based on the potential target area's IPB intelligence. Intelligence preparation for this "battlefield/battlespace" goes far beyond weather, terrain, kinetic threat and OPFOR Order of Battle. They basically write their own SOPs subject to approval by the BDE commander.

So, why won't the standard modular Brigade Combat Team achieve the same objectives with a few modifications to its TO and mission?
More than "a few modifications" are needed in each Theater of Operations. Vietnam and later Iraq illustrate that the foremost Vulnerabilities inherent to sequential Phase Lines are time delay and predictability. In the time lapses between phases, the insurgents have enough time to counter the current phase while preparing to counter the next phase. Collapsing Phases II through V has all of our asymmetric assets coming at the enemy simultaneously.

What is the train-up time required to deploy an ABCT?
None. The objectives and METL are within the MOS of every element and individual. (see previous discussion)

Do the ABCT deployment objectives, timelines and configuration adhere to U.S. military doctrine?
No.

Is this ABCT a defensive tool or an offensive one?
It is simultaneously both.

Are there any other offensive options besides the ABCT model or one similar?
No. During the Soviet war in Afghanistan, (according to reports written after the war by Soviet and U.S. officers and analysts), Pol/Mil advisors stated that the number of Soviet troops in the country estimated by different sources was between 105,000 and 150,000. This was sufficient to maintain only the status quo, *not enough* to decisively crush the resistance. Trying other options or models would merely be some version of the ABCT in action on the ground. No matter what the ABCT ended up looking like for execution purposes on the ground, all other U.S. Governmental and International Inter-agency activities, which would normally be occurring, in support of this mission, would still need to be in action.

Is the Command and Control any different for an ABCT?
To an extent:

(a)   Those CS and CSS personnel chopped to the ABCT are completely OPCON to the ABCT commander while remaining ADCON to their parent commands.
(b)   The ABCT commander should have considerably more decision autonomy and authority than the average maneuver brigade commander.

What are the tactical vulnerabilities of a deployed ABCT?
The common – and effective - tactical threats that are faced by a large deployed unit should not apply with the ABCT. The ABCT is equipped to deploy for 30 days without resupply convoys or air resupply.

Once the ABCT redeploys, won't the enemy simply re-occupy the area?
They may try, but they will find it is not the same area they occupied or had influence over 30 days earlier. Now, the enemy must decide a mode of attack or maybe no imminent attack at all because 100 miles away another ABCT had set up a similar

operation two days ago and two weeks ago another ABCT had been deployed.

What are some potential "fail-points" of the ABCT?

(a)   Planning - Exactly where the ABCT deploys is critical and the key terrain and human terrain must be carefully factored in.

(b)   Intelligence – Conflicts such as these must be a "thinking man's" war. No blunt instruments here. Intel support needs to be strong and ongoing.

(c)   The Commander - The commander of an ABCT would need considerable autonomy from higher headquarters, given the multi-dimensional essential tasks of the Brigade. The commander and his Primary Staff should be "spatial" thinkers, not "linear" thinkers.

What specifically is the role of the Host Nation in this mission?

The HN role in the ABCT deployment is significant. Deploying with the ABCT is a contingent of COIN-trained HN soldiers, and an element of HN police which will remain embedded once the ABCT redeploys. The primary purpose of the deployed HN rep is to link him/her with the U.S. aid being provided during the deployment by the ABCT. The HN rep will leave with the ABCT, but a channel of communication (computer?) will be established between the HN rep and the village/area leadership and hopefully some measure of confidence, which is now virtually zero beyond the city limits.

What role does the ABCT play in Irregular Offensive, Defensive and Stability Operations?

It is simultaneously all three – offensive, defense and stability ops. "Offensively", the ABCT is thrusting into a previously unsecured area with its large patrol/fire power footprint that by its presence immediately established a blocking action that takes in a sizable area. If strategically placed, this footprint would disrupt enemy C3I over a wide swath of countryside, cutting key movement routes.

"Defensively", the ABCT has trained and armed local police and/or militia, sets up intelligence network and establishes a communications system for alert and alarm.

"Stability operations" include area security enhancement through training, arms, cadre, intelligence and military and civil connectivity. The area has established rapport with the HN government. The area, after a month, has been thoroughly assessed and evaluated to pave the way for follow-on assistance by the HN government and NGOs.

The decision regarding how long to leave an ABCT in place may also be driven by other operations occurring in Theater and how its continued operation in the same locale affects the overall strategic plan.

What are the different impacts on LOE (Level of Effort) on the "Larger Force" and its mission?

Ostensibly, the ABCT operates tactically and logistically independently of the Larger Force. But its deployment certainly would be factored into the Larger Force's strategic planning; in fact, its geographic deployment may be influenced by strategic planning of the Larger Force. The deployment of the ABCT(s) to a given area(s) would almost certainly have an effect on the Larger Force. Theater-wide intelligence collectors and analysts must focus on these possible reactions that could affect the Larger Force:

1. **Surprise -** A brigade-sized force dropped into the middle of an enemy-controlled area with the profile (medical clinic, mobile laundry, Civil Affairs, Military Police, etc) of a permanent base being established does not follow either U.S. or Soviet known doctrine. Every enemy the U.S. has faced since WWII has been well versed in how U.S. military doctrine functions. The ABCT is not in the U.S. military manuals or on the Net. They have never seen this type of deployment by the U.S. or the Soviets.

2. **Redeployment** – Of immediate concern to the enemy leadership will be the temporary redeployment of its fighters out of harm's way pending leadership meetings and decision-making to address this new development. At this point they may assume the brigade is preparing for an offensive thrust into the countryside once the base is consolidated.

3. **Decision-making** –Conceding the area of the ABCT would be nothing less than a defeat, no less impacting than a battlefield defeat. By the time the enemy goes through their decision cycle and either move in reinforcements or redeploy to another region and adjust to the dislocation with additional personnel, resources, supplies, financing and intelligence contacts, they must rebuild, maintain and repair their vital support "infrastructure" when the Brigade has left.

What is the analysis of cost vs. benefit?

The financial cost of an ABCT is no greater than what is already being expended on

troops in Theater. There is no special training. All MOS skills required are already in-country. There is no special equipment.

Once an area has been selected for ABCT deployment, will the IPB for this deployment be any different than for the usual tactical combat deployment?
Yes. Considerably different. Intelligence preparation for this "battlespace" goes far beyond weather, terrain, kinetic threat and OPFOR Order of Battle. While all of the standard IPB boxes are on the checklist, the IPB for an ABCT mission increases the checklist to include village(s) leadership profiles, area (estimated) economic and quality-of-life indices, history of warfare involvement/insurgent relationships, etc. This means data collection must reach out beyond traditional sources and encompass such entities as NGOs, HTTs and OSINT. The quality and granularity of this vital Asymmetric IPB may determine the degree of success of the ABCT while everything is still on the drawing board.

What are the effects of the ABCT of military missions Clear, Hold and Build?
All phases of Clear-Hold-Build are present in the ABCT operation though compressed in time and the forces and resources concentrated in a small area relative to a brigade element.

What are the key factors that would contribute to a successful ABCT mission?

(1) A Commander who is innovative and can think on his/her feet

(2) A target site that has been selected by meeting most if not all of the criteria

(3) A thorough IPB that not only accounts for key terrain but also "human" terrain

(4) Diligent supervision of organic and attached assets by the ABCT Primary Staff

(5) HN government support of embedded personnel and post-operation support

(6) Utilize the concept of emplacing an ABCT in locations where the HN folks are generally friendly to us, where we can bypass known enemy strongholds and draw them to us as targets, where we can have beneficial effects on assisting the local population for long term support, and where we can pass out real money and material support to the people that really need it, bypassing somewhat corrupt government officials.

CHAPTER TEN

Preventing state failure:
a proposed agenda for NATO

Rolf Schwarz

Introduction

The international community has had to grapple with many security issues resulting from state failure. The international response to fragile and failed states has been ad-hoc at best and has mainly resorted to means of humanitarian interventions and post-conflict reconstruction measures. It is my argument in the following that the problem of fragile and failed states demands a broader rethinking for the international community; it demands both a rethinking of the concept of sovereignty (when is it time to intervene and how should it be done?) and an understanding of post-conflict state-building (what is to be rebuilt in the aftermath of conflict?).

More fundamentally, I argue that the problem of fragile and failed states demands a rethinking of how to approach the problem in the first place. While interventions are certainly one policy response, they are certainly not the only ones possible. While NATO has acted in Bosnia, Kosovo, and Afghanistan as a peacekeeper of first resort, it might not need to take on this role if such conflicts were prevented or sufficiently mitigated in the first place. Rather, it might be easier and cheaper for NATO to focus on conflict prevention and capacity-building in the field of state-building rather than on intervention once states have already failed. In other words: is the job of putting fragile and failed states back on their feet really a "mission impossible" whereby we have to lower our objectives and expectations, or is nation and state-building a viable project if we devote the right number of resources and troops to it? Which lessons have we learned from interventions in the Balkans, the Middle East and Africa over the past decade? The concept I propose here is not a "new" mission for NATO but a re-thinking of how best to accomplish its core purpose of providing security for its member states.

I argue that NATO would be wiser to develop a capacity to monitor security developments and to strengthen fragile states in order to lessen the need to act and plan operationally for interventions in the aftermath of state failure. This is what

I term a proposed agenda for NATO; first an agenda to increase awareness that fragile and failed states represent a threat to NATO; and secondly an agenda to shift focus and to move towards prevention and avoiding state failure rather than dealing with it afterwards as was the case in Afghanistan and Somalia. My argument consists of three parts. The first shows why NATO should be concerned about state failure and why NATO should be included in current debates on state-building. In fact, recent years have witnessed a merging of peacekeeping with state-building agendas; peacebuilding, as practiced in Afghanistan, Kosovo and East Timor, entails elements of state reconstruction, election monitoring and the promotion of market economies.

Secondly, I show what should be done once states have failed and how policies of post-conflict peacebuilding should be tailored to rebuild fragile and failed states. This includes awareness of the growing importance of interventions in world politics and the emergence of a norm of humanitarian intervention and a responsibility to protect. It also includes awareness of the enormous task involved in post-conflict state-building. Rebuilding states is a complex and often arduous process. It is best captured in terms of the three core functions of any modern state: security, welfare and representation. These three substantial components of post-conflict state-building at times are mutually reinforcing and at other times stand in one another's way. All this highlights the ambiguities and pitfalls involved in such ambitious international efforts. Thirdly, I show what needs to be done to prevent state failure in the first place. Moving away from intervening in fragile and failed states demands, of course, a change of focus for NATO. It entails the development of capacities to rebuild states and to strengthen institutional capacitates in states that are of strategic importance to NATO.

Furthermore, I will show that - like responding to state failure - preventing state failure requires a comprehensive approach with the full range of development and governance efforts and there is a specific role that NATO as a political-military alliance should play. I do not suggest that NATO should act alone, but it should apply its unique range of military and political capabilities in partnership with the EU, UN, the OSCE and other organizations as appropriate. Finally, I conclude by delineating perspectives and future challenges for NATO in addressing the agenda of state failure.

Fragile and failed states as a threat to NATO

Failed states are already a threat to NATO member states. The breakdown

of order and the collapse of state institutions bring forth chaos and anarchy. Where anarchy prevails, terrorism, narcotics trade, human trafficking, weapons proliferation, and organized crime flourish and this may in itself pose security threats to NATO or, as in the case of the Taliban, may constitute staging areas for direct threats to NATO member states.[1] NATO, however, is not adequately organized to deal with governance failures despite public recognition and announcements of their importance. In the words of the NATO Secretary General there are three big security challenges facing NATO:

> "We face common security challenges and threats – challenges and threats, such as failed states, terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, piracy and energy security".[2]

If failed states are recognized as a threat to NATO, would it not be wiser to prevent them from failing in the first place? But while NATO has spent a lot of energy and resources in dealing with the fight against terrorism and in preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, little attention has been paid to the threat emanating from fragile and failed states. Attention and awareness ought to be paid to the most vulnerable and unstable regions of this world. NATO ought to be able to anticipate potential cases of state failure. This does not mean that NATO would intervene. Rather, NATO could help to effectively manage and prevent potential crises *before* they develop into full crisis and anarchy. Conflict prevention through institution-building and capacity-building ought therefore to become a routine element of policy-making within NATO.

State failure is often perceived narrowly as the *collapse* of state institutions and the disappearance of states. However, cases of state collapse are today rare phenomena and fewer than 20 cases of state collapse have been observed in the period 1955-1998.[3] While for centuries state collapse and state disappearance were a regular feature of international relations, very few states have disappeared since the

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[1] The listed phenomena are usually seen as being the "root causes" of conflicts but might in fact be better seen as "symptoms" of fragile and failed states. See Nelson Kasfir (2004), "Domestic Anarchy, Security Dilemmas, and Violent Predation: Causes of Failure" in Robert I. Rotberg (ed.), *When States Fail. Causes and Consequences*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 53-76; and Steven R. David, "Internal War: Causes and Cures" in: *World Politics*, Vol. 49(4), pp. 552-576, 1997.

[2] NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen at the occasion of his visit to the Kingdom of Bahrain, Ritz Carlton Hotel, Manama, Bahrain, 7 March 2010.
Available at: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/opinions_62052.htm

[3] Jack A. Goldstone et al., *State Failure Task Force Report: Phase III Findings*. McLean: Science Applications International Corporation, 2000.

19th century. A distinction must hence be drawn between legal statehood (recognition under international law) and empirical statehood (effective control). When NATO member states look at state failure, it is the failure of empirical statehood not partitioning or dissolution of states under international law that threatens global and regional security.

State *failure* is thus not the same as state *collapse*. State collapse is the breakdown of state institutions and the emergence of a situation that resembles a war of all against all. Its symptoms are anarchy, lawlessness and widespread violence that threaten surrounding states and regions.[4] State failure, on the other hand, typically precedes but does not always lead to state collapse and should be understood more broadly. A failed state can be defined as "a polity that is no longer able or willing to perform the fundamental tasks of a nation-state in the modern world" despite maintaining international legal recognition.[5] Politically it is the failure of good governance; in the security field it is the failure to provide equal, non discriminatory protection and stability to all citizens; and in the economic domain it is the failure to provide general welfare[6] - the latter being the most important.

Fragile states are hence states that have weak structures and lack performance capacity in core state tasks; they may be on the verge of becoming failed states, but may also recover from state weakness and gain in capacity to perform. State failure understood in this way as poor governance and inadequate and weak national authority structures has been much more common. Recent studies have identified some 136 occurrences of state failure,[7] ranging from the commonly accepted cases of failed states like Afghanistan, Somalia and Yemen, to ethnic wars as in Bosnia in the 1990s and in Congo-Kinshasa in the 1980s, to genocide in Rwanda, and adverse regime changes in numerous countries. Many states which fail have weak state structures and low performance levels; in some cases this leads to domestic

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[4] See William I. Zartman (ed.), *Collapsed States: The Disintegration and Restoration of Legitimate Authority*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1995; Jack A. Goldstone et al., *State Failure Task Force Report: Phase III Findings*. McLean: Science Applications International Corporation, 2000; and Gerald B. Helman and Steven R. Ratner, "Saving Failed States." In: *Foreign Policy*, no. 84, pp. 3-20, 1992-92. These all focus narrowly on "widespread violence" in failed states and not on performance and governance as I do in this chapter.

[5] Robert I. Rotberg (ed.), *When States Fail. Causes and Consequences*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 6, 2004.

[6] The term "general welfare" is used here to mean well-being or the opportunity to pursue health, happiness, or prosperity. It does not necessarily imply a system of transfer payments or other government assistance to the poor.

[7] Jack A. Goldstone et al., *State Failure Task Force Report: Phase III Findings*. McLean: Science Applications International Corporation, 2000.

instability, civil wars and armed violence. Indeed, since 1945 more than 90 percent of all wars have been fought in the developing world.[8] Insecurity in today's globalized world is thus a primary domestic challenge to states; and weak state structures are a common problem of the developing world.

In order to anticipate where and when state failure occurs, NATO ought to look at how governments in the developing world are dealing with the challenges of decreasing welfare, economic decline, and decreasing societal well-being. Indeed, NATO's security is tightly linked to that of other regions. The Declaration on Alliance Security, approved by the NATO Summit in Strasbourg and Kehl on 4 April 2009, made this unmistakably clear:

> "Other challenges such as energy security, climate change, as well as instability emanating from fragile and failed states, may also have a negative impact on Allied and international security. *Our security is increasingly tied to that of other regions*." (emphasis added).

The best predictor of the onset of state failure is the breakdown of the social contract that binds citizens to the state. Various sets of citizens cease to trust the state; they turn to sectional and communal loyalties that become the main recourse in times of insecurity and their main pathway of economic opportunity.[9] States that are dependent on natural resources are particularly prone to state failure, understood broadly as the breakdown of the social contract and declining welfare. The majority of the ten most at-risk countries in the Failed States Index[10] are characterized by economic reliance on a single natural resource: the Democratic Republic of the Congo (diamonds), Sudan (oil), Iraq (oil), Somalia (n.a.), Sierra Leone (diamonds), Chad (oil), Liberia (diamonds), Yemen (oil), and Zimbabwe (coal). Natural resource dependence bears the seeds of state failure in the long run.

While the economic benefits from natural resources are evident as long as revenues are abundant, the long-term consequences are market distortions (Dutch

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[8] Charles W. Kegley and Eugene R. Wittkopf, *World Politics. Trends and Transformation*, p. 348, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999.

[9] Robert I. Rotberg (ed.), *When States Fail. Causes and Consequences*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 9, 2004.

[10] See the *Failed States Index* interactive map and rankings. Available at: http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2009/06/22/2009_failed_states_index_interactive_map_and_rankings. It should be noted that the *Failed States Index* attempts to indicate the likelihood of what I call "state collapse" and that many of the highest ranked states on the *Failed States Index* are "failed states" under my terminology.

disease), patronage, and unproductive economic sectors. This stands in contrast to a balanced economy with industrial, technological and durable development in a variety of sectors. The lack of human development in states that rely on a single natural resource breeds inequalities and human insecurities[11] and is associated with a higher likelihood of the outbreak of civil war.[12] If natural resources are used for personal benefit and economic greed, they contribute to instability because they allow non-state groups to challenge the state's monopoly as security provider and its critical role as a provider of justice and facilitator of economic opportunity. In such cases citizens no longer have an interest in investing in economic activities, cease to trust in the governance of the state, and fall back on communal identities that may better provide economic opportunities, welfare and security. When states manage to provide effectively for the general welfare, they survive. Where they lack adequate resources for welfare, they will fall apart from inside and succumb to state failure.

The challenge of decreasing welfare is particularly great in the Arab world, where 32 million people - equaling a total 12 percent of the regional population - suffer from malnutrition.[13] It is estimated that close to 100 million new jobs, double the current number, will need to be created over the next 20 years to keep pace with new labor force entrants and absorb the currently unemployed.[14] Additionally, half of the Middle East region's population lives under conditions of water stress and rapid population growth and climate change will further constrict the availability of water.[15] This is worrisome and has implications not only for economic welfare and human well-being, but also for human security.

Human security is today understood as having changed the referent object of security from an exclusive stress on territorial security to a much greater stress on people's security.[16] Human security resolves around two versions, a broader version focusing on "freedom from want" and a narrower version centering on "freedom from fear". While the former is closer to a development agenda, the latter is more suited to NATO and its potential role in preventing state failure. Here the attention is on removing the use, or threat, of violence from people's everyday lives. Human

[11] Philippe Le Billon, *Fuelling War: Natural Resources and Armed Conflict*. London: Routledge, 2005.
[12] Michael Ross (2004). "How do Natural Resources Influence Civil War?" *International Organization* 58(1): 35-67; Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, "On Economic Causes of Civil War", *Oxford Economic Papers* Vol. 50(3), pp. 463-73, 1998.
[13] UNDP, *Arab Human Development Report 2004: Towards Freedom in the Arab World*. New York: United Nations Development Program, 2005.
[14] World Bank, *Annual Report 2006*. Washington: World Bank, 2006.
[15] UNDP, *Arab Human Development Report 2009: Challenges to Human Security in Arab Countries*. New York: United Nations Development Program, 2009.
[16] UNDP, *Human Development Report 1994*. New York: United Nations, p. 24, 1994.

rights concerns and development issues are increasingly integrated with security matters; and justice, growth in welfare, and sustainable peace are deeply entwined goals.[17] Development, security and human rights share a symbiotic relationship (encompassed in the concept of human security) and a decline in any of them might indicate coming state failure.

Why should NATO care?

There are three obvious reasons why NATO should have a greater awareness of the problem of fragile and failed states. First, NATO is already engaged operationally in a failed state (Afghanistan) and key NATO members are engaged in a neighboring fragile state (Pakistan). This has implications beyond the classic military aspects of counter-insurgency. NATO's mission in Afghanistan is not only military but includes reconstruction and state-building tasks. The declared end-state of the NATO-led and UN-mandated ISAF mission is to assist the Afghan Government in exercising and extending its state authority and influence across the country, paving the way for reconstruction and effective governance. Thus, its role currently far exceeds the simple provision of military security. But reconstruction and state-building presuppose a clear understanding about what state structures need to be rebuilt and how. The complexities, subtleties and ambiguities of historical processes of state-building across Europe and the world point to the need for a sensitization in the approach to post-conflict state-building, especially if driven externally.

Security, welfare and representation are at times mutually reinforcing but at other times they present insurmountable differences in objectives.[18] While security may advance welfare or representation in some contexts, it may undermine it in others. International policies devised for one issue-area might be dependent on sequencing and timing. The overall importance of designing a comprehensive approach to fixing failed states through state-building is hence obvious.

Second, NATO is already experiencing the growing insecurity emanating from fragile and failed states. These threats are indirect and relatively small in nature, but their occurrence is likely to increase over time. Piracy and illegal migration are products of fragile and failed states. They have international security implications and

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[17] Kofi Annan, *In Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security and Human Rights for All*. New York. United Nations Publications, 2005; as well as UN, *A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility. The Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Change*. New York: United Nations, 2004.
[18] Francis Fukuyama, *State Building. Governance and World Order in the twenty-first Century*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004.

are threats that directly and indirectly affect NATO member states. The international community has started to address the issue of piracy in the context of state failure in Somalia through a series of UN Security Council Resolutions, and NATO has engaged its Standing NATO Maritime Group (SNMG) twice in that context. But piracy and migration are symptoms and not causes of state failure. Consequently it is not enough, in the case of piracy, to secure only the international waters; there is a need to combine this with a policy of institution and capacity-building.

In fact, the international community has started to engage cautiously in this area with early preparations for a possible EU mission to train Somali soldiers in Uganda. The idea would be to contribute to the strengthening of the Somali Transitional Federal Government in a comprehensive approach to the piracy problem. This would include capacity-building of the security sector through military training and the provision of specialized skills in urban combat and communications.[19] The same need for a comprehensive approach is true for illegal migration. While NATO member states might be tempted to search for military solutions to strengthen "fortress Europe", e.g. through forward screening and military patrolling of the Mediterranean Sea, this is not enough. Migrants are both a political and economic phenomenon and have their origins in weak state structures, inadequate governance and lack of welfare provisions in the country of origin. Again, strengthening institutions and capacity-building would be more sustainable, durable, and cost-effective policies for NATO than the securitization of illegal migration.

Third, NATO should care about fragile and failed states because it is likely that NATO will be conducting future peacekeeping operations in failed states. This represents then a future operational challenge to NATO in order to effectively perform these missions. While the focus of NATO's strategy should be on conflict prevention, the need for intervention through peacekeeping and stability operations cannot be ruled out, and NATO is likely to take on these peacekeeping missions on a case by case basis. Indeed, NATO already recognizes the criticality of conflict prevention. It needs to go a step further and seek to prevent state failure also.

This will represent a challenge for NATO as it engages operationally with states in other world regions; it will have to deal with different ideologies, religions, cultures, ethnic and tribal structures, or indeed with other regional institutions. The nascent cooperation of NATO with the African Union (AU) on Sudan and Somalia, or the initiated dialogue with the League of Arab States (LAS), are examples of what could become a "partnership of partnerships" for NATO. A functional form

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[19] Somalia Security Sector Assessment (2010).

of cooperation among regional groupings (and not just states) aimed at leveraging capabilities to address insecurities and instability and to shouldering them jointly would help to prevent the need for NATO to engage in more costly interventions later on. As NATO is likely to engage with other regional organizations in the future, like the AU and the LAS, this will bring additional legitimacy and political support. These joint missions will most probably become routine matters in international peacekeeping as they provide a mechanism for burden sharing. They require from NATO awareness of state weakness and failure in other parts of the world, cultural understanding, and a policy of conflict prevention through regional engagement.

It may seem counter-intuitive, but to provide security more effectively within the territorial boundaries of its member states NATO needs to look at security beyond the Euro-Atlantic area. As many fragile and failed states are precisely located outside of Europe, and particularly in Africa and the Middle East, NATO needs to monitor security developments in these countries and reach out to them through dialogue. In practical terms, NATO needs to put its emphasis on prevention of state failure and not on intervention to fight the symptoms of failed states. This prevention can be achieved through intensified cooperation with partner countries that are of strategic value to NATO in order to strengthen their institutions and capacities. NATO's engagement in Afghanistan, the maritime operation in Somalia and possible future operations all point towards a rethinking of when interventions should occur, what should be rebuilt and what NATO can do in the process of preventing or responding better to the problem of fragile and failed states.

The shifting focus on state intervention

So far I have highlighted the fact that fragile and failed states are a threat both to NATO and to the international community as a whole. This section will show that fragile and failed states have come to dominate the agenda of the international community in recent years. They are no longer seen purely as a security threat to their own populations but rather as a challenge to an increasingly liberal world order and to international peace and security. The international community has resorted more and more often to interventions in post-conflict situations in order to address this challenge.

Developments in the 1990s in Rwanda, Somalia and Kosovo have shifted the focus to the humanitarian dimension to allow acts of intervention in another state with the purpose of protecting individuals against gross violations of human rights, such as slavery or genocide. Humanitarian interventions have come to be

seen as legitimate policy options for the international community, while nonetheless adhering to the general norm of non-intervention enshrined in the UN Charter.[20] Interventions, even if humanitarian in nature, cause profound ruptures in state-building processes. Interventions are traumatic even in cases where the state has already failed. Prevention of state failure would certainly be less disruptive. The need to assess the impact of interventions is hence paramount, given that intervention often means becoming part of the local predicament. The international responsibility to protect[21] must be seen in all its amplitude: it demands time and consumes resources of both target state and intervening organizations and it leaves no room for an easy exit strategy.

Decisions before intervention should therefore depend, to some extent, on prospects for institution-building after intervention.[22] In order to avoid pathological deformations caused by international interventions, and in order to build self-sustaining structures of political authority after intervention, an estimation of this probability prior to the intervention seems of paramount importance. The debate on humanitarian intervention has brought forward a renewed discussion of the concept of sovereignty. Both the Report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty[23] and the Kosovo Report[24] explicitly maintained the concept of sovereignty as the cornerstone of the present international system and tried to strengthen the sovereignty of states. The ICISS report proposed to shift the focus from absolute sovereignty to sovereignty as responsibility:

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[20] In Chapter 7 of this Forum Paper, Sarah Sewall argues that military doctrine and operational preparedness has lagged behind international legal developments in responding to cases of mass atrocities and genocide.

[21] In 2000, at the UN Millennium Summit, an independent International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) was established. A year later, the Commission produced a report entitled *The Responsibility to Protect* (ICISS, 2001) which stressed that state sovereignty implied responsibility and that where a population was suffering serious harm, as a result of internal war, insurgency, repression or state failure, and the state in question was unwilling or unable to halt or avert it, then the principle of non-intervention had to yield to the international responsibility to protect. Since its publication, the responsibility to protect was incorporated into the final document of the 2005 World Summit, as well as into Security Council Resolution 1674 on the protection of civilians in conflict, and can thus be seen as a new norm in the area of international peace and security.

[22] Robert O. Keohane, "Political Authority After Intervention: Gradations of Sovereignty" in J. L. Holzgrefe and Robert O. Keohane (eds.), *Humanitarian Interventions*, p. 276, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

[23] ICISS, *The Responsibility to Protect: Report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty. Research, Bibliography, Background*. Ottawa: International Development Research Centre, 2001.

[24] IICK, *The Kosovo Report: Conflict, International Response, Lessons Learned. Report of the Independent International Commission on Kosovo*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

"These approaches all see the basis for sovereignty shifting from the absolute rights of state leaders to respect for the popular will and internal forms of governance based on international standards of democracy and human rights. . . . On a scale of values the sovereignty of a state does not stand higher than the human rights of its inhabitants."[25]

According to this reading, sovereignty is no longer sacrosanct, but bound to performance and international criteria. Sovereignty is no longer seen as a protection for authoritarian rulers against non-interference but seen as entailing responsibilities towards the population. These sovereign responsibilities rest primarily with the nation state but can, when that state is unable or unwilling to shoulder them, fall into the hands of the international community. Some authors have therefore argued that sovereignty should be unbundled.[26] Drawing on the work of Stephan Krasner,[27] who has detailed various facets of sovereignty (international legal, domestic and Westphalian sovereignty), an argument is made that in fragile and failed states towards which humanitarian interventions are directed, a focus on domestic and legal sovereignty seems more important than Westphalian sovereignty.[28] In others words, there is a right to care about developments in another country, as Bernard Koucher's famous right to monitor and his obligation to be concerned (*devoir d'ingérence*) put it.[29] Also, interventions in post-conflict situations remain valid policy options to address threats emanating from insecurities, massive human rights violations and genocide. This understanding of sovereignty as reflecting performance criteria can be seen as a twofold track: the target state retains 'its' sovereignty as long as these performance criteria are met; otherwise, international actors take over this role for a transitional period.

The international responsibility to care and to intervene (if necessary) thus

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[25] ICISS, *The Responsibility to Protect: Report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty. Research, Bibliography, Background*, p. 11, Ottawa: International Development Research Centre, 2001.

[26] Robert O. Keohane, "Political Authority After Intervention: Gradations of Sovereignty." In: J. L. Holzgrefe and Robert O. Keohane (eds.), *Humanitarian Interventions*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 275-298, 2003; Rolf Schwarz and Oliver Jütersonke, "Divisible Sovereignty and the Reconstruction of Iraq" in *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 26(4/5), pp. 649-665, 2005.

[27] Stephan D. Krasner, *Sovereignty: Organized Hypocrisy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999.

[28] Robert O. Keohane, "Political Authority After Intervention: Gradations of Sovereignty" in J. L. Holzgrefe and Robert O. Keohane (eds.), *Humanitarian Interventions*, p. 276, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

[29] Bernard Kouchner, *Le Malheur des Autres*. Paris: Editions Odile Jacob, 1991.

needs to start with a new understanding of sovereignty: a constitutional one. Such an understanding proposes a division of sovereignty in the international realm based on constitutional principles, just as in the domestic realm. Some authors have rightly asked why such an understanding still seems unthinkable: "Why cannot a division be made on a basis of vesting part of the whole of sovereignty exclusively in one public agency and the rest of that whole in another agency?"[30] and NATO could certainly be one of these public agencies that fulfill sovereign functions for a limited period, as has done the United Nations in Transitional authorities in East Timor and Kosovo.[31] Similarly, other authors have spoken of a possible "redistribution of sovereignty" to non-state actors[32] and the debates about engaging moderate Taliban in Afghanistan or Sunni tribes in Iraq to bring them into the peaceful political process seem to point in this direction.[33] In view of the debates about the privatization of security in the context of state reconstruction, some skepticism might be warranted in this regard. But there seems to be a clear tendency and willingness to sub-contract sovereign functions to non-state actors, as the example of Blackwater in Iraq highlights. That a fundamental rethinking of sovereignty is urgent and paramount is highlighted by the tensions inherent in the current international system between the promotion of "quasi civilizatory" goals and purposes – such as the promotion of human rights and social progress beyond national borders – and the principle of sovereign equality of states.[34]

The debate about humanitarian interventions, the willingness of the international community to shoulder responsibilities, and the changing notions of sovereignty show that a shift in the international order has occurred. Today, fragile and failed states are no longer exclusively perceived as a security threat to their populations but also as a challenge to international peace and security. International developments since 9/11 and in Afghanistan have further tilted the balance towards the latter. Whether this renewed preoccupation with fragile and failed states will shift the focus of international activities from intervention to prevention remains unclear.

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[30] Hideaki Shinoda, *Re-examining Sovereignty: From Classical Theory to the Global Age,* p. 69, Houndmills: Macmillan, 2000.

[31] Richard Caplan, *International Governance of War-Torn Territories: Rule and Reconstruction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005; and Simon Chestermann, *You the People. The United Nations, Transitional Administration, and State-Building*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.

[32] Zaki Laïdi, *Adieu Bodin? Souveraineté et mondialisation. Leçons inaugurales de la séance d'ouverture de l'année académique 2002–03 [Goodbye Bodin? Sovereignty and Globalization: Inaugural Lecture for the Start of the Academic Year 2002–03]*, p. 12, Geneva: Graduate Institute of Development Studies, 2003.

[33] Oren Barak, "Dilemmas of Security in Iraq" in: *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 38(4), pp. 455-475, 2007.

[34] Roland Paris, "International Peacebuilding and the 'Mission Civilisatrice'" in *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 28(4), pp. 637–656, 2002.

What is clear is that the debate has already shifted from intervention to post-conflict peacebuilding measures, as NATO's commitment in Afghanistan and the United Nations' engagement in East Timor, West Africa and the Balkans demonstrate.

Post-conflict state-building: what to rebuild?

Once a state has failed it becomes the highest priority to reestablish order and to reestablish the state's capacity to function and to perform properly. As we have seen, fragile and failed states are not only characterized by lack of performance and governance failures but often also by widespread violence and conflict. When such a situation of conflict has been stabilized, either through outside intervention or through a brokered peace deal, and when armed violence has ceased, new challenges arise. In post-conflict situations, three elements represent the core challenges for rebuilding a functioning state and for strengthening society. These are security, welfare and representation. Despite a long line of antecedents, building a state by way of external imposition is a difficult task. The tripartite distinction serves to highlight the core problems of post-conflict state-building. These issue-areas do not exist in a void and are not created ex nihilo. They are closely interconnected, in some cases reinforcing and in others hindering one another (see table 1). Security stands apart as it is a precondition for both welfare and representation:

> "The value of security comprises the protection of physical existence against internal and external threats. In its internal dimension it borders on the domain of rule in which opportunities for exercising freedom and for political participation are allocated among individuals. These secure the preservation of the physical existence of the individual and serve its advancement [respectively]. With regard to material needs, the latter is provided for in the domain of economic well-being, by means of the allocation of economic gains as well as opportunities for achieving such gains."[35]

With regard to welfare, it can be noted that an increase in welfare reduces conflicts externally and provides the necessary resources to provide security within the state. Furthermore, it increases the capacity and propensity

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[35] Ernst-Otto Czempiel, *Internationale Politik: Ein Konfliktmodell [International Politics: A Model for Conflict]* (Paderborn: Schöningh/UTB, 1981), p. 198.

for political participation[36], prolongs the life expectancy of democracies[37] and thus ultimately affects the representation function of states. While there might be nuanced disagreement as to whether representation is only adequately fulfilled in liberal democracies or also in other political systems[38], the real nexus lies on how individual rights, civil rights, citizenship laws and minority rights are guaranteed within a state. Promoting democracy can thus be an effective strategy of conflict prevention. In fact, the 1997 U.S. National Security Strategy recognized explicitly that democracy is a means to stabilize states and pacify regions[39]. Promoting the representation function of states in the context of post-conflict state-building can thus effectively focus on democracy-promotion. But it must go beyond a simple support for elections[40] and focus on the genuine characteristics of democracy, such as respect for human rights, the existence of civil and political rights, and the principles of rule of law. Representative democracy thus includes not only regular elections, but also meaningful and extensive competition in those elections, a highly inclusive level of political participation and a level of civil and political liberties sufficient to ensure the integrity of political competition and participation.[41] Promoting representation in society thus includes assistance in constitution-drafting, capacity-building in creating accountable government, overcoming social divisions through reconciliation and education of citizens in peace and justice, building a genuine political community through a new social contract.

In that reading, representation allows for the non-violent resolution of conflicts domestically. It also allows for long-term peaceful external relations between

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[36] Seymour Martin Lipset, "Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy" in *American Political Science Review,* Vol. 53, No. 1, pp. 69-105, 1959.

[37] Adam Przeworski, Michael E. Alvarez, José Antonio Cheibub and Fernando Limongi, *Democracy and Development: Political Institutions and Well Being in the World, 1950–1990*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

[38] According to Juan Linz's classical definition of authoritarian states, authoritarian political systems allow for "limited political pluralism". One might hence deduce that representation also occurs in authoritarian political systems but that it remains reserved for a small elite. It is thus only partial representation and not comprehensive representation that includes all of the population. See Juan J. Linz, "Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes" in Nelson Polsby and Fred Greenstein (eds.), *Handbook of Political Science, Vol. III*. Reading: Addison Wesley, p. 264, 1975.

[39] United States, *A National Security Strategy for a New Century*. Washington, D.C., 1997.

[40] Christopher A. Jennings, "The Goldilock Choice" in Christopher M. Schnaubelt (ed.), *Counterinsurgency: the challenge for NATO strategy and operations*, NATO Defense College, NDC Forum Paper, no. 11, pp. 73-93, 2009.

[41] Juan J. Linz, Larry Diamond and Seymour Lipset, *Democracy in Developing Countries, Vol. II, Africa*. Boulder: Westview, p. xvi, 1988.

states and regions, as affirmed by research on the "democratic peace"[42]. Furthermore, representation contributes to optimal solutions of redistribution problems within society and the state[43]. In its relation to welfare, adequate representation promotes economic growth and social justice[44], attracts more foreign direct investment and makes aid more effective[45]. All of these elements of welfare are of course long-term goals and prophylactic in nature and should thus be reinforced in order to strengthen governance and state performance in fragile states irrespective of whether this occurs in a situation of already failed state, in post-conflict environments or in order to avoid fragile states from failing. The interdependent nature of the three core state functions is summarized and illustrated in table 1.

Table 1: The interdependence of security, welfare and representation

Impact on Condition	Security	Welfare	Representation
Security		Security (peace, monopoly of force, secure property rights) is a necessary condition for welfare.	Security (peace, monopoly of force) is a necessary condition for democratic representation.
Welfare	Welfare reduces conflicts and provides the necessary resources to produce security.		Welfare increases the capacity and propensity for political participation and prolongs the life expectancy of democracies.

[42] Michael E. Brown, Sean M. Lynn-Jones and Steven E. Miller (eds.), *Debating the Democratic Peace*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996.

[43] Carles Boix, *Democracy and Redistribution*, Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

[44] Robert J. Barro, *Determinants of Economic Growth: A Cross-Country Empirical Study,* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, pp. 49-87, 1997; Adam Przeworski, Michael E. Alvarez, José Antonio Cheibub and Fernando Limongi, *Democracy and Development: Political Institutions and Well Being in the World, 1950–1990,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

[45] Nathan M. Jensen, "Democratic Governance and Multinational Corporations: Political Regimes and Inflows of Foreign Direct Investment", *International Organization* Vol. 57, No. 3, pp. 587-616, 2003; Stephen Kosack, "Effective Aid: How Democracy Allows Development Aid To Improve Quality of Life", *World Development* Vol. 31, No. 1, pp. 1-22, 2003.

Representation	Representation allows for peaceful external relations and domestically for the non-violent resolution of conflicts.	Representation promotes economic growth and social justice.
		Representation attracts more FDI and makes aid more effective.
	Representation offers optimal solutions to redistribution and thus contributes to stability	

Historical studies have shown that the evolution of these core functions in modern states took centuries in Europe. Furthermore, it has been shown that violence played an integral part in this process.[46] An understanding of this process teaches that it was organically driven by local actors. Beyond this, more fundamental questions about what represents a "normal" process of state-building may be posed. Is there an inevitable process of European state-building towards which all states drive? How universal is state-building in view of rampant cases of state failure, not to mention the few cases of full-blown state collapse? Why should European state institutions be built elsewhere? In fact, if one looks at the recent history of Afghanistan, no clear answers appear. Was Afghanistan ever a functional state[47] even before 9/11 or was there a real state-building project underway driven by the Taliban with the aim of creating an Islamic state?

In some ways, the state-building process in Afghanistan under Taliban rule even resembled the violent processes of European state-building in the Middle Ages.[48] In Afghanistan it was of course not in conformity with the European notion of a liberal state and contrary to universal values of human rights, dignity and freedom, and of course, more importantly a threat to Western and NATO states. Since the fall of the Taliban in 2001 and the international efforts to re-build (or build) a functioning state in Afghanistan, with the primary responsibility of ISAF and NATO since 2003 but also with the assistance of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and the European Union (EU), some of the old difficulties

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[46] Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital and European States, AD 990-1990,*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990.

[47] Christopher Cramer and Jonathan Goodhand, "Try Again, Fail Again, Fail Better? War, the State and the "Post-Conflict" Challenge in Afghanistan" in *Development and Change*, Vol. 33(5), pp. 885–909, 2002.

[48] Charles Tilly, "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime" in Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol (eds.), *Bringing the State Back In.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 169-191, 1985.

and contradictions of state-building have re-emerged.

First of all is the perception of the role of the state in a non-Western context, in this case by the Islamic and tribal society of Afghanistan.[49] This perception is quite different from the Western point of view: Islam does not separate state and religion nor does it recognize distinct public and private spheres.[50] Moreover, Islamic principles demand a concrete role of the state in shaping society and in the conduct of public life. The Koran stipulates (in Sura 3:104 and Sura 9:71) the basic principle of commanding right and forbidding wrong which is to guide rulers, the state and individuals. Hence, in the perception of the Afghan people, Islam is part of the state and the state is part of Islam.

Secondly, there are contradictions with regard to a common understanding of what kind of state should be rebuilt and what functions it should primarily fulfill. While international discourse places great emphasis on human rights, surveys have shown that the Afghan people ask primarily for accelerated and effective government, both with regard to the disarmament of local armed groups but also with regard to judicial proceedings and effective central governmental authority.[51]

Finally there are contradictions with regard to the representative function of the state. The Afghan people have generally supported the state-building process through elections and participation in the Loya Jirga in 2003 and in the 2004 and 2005 elections was high; only in last year's elections has participation declined. At the same time, however, the standard of these local and parliamentary elections have remained far away from the creation of a democratically accountable state and in that sense might represent "a state of normality for many [post-conflict] societies".[52]

All of this highlights the fact that international efforts at state-building in post-conflict environments are not easy and that the task for NATO and the international community in failed state contexts is no easy one. What all these points highlight in essence is the imperative for NATO and the international community to

[49] Chris Mason, "A whole of reality solution for Afghanistan" in Christopher M. Schnaubelt (ed.), *Operationalizing a Comprehensive Approach in Semi-Permissive Environments*, NATO Defense College, NDC Forum Paper, no. 9, pp. 172-185, 2009.

[50] Abdulaziz Sachedine, *The Role of Islam in the Public Square: Guidance or Governance?* Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006.

[51] HRRAC, *Take the Guns Away – Afghan Voices on Security and Elections*. Kabul. Human Rights Research and Advocacy Consortium, 2004.

[52] Thomas Carothers, *Critical Mission. Essays on Democracy Promotion*. Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, p. 180, 2004. Similar observations apply also to elections in post-2003 Iraq and in 2009 in Iran.

focus on the creation of effective state structures rather than democratic polities.

How to avoid state failure? What can NATO do?

So far I have stressed the complexities of post-conflict situations which call for a deep understanding of social, historical and political dynamics. I have also shown that there are limits to a social engineering process that drives state-building externally and that there are no one-size-fits-all solutions to this. In this section, I take the argument to its logical conclusion and argue that this demands a shift in focus for NATO in its strategy to provide security for its member states. In addition to focusing only on fixing failed states, as currently in Afghanistan and Somalia, NATO ought to add prevention of state failure to its portfolio.

The responsibility to protect demands from NATO and the international community a duty to care about fragile states and in some cases to intervene; but it also demands a duty to monitor and to contribute to strengthening weak state structures and fostering regional stability schemes. Indeed, if NATO wants to contribute to expanding the zone of peace that characterizes its member states then it needs to address the problem of fragile states in its immediate neighborhood and help to bring stability to "zones of turmoil" in which a vicious cycle of poverty, violence and authoritarian rule exists and which have come to characterize many parts of the developing world.[53]

NATO, as an institution, must develop a capacity to monitor security developments in these parts of the world and ought to strengthen fragile states rather than mainly wait to act and plan operationally for interventions in the aftermath of state failure. Indeed, such a policy shift will be cost-efficient and resource-efficient and might address the wariness of many NATO nations towards operational engagement in out-of-area missions. A recent NATO study made this point quite explicit: "In the world of 2030, the inability to react with expediency and purpose to events both expected and unexpected will be costly."[54]

In view of this, I argue that NATO ought to focus on conflict prevention and capacity- building in the field of state-building rather than on intervention once

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[53] Max Singer and Aaron B. Wildavsky, *The Real World Order: Zones of Peace, Zones of Turmoil*. London: Chatham House Publications, 1993.
[54] NATO/ACT Multiple Futures Project, April 2009. Available at
http://www.act.nato.int/content.asp?pageid=994727583

states have already failed. This could be done through an early-monitoring centre, such as the World Bank's crisis prevention unit, or through a NATO-led Centre of Excellence which studies, analyzes and identifies possible cases of state failure and international and domestic developments contributing to the fragility and weakness of states, both in the Euro-Atlantic vicinity and beyond. This initiative does not need to be a stand alone effort by NATO but could be accomplished collaboratively with other institutions and organizations such as the EU, the OSCE or the World Bank.

Secondly, this could mean that NATO develops a broader regional policy and focus that looks at security beyond the Euro-Atlantic area. NATO has already partially addressed this issue by launching partnerships with some countries from North Africa, the Middle East and the Gulf region through the Mediterranean Dialogue (MD) and the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI). Both of these initiatives aim at strengthening and improving partner countries' capabilities to address common challenges and threats in coordination with NATO. The ICI aims specifically to "further contribute to long-term global and regional security and stability" while complementing other international efforts and through a renewed engagement by NATO with the Gulf region.[55] This recognition of complementarity highlights the comprehensive nature of an approach to stabilizing states and governance structures. Indeed, many of the capacity-building tasks needed to strengthen fragile states must include other international actors, such as the EU, the OSCE, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and the UNDP.

While NATO has recognized the need for a new NATO engagement towards regional security and stability, embodied in the MD and the ICI initiatives, more needs to be done. Failed states and declining welfare standards in fragile states have already lead to large-scale migration into the Euro-Atlantic area. As migration becomes more and more perceived as a security issue – linked to illegal trafficking in human beings and weapons – new challenges for NATO will arise. These challenges are best met by building up capacities in partner countries, be it through institution building, defense reform, or direct support and advice in security planning. These elements could deal with security-related aspects of state weakness.

There are obviously also areas of non-security related state weakness, which refer to the lack of development or uneven or unequal distribution of resources within

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[55] NATO, Istanbul Cooperation Initiative. Official Document, 2004. Available at
http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_21017.htm

a country. Many studies have been done on this[56], and while it seems obvious that this is a major factor contributing to fragile and failed states, it does not seem to be an area where NATO has a pronounced added-value. Other international institutions, such as the World Bank, the IMF, UNDP, the OECD or the EU, might be better placed to strengthen fragile states through economic and welfare measures.[57] The complexity of the phenomena of failed states becomes obvious also in this area.

Finally, and in concrete terms, NATO could strengthen and expand the existing programs of cooperation with the countries from the Mediterranean Dialogue (MD), with countries participating in the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI), and with countries such as Yemen, Iraq, Pakistan and Afghanistan, in the area of practical cooperation. Beyond the already existing programs, this could mean developing capacity-building in the area of soft security issues. This could mean functional security cooperation in the area of maritime security and a joint maritime monitoring mechanism, as well as capacity-building in the area of the protection of critical infrastructure in the field of energy, which is so crucial to states that rely on a single source of income. But it could also include the use of good offices for the resolution of conflicts, moral suasion, and defense reform.

Most important in this regard is security sector reform. This is arguably the area where NATO has gained enormous know-how over the past decades and the toolbox of NATO's security cooperation with countries from Eastern Europe testifies to this.[58] But security is also, as I have shown, the core state function that enables the other two, namely welfare and representation, to develop. It is thus in this field where capacity-building in fragile states should mainly occur. Extensive programs of security sector reform have been conducted in the countries neighboring NATO to its eastern frontier, notably the former Warsaw Pact states but also the countries in the Balkans.

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[56] See among many: Jonathan DiJohn. *Mineral-Resource Abundance and Violent Political Conflict: A Critical Assessment of the Rentier State Model*. London: Crisis States Program, 2002.

[57] Indeed this seems to reflect the view of some NATO member states that prefer strengthening these institutions and leaving to NATO the core military tasks of European defense. See Gisela Müller-Brandeck-Bocquet (2009), "France's New NATO Policy: Leveraging a new Realignment of the Alliance?" In: *Strategic Studies Quarterly*, Winter 2009, pp. 95-109; and France (2009), *The Strategic functions of the Atlantic Alliance*. French Food-For-Thought Paper. This might of course be an obstacle in NATO taking on the role of prevention of state failure, but the arguments in favor of such an expanded NATO role by far outweigh the more prudent positions. Not only is it in NATO's strategic interest, it also is a much cheaper and cost efficient policy than intervention post failure.

[58] Andrew Rathmell, "Reframing Security Sector Reform for Counterinsurgency: Getting the Politics Right", 2010. In Chapter 6 of this Forum Paper.

In some cases, the success of these measures has been quite far-reaching and former Warsaw Pact states have successfully transformed their national authority structures to reflect new and democratic standards[59] and many of them have become full members of NATO and the European Union. Obviously the "costs" of reform were counterbalanced with the "gain" in state capacity and strength and ultimately the "carrot" of NATO and EU membership. Essentially, the perceived value of a NATO security guarantee convinced states to accept the costs of political and economic reforms. While perhaps a long way down the road, a similar and complementary route should be taken with "buffer countries" in the vicinity of the North Atlantic area that stand between NATO and failed states.[60] The advantages and implications of expanding the NATO zone of peace further southwards and eastwards are obvious.

What I have shown so far is that it is imperative to understand state-building through the functions the state fulfills or ought to fulfill before states fail. The international community, and NATO in particularly, needs to know what to fix in cases of failed states, and what to strengthen in fragile states in the first place before failure occurs. If that lesson is learnt then presumably there would be fewer states for NATO and the international community to intervene. There are indeed a few examples of fragile states that have avoided state failure. Examples include Pakistan,[61] Cote d'Ivoire (saved through French intervention), the Solomon Islands (saved through Australian intervention), Indonesia, and Tajikistan.[62] Other examples include states from North Africa that have been exposed to domestic violence and terrorism, notably Algeria,[63] and recently Yemen.

Avoiding state failure is thus not a mission impossible. It is a matter of prevention rather than intervention. Where intervention has to occur the state

[59] Marybeth Peterson Ulrich, *Democratizing Communist Militaries. The Cases of the Czech and Russian Armed Forces*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1999.

[60] The term "buffer countries" is used here to describe the phenomena that most cases of state failure have occurred in Africa and in Asia and thus not in the immediate vicinity of NATO. There is however nothing that would guarantee that this will always remain so, and while the threat of state failure has so far been mostly indirect to NATO it might become direct over time. Given this, it seems even more necessary for NATO to focus on capacity-building and the promotion of regional security and stability in the countries immediately neighboring NATO, such as the states of North Africa, the Middle East and the Gulf region, as well as the countries in the Caucasus and Central Asia.

[61] Anita Singh, "Pakistan's Stability/Instability Complex" in *Strategic Studies Quarterly*, pp. 22-48, Winter 2009.

[62] Robert I. Rotberg (ed.), *When States Fail. Causes and Consequences*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 15, 2004.

[63] Azzedine Layachi, "Algeria: Reinstating the State or Instating a Civil Society?" in William I. Zartman (ed.), *Collapsed States: The Disintegration and Restoration of Legitimate Authority*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner. pp. 171-191, 1995.

reconstruction process is difficult and marred with contradictions, as seen from the examples of Afghanistan and Iraq. In all cases of post-conflict peacebuilding the relationship between external and local actors, between foreign and domestic solutions, and between outside and inside arrangements is a problematic one.

That NATO ought to focus more on prevention than on intervention is therefore clear. Whether NATO should also focus in prevention more on creating effective state structures or on selectively bringing about democratic processes remains an open question. Ultimately, however, NATO cannot be the global policeman or the global state-builder in all fragile states. It will have to act selectively and prioritize its engagement. Hence it seems advisable for NATO to concentrate its policy of prevention in the most critical and strategic regions for NATO, namely the Middle East, North Africa and the Gulf region, as well as Central Asia and the Caucasus.

Conclusion

State failure designates the consequences of a process of decay and decline of governance at the nation-state level. It is usually associated with a breakdown of the social contract that binds citizens to the state. The state loses its capacity to perform and to provide public goods equally to all of its populations. Citizens cease to trust in the governance of the state and fall back on communal identities that can provide security and economic opportunities and even representation. In such situations, insecurities and violence thrive and lead in some rare cases to the full-blown collapse of state institutions. *Either failure or collapse presents a possible incubator of direct threats to NATO.*

In this chapter, I have suggested that fixing failed states is not a mission impossible. State weakness has often been the key determinant in driving states towards failure and in some cases this has been exacerbated by weak economic performance, reliance on one natural resource and on policy decisions posing challenges to the governance of the state. But this can be addressed. It is in this aspect that NATO has a potential agenda. It would be an agenda to strengthen fragile states that are of strategic importance to NATO using political dialogue, military support and most importantly through capacity-building and security sector reform. In so doing, NATO can effectively contribute to regional security and stability in its immediate neighborhood and thus expand the zone of peace that characterizes NATO member states.

State failure represents indeed a threat (albeit so far still indirect in nature) to NATO member states because widespread violence in failed states threatens neighboring states and surrounding regions. It has so far been a rare phenomenon, but nothing indicates that cases of state failure will diminish over time and always occur in regions remote to the North Atlantic area. Hence, in order to avoid the effects of failed states becoming direct threats to NATO, I have argued in this chapter for a change in focus. Instead of dealing with the aftermaths of state failure, as in Afghanistan and Somalia, NATO would be better advised to focus on conflict prevention and capacity-building in the field of state-building rather than to wait and act only once states have already failed.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Challenges and prospects
for NATO "Complex Operations"

Benjamin Schreer

Against the background of recent operational experience in Iraq and Afghanistan, 'Complex Operations' has become an increasingly prominent concept in U.S. strategic debate to identify the characteristics of modern conflict, and to spell out the necessary adjustments for both the military and the civilian actors. Given that shifts in U.S. strategy over time also have an impact on NATO strategic debate and in the face of major difficulties to agree on and to execute strategy for the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan, a critical issue is whether or not the Alliance can 'do' Complex Operations. If operations such as in Afghanistan indeed will become the defining paradigm in modern conflict, NATO will have to undergo significant transformation of doctrine, education, training and equipment in order to adapt to this challenge. Should it choose not to do so or only in a piecemeal fashion, the Alliance's effectiveness in these types of operations will be severely limited, as will be NATO's ability to play a prominent role as a global provider of stability.

That said, the concept of Complex Operations displays some shortfalls. This article argues that the concept of 'Complex Operations' currently discussed might be of limited utility in a NATO context. It is beset by ambiguity, and raises more questions than it answers. While the difficulties of providing strategic clarity are already challenging enough at the national level alone, introducing such a concept on the multinational level of the Alliance is even more complicated. In fact, the concept of Complex Operations seems driven by a strong desire to persuade those parts of the U.S. civilian bureaucracy participating in contested state-building operations like Iraq and Afghanistan to cease their resistance to closer interagency coordination with the military. Prominent concepts such as "counterinsurgency" (COIN) or "irregular warfare" to describe the operational reality in Afghanistan have failed to receive sufficient support from the civilian actors.

"Selling" Complex Operations to skeptical NATO Allies will prove to be quite difficult. For NATO to embrace Complex Operations as a priority of its mission

spectrum, significant obstacles will need to be overcome. At the politico-strategic level, a focus on Complex Operations implies the continued willingness of Allies to engage in out-of-area operations. After the operation in Afghanistan, however, many European Allies will argue for a return to a less ambitious orientation towards Euro-Atlantic stability. Further, current definitions of Complex Operations include counterinsurgency and irregular warfare; both of which are highly contested within NATO. Consequently, many European Allies might well perceive this concept as old wine in new bottles, that is, American attempts to introduce counterinsurgency and irregular warfare through the backdoor. In addition, it will be difficult to derive concrete requirements for doctrinal development and force generation from the concept. To be fruitful in an alliance context, the concept of Complex Operations should provide more clarity about what it is and what it is not.

Complex Operations – How useful a concept?

In 1997, the US administration of President Bill Clinton released Presidential Decision Directive (PDD) 56, "Managing Complex Contingency Operations" on lessons to be learned from operations in Panama, Somalia, Haiti, and Bosnia. But only with the emergence of problems in current operations did the need to better prepare for such operations resurface in U.S. debate.[1] Faced with the complexities in Iraq and Afghanistan, U.S. strategic debate has revived the concept of 'Complex Operations' to describe operational realities for U.S. soldiers involved in these missions, and to provide recommendations on how to adapt both the military and the civilian bureaucracies to this challenge.

Already, some practical measures to introduce the concept of Complex Operations have been taken at the U.S. government level. The Department of Defense (DoD), with the support of the Department of State and USAID, has established the Center for Complex Operations (CCO). This center is meant to be a "developing network of civilian and military educators, trainers, and lessons learned practitioners dedicated to improving education and training for Complex Operations".[2] The National Defense University (NDU) has been particularly active in supporting debate on the concept. The CCO is located at Fort Lesley Mc Nair and is chaired by Hans Binnendijk, director of NDU's Center for Technology and National Security Policy. Binnendijk has long been an advocate for closer interagency interaction in

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[1] Hans Binnendijk and Patrick M. Cronin, "Through the Complex Operations Prism", in *Prism*, vol. 1, no. 1, p. 9, 12/2009.
[2] See *Center for Complex Operations* at http://ccoportal.org/ (last accessed January 29, 2010).

military operations. Under his guidance, NDU has published extensively on Complex Operations.[3] Finally, NDU recently launched *PRISM*, a Complex Operations journal chartered by CCO that is supposed to promote insights into a broad range of Complex Operations issues.[4]

'Complex Operations' is used as a collective term to describe the nature of current military operations such as in Afghanistan. A whole number of non-conventional military operational concepts are subsumed under the heading of Complex Operations. For CCO, Complex Operations include "stability and support operations, counterinsurgency, and irregular warfare".[5] A NDU publication sees Complex Operations as comprising "operations for stabilization and reconstruction, humanitarian and disaster relief, and irregular warfare and counterinsurgency".[6] However, the definition given for Complex Operations is a fairly simple one. Complex Operations, it is said, are "those operations that require close civil-military planning and cooperation in the field".[7]

On its part, while avoiding the term "Complex Operations", NATO for some time has identified the concept of a 'comprehensive approach' as the major requirement for conducting these types of operations. On a national level, Western states have discussed the need for 'whole-of-government approach' and for better 'interagency coordination'. But while the wisdom for closer planning and cooperation between the military and the civilian side is shared across the board, implementation of this concept has proven extremely difficult. This has also been true for NATO and its operation in Afghanistan. The ambiguity of the term has been one major problem. For example, there has been no agreed-upon definition for stabilization and reconstruction operations.[8] The problem of implementation will probably not disappear by (re-) introducing the term 'Complex Operations'.

Moreover, subsuming operations for stabilization and reconstruction, humanitarian and disaster relief, and irregular warfare and counterinsurgency under

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[3] Hans Binnendjik and Patrick Cronin (eds.), *Civilian Surge: Key to Complex Operations*, NDU Press: Washington, DC, 2009.

[4] *Center for Complex Operations* at http://ccoportal.org/prism, last accessed January 29, 2010.

[5] *Center for Complex Operations* at http://ccoportal.org/, last accessed January 29, 2010.

[6] "Executive Summary", Hans Binnendjik and Patrick Cronin (eds.), *Civilian Surge: Key to Complex Operations*, p. 1, NDU Press: Washington, DC, 2009.

[7] Binnendjik and Cronin, *Through the Complex Operations Prism*, p. 9.

[8] Brooke Smith-Windsor, "Hasten Slowly: NATO's Effects Based and Comprehensive Approach to Operations", *NATO Defense College Research Paper* no. 38, July 2008; Christopher M. Schnaubelt, "Complex Operations and Interagency Operational Art", in *Prism*, vol. 1, no. 1, p. 37, 12/2009.

the heading of Complex Operations also raises some other problems. While all of these types of operations require civil-military planning and cooperation, they also differ in important aspects. For example, civil-military planning for stabilization and support operations is quite different from interagency cooperation in irregular warfare or counterinsurgency given the nature of the conflict, degree of violent opposition, duration etc. Further, most academic writings on 'Complex Operations' place a major emphasis on improving capabilities for 'stabilization and reconstruction operations'. Irregular warfare and counterinsurgency are briefly mentioned but not dealt with in any more detail thereafter.[9]

The reasons for this 'benign neglect' of contentious operational concepts such as counterinsurgency in this context are partly to be found at the level of the U.S. bureaucracy. In the U.S., the civilian side has not bought into DoD driven concepts such as counterinsurgency and irregular warfare. Civilian players are reluctant to provide more resources to what they see as "militarized" concepts and to subordinate them under the dominant role of DoD. For example, while the State Department has published a *Government Counterinsurgency Guide*,[10] other civilian bureaucracies involved in these operations are still skeptical. Therefore, calls for the development of 'joint, interagency doctrine for Complex Operations'[11] foremost appear to be an attempt to minimize resistance within the US civilian bureaucracies by introducing a term that has a much more neutral connotation and thus might be more acceptable for these actors.

Further, parts of the U.S. strategic community seem to pursue the intention of placing 'stabilization and reconstruction operations' at the heart of the U.S. military non-conventional mission spectrum.[12] These advocates also point to an emerging "Complex Operations fatigue" in Washington and a tendency to "revert to more traditional roles".[13] Yet emphasizing stabilization and reconstruction as the core mission fails to win support of the military and other parts of the strategic expert community, given a very different operational reality in places like Afghanistan and Iraq. Subsuming the very different operational concepts of stabilization

[9] Examples include Hans Binnendjik and Patrick Cronin (eds.), *Civilian Surge: Key to Complex Operations* (NDU Press: Washington, DC, 2009); Binnendijk and Cronin, Through the Complex Operations Prism.

[10] U.S. State Department, *U.S. Government Counterinsurgency Guide*, Washington, DC: U.S. Department of State, January 2009.

[11] Binnendijk and Cronin, *Through the Complex Operations Prism*, p. 18.

[12] See also Hans Binnendijk and Stuart E. Johnson, *Transforming for Stabilization and Reconstruction Operations,* Center for Technology and National Security Policy, NDU: Washington, D.C., 2004.

[13] Binnendijk and Cronin, *Through the Complex Operations Prism*, p. 20.

and reconstruction, humanitarian and disaster relief, and irregular warfare and counterinsurgency under the catch phrase 'Complex Operations' might actually contribute to this fatigue. Like 'comprehensive approach' the term does not provide much clarity to the growing complexity of modern military operations. Indeed, the vagueness of the concept of Complex Operations seems to reflect the ongoing challenge for Western militaries and the strategic community to come to terms with a "lack of a coherent concept of war".[14]

As with 'comprehensive approach' the term 'Complex Operations' means different things to different people. While some academics, as mentioned above, focus on stabilization and reconstruction operations, military officers and other strategic experts focus on irregular warfare and counterinsurgency.[15] There is also a lack of support within the DoD for such an approach. For example, the new 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) Report published by DoD does not mention the concept of Complex Operations, but even so it assesses a scenario in which U.S. forces would focus on "counterinsurgency, stability, and counterterrorism operations".[16] The concept of Complex Operations, therefore, is not as widely accepted as its advocates assume. Highly likely, NATO will also find it difficult to agree on the meaning and implications of Complex Operations.

Complex Operations – A Case for NATO?

In the logic of supporters of the concept of Complex Operations, NATO's recent operational experience has demonstrated the need to readjust for this mission spectrum. Engagements in the Balkans and particularly in Afghanistan have required much better planning and coordination between the military and the civil actors involved in contested state-building. The Alliance has stressed the fact that a comprehensive approach is key for success of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan.[17] On paper, then, 'Complex Operations' seems to be an ideal concept for NATO to adopt. And in principle, NATO should be capable of transforming for Complex Operations given that in the past the Alliance has shown a remarkable ability to politically and militarily adjust to new challenges. A closer

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[14] David W. Barno, "Military Adaptation in Complex Operations", in *Prism*, no. 1, no. 1, p. 31, 12/2009.

[15] See the different emphasis of Binnendijk/Cronin and Barno.

[16] U.S. Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report*, p. 43 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, February 2010).

[17] North Atlantic Treaty Organization, *Bucharest Summit Declaration*, issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council on 3 April 2008, www.summitbucharest.ro/en/doc_201.html (last accessed February 2, 2010).

look, however, reveals that significant political challenges and issues of capability development would need to be overcome to make this happen. Also, it is highly likely that the aforementioned inherent problems of the concept will reduce acceptance in at least some parts of the Atlantic Alliance.

Options

NATO has at least three options for dealing with the concept of 'Complex Operations':

- **Option 1: avoidance**
  Allies could choose to disregard the concept of Complex Operations. The term would not be introduced on the political level and NATO would pursue policies that seek to limit the need for such types of operation. Engagement in contested nation-building projects such as in Afghanistan would be avoided. Attempts at the military level to better prepare for stabilization and reconstruction operations, humanitarian and disaster relief, counterinsurgency and irregular warfare would not meet with much support at the political level of the Alliance. There would be not much investment in strategy and capabilities for Complex Operations.

- **Option 2: piecemeal reform**
  Recognizing the need to improve capability in order to contribute to a comprehensive approach to modern operations, the Alliance would create institutional mechanisms to facilitate civil-military planning and cooperation. Likewise, there will be a development of joint doctrine for stabilization and reconstruction operations, humanitarian and disaster relief, counterinsurgency and irregular warfare – based on the lessons learned from Afghanistan and other recent missions. However, these initiatives will be largely bottom-up driven and will enjoy only half-hearted political support. For example, while doctrine for NATO counterinsurgency will be finalized, Allies such as Germany will be reluctant to endorse the political and military implications. Moreover, Allies will have to rely mostly on ad-hoc solutions for civil-military coordination in the field.

- **Option 3: retooling**
  In this scenario, NATO would fully embrace the concept of Complex Operations as one guiding future strategy, doctrine and force structure. The concept of Complex Operations would be introduced in NATO's new

strategic concept and the necessary changes would be spelled out. There would be radical restructuring of Alliance political and military capabilities, supported by both top-down and bottom-up initiatives. This would make a radically transformed NATO with a broad 'tool-box' for civil-military operations, including contested nation-building missions.

However, while NATO will not be able to avoid the topic of 'Complex Operations' altogether, it will not change its posture radically in in this direction. Instead, there probably will be piecemeal reforms in order to better adjust to the current operational realities.

Challenges

To make Complex Operations a top priority at the political and military level of NATO at least three requirements would need to be met. The first requirement would be a consensus among the Allies that Complex Operations constitute a major future task for the Alliance, and that consequently there is a need to reprioritize and rebalance tasks and capabilities. Second, there would need to be consensus and clarity on the characteristics and capability requirements of Complex Operations, including on contested concepts such as counterinsurgency and irregular warfare. Finally, political will would be required to invest significant political and financial resources in developing better capability for Complex Operations.

However, it is hard to see how all of these requirements can be fulfilled. First, it is far from clear that Allies will identify the need for making 'Complex Operations' a top priority for political and military deliberations. For many Allies there is not much reason to introduce yet another label on the political and military level of NATO, particularly one which seems largely driven by a desire to overcome U.S. civilian bureaucratic resistance. Comprehensive approach as the primary means to allow for improved civil-military planning and cooperation in the field has already been established, and the term and concept of 'Complex Operations' seems not to offer much added value. Moreover, the ISAF operation in Afghanistan seems to have demonstrated that it is neither unwillingness nor inability on the part of NATO to contribute to a comprehensive approach. Rather, civilian actors such as the European Union (EU), the United Nations (UN) and non-governmental institutions have failed to provide adequate resources, largely also because of deep-seated reservations about working with the military.

Further, there is no consensus within the Alliance that Complex Operations

will and should play a dominant role of NATO's future mission agenda. In fact, the Alliance of now 28 members has problems reaching consensus on a whole range of strategic issues, including the mission spectrum. In a 'multi-tier' Alliance,[18] member countries are at odds about where to focus NATO's energies. While the United States and others foresee the continuation of a global role including missions such as in Afghanistan, many European countries such as Germany and France advocate a much less ambitious role and a return to a focus on the stability of Europe and its immediate neighborhood. Finally, Eastern European members backed by Norway press for greater emphasis of NATO's force planning on traditional Article 5 contingencies for fear of a resurgent Russia.

Additionally, the impact of the Afghanistan operation on the Alliance should not be underestimated. The major problems experienced by NATO in defining a strategy for the ISAF operation will probably give most Allies even less of an appetite for engaging once again in long-term, sustained, contested state-building. On the contrary, it is highly likely that European Allies in particular will argue for a much less ambitious NATO agenda. Absent a dramatic event, the Alliance will need quite some time to recover politically and militarily from Afghanistan.[19] There already is a growing 'contested nation-building fatigue' in all NATO member states. In such a climate, attempts to introduce the term 'Complex Operations' at the political level of the Alliance would be challenging, also because the concept is directly related to the experiences in Afghanistan.

Some Allies will also see this concept as a threat to their intention to refocus NATO's political and military planning towards more traditional contingencies. Most European member states (but also parts of the U.S. establishment) will oppose any proposals for NATO to develop indigenous civilian capabilities for stabilization and reconstruction operations. In the past, efforts by the National Defense University to advocate the establishment of a *NATO Stabilization and Reconstruction Force*[20] failed in particular to convince European Allies. They fear unnecessary duplication with EU assets and are reluctant to assign an ever greater mission spectrum to NATO despite the fact that NATO-EU cooperation has stalled in the past mainly for non-

[18] See Timo Noetzel and Benjamin Schreer, "Does a multi-tier NATO matter? The Atlantic alliance and the process of strategic change", in *International Affairs*, vol. 85, no. 2, pp. 211-226, March 2009.

[19] Timo Noetzel and Benjamin Schreer, "NATO's Vietnam? Afghanistan and the Future of the Atlantic Alliance", in *Contemporary Security Policy*, vol. 30, no. 3, pp. 529-547, December 2009.

[20] Hans Binnendijk and Richard Kugler, "Needed – A NATO Stabilization and Reconstruction Force", in *Defense Horizons*, no. 45, September 2004, www.ndu.edu/ctnsp/DH_45.pdf, last accessed February 2, 2010.

related political reasons which are unlikely to be resolved any time soon.[21] Therefore, notwithstanding recent operational experience, support for the build-up of significant indigenous NATO capabilities in this area will remain low.

Finally, the ISAF operation in Afghanistan displays some of the inherent problems of the Complex Operations concept mentioned above. All members agree that a comprehensive approach is needed to prevail in the Afghan operation. All members would also define the mission as 'complex'. However, they differ on the nature of the operation. For most Allies, the ISAF mission has turned into a full-blown counterinsurgency operation. The COMISAF, General Stanley McChrystal, supported by the U.S. government, has called for NATO to overcome its many difficulties in conducting counterinsurgency operations. For him, and many others, joint civil-military planning and coordination (comprehensive approach) is key to success in such complex counterinsurgency operations.[22] In fact, NATO has huge difficulties formulating a strategy for counterinsurgency in Afghanistan. One major political challenge is that some Allies such as Germany contest the very notion that ISAF is conducting counterinsurgency, and prefer to stress the conduct of a stabilization and reconstruction operation. In general terms, the Atlantic Alliance finds it hard to agree on counterinsurgency or irregular warfare as a major priority for political and military planning.[23]

Consequently, the concept of 'Complex Operations' as discussed above will probably not resonate well within the Alliance. First, it does not provide more insight into the challenges of modern military operations. The need to prepare for complex civil-military operations using a comprehensive approach has long been recognized. Second, concepts such as counterinsurgency and irregular warfare are contested within the Alliance despite the fact that the operational reality in Afghanistan underscores the urgent need to prepare for those types of missions. Moreover, many allies will also be opposed to attempts to make stabilization and reconstruction operations NATO's major focus, also on the grounds that the Alliance is first and foremost based on Article 5, i.e. a system of collective defense. As a

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[21] Charles L. Barry, "Designing a Comprehensive International Approach", Hans Binnendjik and Patrick Cronin (eds.), *Civilian Surge: Key to Complex Operations*, pp. 273-294, NDU Press: Washington, DC, 2009; Brooke Smith-Windsor, "Hasten Slowly: NATO's Effects Based and Comprehensive Approach to Operations", *Research Paper n. 38*, NATO Defense College, Rome, July 2008.

[22] General Stanley A. Mc Chrystal, *COMISAF's Initial Assessment, Headquarters International Security Assistance Force*, Kabul, Afghanistan, August 30, 2009.

[23] Benjamin Schreer, "NATO and Counterinsurgency: Lessons from Afghanistan", Christopher M. Schnaubelt (ed.), C*ounterinsurgency: the challenge for NATO strategy and operations*, NDC Forum Paper no. 11, pp. 43-57, Rome, NATO Defense College, November 2009.

result, the approach to subsume these types of operations under the collective term 'Complex Operations' will likely meet with opposition inside the Alliance given the lack of political consensus that these operations constitute an integral part of NATO's mission spectrum. Political will to invest significant resources in this area will remain low.

Conclusions

The question must be asked if the concept of Complex Operations introduced at the beginning of this article has much utility for the Atlantic Alliance. As shown, it suffers from some ambiguity and it seems largely directed at dissolving internal struggles within the U.S. bureaucratic apparatus involved in contested nation-building missions such as Afghanistan, in order to better prepare for civil-military interaction in the field. In its current form it threatens to overburden an Atlantic Alliance that already struggles to reach consensus on a number of strategic issues. In fact, attempts to introduce the concept could have the unintended consequence of splitting the Allies even further when it comes to mission priorities and capability development.

The new strategic concept currently being developed will serve as a good indicator of how much NATO Allies agree on the future operational environment and the mission spectrum. The increasing trend of Alliance members with very different strategic visions on the future of NATO will lead to a document that avoids the most contentious issues. The experts' group report lead by former U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright on NATO's new Strategic Concept published in May 2010 demonstrates that Allies are wary of another involvement in an Afghan-type of operation.[24]

Thus, integral parts of the Complex Operations approach will probably not be touched upon, and if so not in great detail. Counterinsurgency and irregular warfare will hardly be identified as priorities for political and military planning. Further, the document will very probably not foresee the development of indigenous capability for stabilization and reconstruction operations along the lines proposed by U.S. think tanks. Rather it will state that NATO should improve its ability to cooperate closely with civilian actors in order to prevail in Complex Operations, i.e.

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[24] NATO 2020: *Assured Security; Dynamic Engagement,* Analysis and Recommendations by the Group of Experts on a new Strategic Concept for NATO, 17 May 2010, http://www.nato.int/strategic-concept/index.html, date accessed 17 May 2010.

to contribute more effectively to a comprehensive approach.

It is the author's assessment that NATO will adopt only a piecemeal approach to 'Complex Operations'. Most progress will have to be made below the political level. One is in the area of writing and updating doctrine for the various types of operations that fall into the category of Complex Operations. A difficult area will be capability development. Only a few members will invest substantial resources in the development of military capability for counterinsurgency and irregular warfare. Thus, should NATO choose to conduct such operations in the future, few states will be willing and able to provide many troops for such missions. As a result, NATO's capability in the twin areas of counterinsurgency and irregular warfare will remain limited.

As already mentioned, Allies will be reluctant to develop indigenous stabilization and reconstruction forces. Instead, NATO will continue to look for ways to improve relationships with the UN, the EU and other regional institutions in this area. As regards humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, NATO experience in the recent past has shown that the Alliance can react rather quickly and efficiently, and on an ad-hoc basis, if called to action. Elements of the NATO Response Force (NRF) were deployed to contribute to disaster relief after the Pakistani earthquake in 2005. Further, NATO's Multinational Strategic Airlift Capability (SAC) conducted a humanitarian relief mission to Haiti in the beginning of 2010 after a devastating earthquake hit the island.

In the end, turning NATO into an organization optimized for 'Complex Operations' at all levels would require a new consensus among its members that the Alliance has to be transformed dramatically for a new set of global challenges, requiring multiple operations in the context of contested nation-building. Yet, such a major change in thinking on the strategic purpose of the Atlantic Alliance is unlikely to emerge in the near term future. As a result, making Complex Operations a key NATO concept will at best be a very long-term project.

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The views expressed in these chapters are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official positions of the NATO Defense College, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, or any of the institutions or governments represented by the contributors.

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Previously, Pam was an international finance lawyer with an international firm in New York, where he advised governments on resolving sovereign debt crises. Pam was also a visiting lecturer at Yale Law School, where he co-taught the course on international business transactions.

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Andrew Rathmell is a director of Libra Advisory Group, which provides development, governance and security sector assistance in fragile states worldwide. Andrew's career has spanned the UK and U.S. governments, think-tanks, universities and project delivery and journalism in conflict-affected environments. Prior to joining Libra, Andrew served with the UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office's Strategy Unit; as the chief planner for the Coalition Provisional Authority in Iraq; as director of an advisory programme in the Iraqi interior ministry; on a World Bank review of Governance capacity building in Iraq; and as an advisor to the UK's Post-Conflict Reconstruction Unit.

Andrew's earlier career included leading RAND Europe's Defence and Security research programme; and lecturing in War Studies at King's College London. His early career included Research Fellowships at Exeter and with NATO, editing the *Gulf States Newsletter* and working as a journalist.

While his recent work has focused on developing strategies to resolve conflicts and stabilise fragile states, Andrew's research and consultancy career began with a focus on Middle Eastern security issues and terrorism and has included applied analysis in areas such as space-based surveillance, cyber-security, and intelligence management.

Andrew holds a PhD from London University and an MA from Balliol College Oxford. He also studied at George Washington University and in Damascus. In 2004, he was awarded the United States Medal for Valor. His publications include books and articles on Middle Eastern security and politics, security sector reform, intelligence, and risk management.

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Dr. Schnaubelt has published numerous articles on security issues and interagency and civil-military operations; the most recent are "Whither the RMA?" in the Autumn 2007 issue of *Parameters*, NDC Research Paper 40 "What NATO can learn from "the surge" in Iraq," and an Op-Ed in the *International Herald Tribune* on "Lessons of Iraq."

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Ms. Schneider is the principal policy advisor to the Deputy Under Secretary of the Army on matters affecting Army Stability Operations and Irregular Warfare.

She has spent 25 years as an officer in the Army Reserves and served two tours on active duty in Iraq.

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She is a Fellow at the Institute of Capital and Creativity (IC2) in Austin Texas, a member of Entovation International, and volunteers on the Board of Directors for the Orphan Foundation. Ms Schneider started her own independent consulting firm in 1998 focusing on international business and knowledge innovation strategies.

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Dr Benjamin Schreer is currently the Deputy Director of the Aspen Institute Germany. Prior to his appointment, he was a research fellow in the research unit "Atlantic and European Security" at the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, SWP) in Berlin (2003-2008), and co-leader of a research group in the Centre of Excellence at Constance University (2008-2009). He is also an associate fellow at the Norwegian Institute for Defense Studies (NIDS) in Oslo. He received his doctoral degree in Political Science from Kiel.

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He has published widely on state-building and Middle Eastern security. His publications have appeared in the *Review of International Political Economy*, *Security Dialogue*, *Third World Quarterly*, *International Journal of Human Rights*, *Cooperation and Conflict*, *Journal of Mediterranean Studies* and *Journal of North African Studies*.

Sarah Sewall

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During the Clinton Administration, Sewall served as the first Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Peacekeeping and Humanitarian Assistance. From 1983-1996, she served as Senior Foreign Policy Advisor to Senate Majority Leader George J. Mitchell. Before joining Harvard, Sewall was at the American Academy of Arts and Sciences where she edited *The United States and the International Criminal Court* (2002).

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