

THE ARMY'S ROLE IN NATION BUILDING

BY

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As the US prepares for changes in the national security strategic vision that comes with any transition of presidential administrations, it must examine what the military's role in nation building should be and how to execute this task. The tasks associated with nation building are part of the Army's core competencies under the auspices of 'Stability Operations', and are now cited in doctrine in the recently published Field Manual 3-07. The US has been executing nation building tasks in Iraq for the past four years as part of Stabilization, Security, Transition and Reconstruction Operations. With resources shifting to Afghanistan, the US has a nation building model from Iraq that could be applicable using the same lines of operation of governance, rule of law, economics and security. It's critical that policy makers understand the military capabilities and limitations when assigning it as the lead for nation building.

THE ARMY'S ROLE IN NATION BUILDING

With a new Presidential administration, and as the US prepares for changes in the national security strategic vision, it must examine what the military's role in nation building should be and how to execute this task. The tasks associated with nation building are already established as part of the Army's core competencies under the auspices of 'Stability Operations', and are now cited in doctrine in the recently published Field Manual 3-07. Additionally, the US military has been executing nation building tasks in Iraq and Afghanistan for more than four years since it transitioned from Major Combat Operations to Stabilization, Security, Transition and Reconstruction Operations. The extended time committed to these dual theaters of war have adversely impacted the ability of the U.S. military to execute all missions called for in the National Security Strategy and National Military Strategy. Given the time, manpower and other resources that have been dedicated to nation building as part of Stabilization, Security, Transition and Reconstruction Operations, strategic planners must question whether the US is being successful and, if so, is this current model applicable as a template for success in future nation building missions for the military.

This paper will examine nation building in Iraq utilizing the different areas of Baghdad and Northern Iraq at different points in time during the conflict. The examination will discuss environmental differences, varying lines of operations applicable to nation building, evaluate the measures of effectiveness used and assess the nesting of military and interagency efforts through implementation of the Provincial Reconstruction Teams.

History of Nation Building for the US Military

Nation building conducted by military forces is best captured within the context of stability operations and support operations. The primary services used for such missions have historically been the Army and Marine Corps because of their force structure and rapid deployment capabilities. The Marine Corps conducted nation building missions in Central America and the Caribbean in the early 20th century with their ability to project the requisite force from Navy vessels. In recent history both the Army and Marines have been used although, given the larger force structure and wider ranging skill set availability in the Army, it has been the force of choice for longer duration nation building requirements. Recent examples of the Marines being utilized for nation building include Lebanon in 1982, Somalia in 1992, and most recently in Anbar Province, Iraq.

Internationally, nation building has been a part of military operations dating back to the mid-20th century, albeit primarily as a post-conflict priority. United Nations records indicate it has undertaken more than 60 peacekeeping missions and negotiated over 170 settlements that have ended regional conflicts since 1948. Nation building as part of peace keeping operations began to shift toward pre-conflict efforts in the early 1990's as a tool to help stabilize fragile governments. As of the summer of 2007, the UN had various peacekeeping missions, with nation building focus, ongoing throughout Africa, Europe, the Middle East, Asia and the Americas.¹ In recent history the US military has spent as much time helping countries restore basic services to their people through nation building efforts after major combat operations as on the conflicts themselves. Examples include both Europe and Japan after World War II, Korea, Panama, Haiti and, most recently, Iraq and Afghanistan.

In the post-Cold War era, peace building, “along with preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peacekeeping...(were) identified as one of a series of instruments in the UN’s toolkit to respond to conflicts...”² Despite the fact that the UN Charter stipulates that it will not interfere in matters of domestic jurisdiction, the international community began to view early intervention into a country’s affairs as a legitimate course of action. The US, not only as a member of the UN Security Council so beholden to any UN resolutions, but also in a position to provide the unique nation building capability anywhere on the globe, was inextricably linked to these nation building developments by the UN. Nation building is viewed by the international community as necessary to set conditions for international development and prosperity. The effect of globalization is that, “peace (nation) building was seen as going beyond state centric conceptions of realpolitik...”³ This strategic shift within the last 15 years has been expansive. The definition and measures of effectiveness for nation building have gone from post-conflict actions to prevent a recurrence of conditions that led to conflict, to actions focused on setting conditions to prevent conflict. Although, there is no agreed upon definition, policy, doctrine or force to accomplish the task.

Despite the civilian agency lead for nation building, the military remains the best resourced to, at a minimum, accomplish the initial associated tasks. Critical to any nation building task is a level of security required as a pre-condition for success. The US military has the forces to keep warring factions separated or for use as force protection in conjunction with nation building tasks.

Within the US, the current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan have brought to the forefront the challenges of conducting stability and nation building operations in a hostile

or semi-hostile environment. Many recent studies, to include the Defense Science Board (2004), RAND Corporation (2003 and 2007) and the Army Chief of Staff's various working groups (2005), sought to determine the best strategic approach to nation building within peace operations as joint, interagency and multinational endeavors. In 2004, the Secretary of State activated the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization to enable the US, "...to respond to crisis involving failed, failing and post-conflict states and complex emergencies." ⁴ Simultaneously to the President issuing National Security Defense Directive, 44, in December 2005, which provided the State Department with the mandate to coordinate nation building efforts, the Secretary of Defense issued DOD Directive 3000.05 in November 2005, which stated that, "stability operations are a core U.S. military mission...comparable to combat operations and to be explicitly addressed and integrated across all DOD activities..." ⁵ DODD 3000.05 also stressed that stability operations, through nation building, have more of an enduring impact toward national security objectives than traditional combat operations. Although the current National Security Strategy dated March 2006 is overwhelmingly threat based, it does include an element with nation building implications stating, "the goal of our statecraft is to help create a world of democratic, well governed states that can meet the needs of their citizens..." ⁶ With the publication of these policy directives, the US formally expressed its beliefs and efforts, along with the international community, that nation building focused on pre-conflict, conflict management and post-conflict must be a priority for future resources.

Following policy, Army and joint doctrine includes nation building as a key component of stability operations and support operations within Military Operations

Other than War. These actions may take place in concert with major combat operations or smaller scale contingencies and peacetime military to military engagements in support of national policy objectives. US doctrine stipulates that these missions are primarily joint, interagency and associated with NGOs.⁷

Despite the limited nation building policy guidance in the NSS, DODD 3000.05 prompted the Army to publish Field Manual 3.07, Stability Operations, in October 2008, which incorporates aspects of nation building requirements. This doctrinal development puts stability operations on par with offensive and defensive operations as Army core competencies. In effect, the national command authority now has the means available to quickly initiate nation building efforts, either unilaterally or as part of a coalition. Although, initiating these operations is far different than being successful at them, which requires interagency proponentcy.

With the current under-resourcing of the State Department and other agencies that have nation building responsibilities such as USAID, any nation building efforts in the near term will likely become the responsibility of DoD, at least informally. The military must balance resourcing to support this requirement along with other core tasks in support of national policy. Some, “conflicts...affect US humanitarian interests, access to markets and materials, the safety of our citizens, and the stability necessary to sustain democratic government.”⁸ Other demands on the force have also continued to increase substantially since 1990. Between 1950 and 1989, the military conducted 13 operations to include the wars in Korea and Vietnam. From 1990 to 2000, prior to Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom, that number increased to over 30 operational deployments in one fourth the amount of time.⁹

Iraq Case Study

Nation building efforts within the Iraqi theater of operations have varied over the previous 4 years. As major combat operations abruptly ended after three weeks of fighting in 2003, the US military had to make an immediate transition to peacekeeping operations and nation building. Of all of the conflicts in the previous 20 years, to include Operation Desert Storm, this was the only one requiring such an abrupt shift. This highlighted the lack of US military and interagency experience and preparedness to initiate nation building on a large scale. The US military has adapted to these requirements. "There has been a significant change over the last year or two in the mentality...as well as the skill set and the operating principles that the (military) forces now have"¹⁰. Examples include integration of civil affairs and Provincial Reconstruction Teams into military non-lethal targeting processes, integration with local security forces and daily interface with the local population.

Progress toward US nation building goals in Iraq is now more urgent due to the recent Status of Forces Agreement which stipulates the US must begin military withdrawals in 2009 and have all troops out of Iraq by 2011. The challenge now becomes how to use the reduced US military leverage, and its ability to augment security, as an influence on the Iraqi government to continue its progress on critical nation building tasks. The key to this is how, "to foster political reconciliation in Iraq without this essential leverage."¹¹ Entities involved in executing these nation building tasks include, Multi-National Forces – Iraq, US Mission – Iraq, US Army Corps of Engineers, US Departments of State, Justice, Agriculture, Transportation, Treasury, NGO's and, at the tactical level, Brigade Combat Teams and Provincial Reconstruction Teams.

An examination of the early nation building efforts in Iraq shows some initial progress with key milestones at the strategic level. Yet, these successes did not carry over with commensurate local level results. They failed to generate the popular support required for effective government institutions to function with a degree of credibility which resulted in many Sunni groups boycotting the national elections in 2005.

The United States was able to turn over control of a sovereign Iraq to the central government and 26 established ministries in June 2004, less than 15 months after regime change. This monumental accomplishment should have been done immediately after Major Combat Operations in order to focus solely on, “fixing damaged infrastructure...restoring basic services..and capturing Hussein.”¹² Although it took over one year for this transition, it also carried with it employment for 1.3 million Iraqis in the federal government and came at a time when President Bush outlined a five point plan for successful Iraqi self-governance. The President stated, “we’re handing over authority to a sovereign Iraqi government...more international support for political transition...helping Iraqis take responsibility for their own security...rebuild Iraq’s infrastructure...helping Iraq move to free elections.”¹³ This establishment of self-rule effectively shifted responsibility for governance from the Coalition Provincial Authority to the Government of Iraq, with coalition in support for security and nation building. The lines of operation continued to focus on security, governance, economics and rule of law although the effort was still predominantly military. An analysis of two different areas of Iraq, at different times during the conflict, provides insights on US nation building efforts and the applicability for future use in Security, Stabilization, Transition and Reconstruction Operations.

The first area examined is Baghdad from April 2004 to February 2005. US forces in Baghdad during this period were the first to shift the main effort focus from primarily lethal operations to one on nation building. The lines of operation included governance, economics, rule of law and security, which nested with those of the Coalition Provincial Authority, both before and after the June 2004 handover of sovereignty. Despite the transition from the Defense Department's Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance, to the State Department's Coalition Provincial Authority, there remained little US interagency structure in Iraq. The ultimate solution, the Department of State Provincial Reconstruction Teams, would not be resourced and employed until November of 2005. The responsibility for nation building belonged to the military.

The military's focus was rebuilding the country's infrastructure and economy, training the Iraqi security forces (police and army) and overseeing the first democratic elections set for January 30th, 2005. Unique to this area was the concentrated mix of Sunni and Shia. The urban sprawl of Baghdad contained six to seven million people in an area approximately 200 square miles. Within Baghdad is Sadr City, predominately Shia, and home of over 2 ½ million people although the infrastructure to support only 500,000. Over half of the households had at least 13 residents.

The US military in Baghdad faced the challenge of integrating better security with both Sunni and Shia groups, improving basic needs of the population, stimulating the economy to reduce the 61 percent unemployment rate, while giving credit to the central government to enhance its legitimacy. Of absolute importance was improving the living conditions. "The first line (of operations) was rebuilding the city's infrastructure and restoring services...such as electricity, running water and a functioning sewer system."¹⁴

The military commander in the area saw a clear correlation between the substandard living conditions and unemployment to the high level of insurgent activity and violence.

The military focused on restoring these essential services, public education on transparency of governance and the democratic process, and working to create long-term employment opportunities in order to create solutions to reduce the violence levels. This is a tall order for any single US government institution. Task Force Baghdad completed over the 800 civil engineering projects totaling \$104 million, built 600 schools and provided more than \$8.3 million in micro and macro grants during this period to stimulate the economy. These achievements were accomplished without a significant presence of US interagency or NGO assistance. The measures of effectiveness were simple, employ military aged males to put money into the economy and keep them from carrying out attacks for pay while, at the same time, improve the water and electricity infrastructure for the populace. Task Force Baghdad was able to put 20,000 people to work on infrastructure and sanitation projects while US forces continued to provide security and train the local government. For longer term security, Task Force Baghdad funded, equipped and conducted 14 police academies and trained seven Iraqi army battalions. This was all done while giving credit to the government for the sake of credibility. A positive indicator that the local populace believed in the new governmental system and realized the benefits from the US and Iraqi efforts was the 51 percent turnout rate at polling stations for the initial Iraqi elections, despite violence which included eight suicide bombers and 106 attacks. The high voter turnout validated the initial focus on nation building but the positive results were only short term due to the inability of US forces to put the same level focus in every neighborhood. As sectarian

retribution and violence escalated, the focus on nation building subsided which adversely affected the standard of living of the population and decreased the government's level of credibility. This would remain unchanged into 2006.

A second area to examine is Northern Iraq from August 2006 to December 2007. This area centers on the population center of Tikrit and differs from Baghdad geographically (separate large population centers with agricultural areas in between), demographically (predominately Sunni and many former high level Ba-athists) and as a point in time on the continuum of progress in Iraq (mature insurgency based on sectarian divides fueled by non-Iraqi bases of power). Despite these differences, the nation building tasks remained similar.

Tikrit is the provincial seat for Salah ad Din province. The large contingent of former high ranking Ba-athists had substantial informal influence within the Sunni population and possessed critical technical and managerial skills. In order to be successful, US forces would need to integrate Iraqis who were both formally elected or appointed, and those who had significant informal influence throughout the region. As with Baghdad, the lines of operation focused on establishing governance and rule of law in conjunction with improving security. Due to the divide between the once oppressed Shia central government and this former Ba-athist province (home to Saddam Hussein), the priority for nation building efforts was governance, communication and support between the various levels of government. In Salah ad Din, US forces were augmented with one of the country's initial Department of State Provincial Reconstruction Teams. The nation wide effort brought 18 of these teams, one to each province to, "help provincial governments...develop a transparent and sustained capability to

govern...rule of law...political and economic development...(and) provincial administration.”¹⁵ These teams did not bring any resources or funding but they did possess critical subject matter expertise in the areas of governance, economics, infrastructure, rule of law and public diplomacy. What nation building skills the US military did not possess in Baghdad in 2004-2005, the Provincial Reconstruction Teams had in 2006-2007.¹⁶

Key rule of law tasks that supported the training of the provincial and qada police included building secure police stations, combined detention and courtroom compounds, secure residences for judges and prosecutors and training policing techniques with US military Police Training Teams and Special Forces teams. As the interagency entered the process, the coalition began to see success beyond street policing and basic law enforcement duties. The Department of Justice dedicated personnel to support the efforts of the Provincial Reconstruction Team’s Rule of Law section. Not only did this assist in establishing a valid legal process that the population could trust, but it also facilitated training and mentoring key Iraqi’s within the process. This Justice Department link to the US Embassy in Baghdad proved critical in facilitating communication between the Ministry of Justice and the provincial judges.

As the rule of law processes improved, US forces simultaneously focused on governance and critical infrastructure to support the basic needs of the populace. A key component of this was the US military strategic communications effort to ensure the provincial and local governments received credit for improving the infrastructure, thus building credibility of the institution. US forces teamed with Department of State governance subject matter experts to instill processes, transparency and trust between

the various levels of government. Iraqi governance was enhanced by focused training on provincial council meetings rules and procedures, provincial budget tracking, provincial director's general interface with central government level ministries and recurring trips to Baghdad for provincial leaders to meet with senior government officials. Infrastructure efforts focused on primary roads, medical clinics in conjunction with NGO's and local municipal centers to support local qada governance operations. These localized efforts proved key to establishing credibility beyond the governor or deputy governor personally solving each individual citizen's problems.

As coalition forces sought to establish dialogue between the provincial leaders and the central government, it became necessary to take action only the military was able to do. Central government ministers and other officials refused to visit Sunni provinces and, due to security concerns, provincial leaders would not travel to Baghdad. US forces escorted and transported key provincial leaders to Baghdad on a monthly basis. Coalition leaders in Baghdad, to include the MNF-I Commander and the US Ambassador, pressured key government ministers to meet with provincial officials. Within Salah ad Din the result of this dialogue through coalition pressure for 13 months was a degree of mutual trust and understanding from both directions, the central government and the province, culminating with the first visit to Salah ad Din by the Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, Minister of the Interior and Minister of Electricity in August 2007. This resulted in key discussions with ensuing policy decisions such as infrastructure investment in the Bayji oil refinery and formerly state owned enterprises, central government support and funding of the Son's of Iraq security program, agreement to provide provinces the freedom to adjudicate high crimes (terrorist acts)

cases and increased material support to the predominately Sunni Iraqi police and army units in Northern Iraq.

As a centralized nation with no provincial tax base for operating costs or capital improvements, provincial and central government leaders must work toward economic progress together. Although untrained in this aspect of nation building, US forces were instrumental in facilitating the Iraqi processes for budget dispersment, budget planning through the provincial council and budget execution through the provincial executive office (governor and deputy governor). Through coordinated efforts by the Provincial Reconstruction Team and Brigade Combat Team civil affairs teams, there have been marked improvements in coordination between the provincial and qada director generals for infrastructure improvements at the local levels. There has also been a significant increase in private banking through the nation wide Al Warka company which negates the need for unregulated money brokers which are also a source of insurgency funding. Other successes include micro-loan disbursement for small businesses which allow \$2500 grants at the discretion of the local US commander, funding to restart formerly state owned enterprises for large scale production and employment in local areas through the Brinkley Group and NGO support through the Izdihar Economic Growth Program. The subject matter expertise required to teach the technical aspects of economic growth for a country is something the military lacks thus these gains would not have been possible without Department of State involvement. Although, the micro-loan program was originated and is being carried out solely by the military with the, “end state at the local level (being) goods and services for Iraqis, provided by Iraqis...”¹⁷ Programs such as these are necessary to stimulate an economy and initiate growth. For

long term sustainment, the host nation must assume responsibility and integrate these types of programs into the banking institutions. The security situation in Northern Iraq in early 2006 was similar to that in Baghdad in 2004. The bombing and destruction of the Shiite al-Askarian Mosque in the city of Samarra in early 2006 served as the catalyst for unmeasured sectarian killings across Iraq. Security deteriorated to the point that nation building progress subsided across the country and many gains were lost. Attack levels in Salah ad Din province, reached as high as 630 per month. Much effort was put into retraining the Iraqi police and army to successfully operate independently. In conjunction with these efforts, US forces began co-opting Sunni militia groups into localized neighborhood watch programs. The formation and utilization of these 'Son's of Iraq' groups served two primary purposes toward establishing security levels required for the resumption of nation building tasks. The primary purpose was to give 'ownership' of local security to the local population. The secondary purpose was as a means to inject money into the economy through direct payments to these individuals and groups. The combined efforts of coalition forces, Iraqi security forces and Son's of Iraq established a level of security that facilitated executing nation building within the other lines of operations.

Assessment of Nation Building Efforts in Iraq

The ultimate measure of successful nation building is captured at the tactical level within the conditions in local areas. From the outset, the goal of the United States has remained to establish a unified democratic Iraq which is capable of defending itself, providing for its citizens and being a member in good standing within the international

community. This is a current assessment of conditions within Iraq after four years of nation building, and as the US begins to shift focus and resources to Afghanistan.

A critical benchmark for success or failure is the level of security attained to facilitate further progress in governance, economics and rule of law. As of October 2008, attacks across Iraq had decreased from more than 180 per day in July 2007 to just over 20 per day, and civilian deaths decreased from 3700 per month in December 2006 to just over 400 for during October 2008. This indicator of the security situation is the best since early 2004.¹⁸ Additionally, there was no spike in violence during Ramadan, the Shia holy month of Ashura or the recent provincial elections in January 2009. The results of these local elections were positive with a balanced turnout of Shia, Sunni and Kurds unlike the national elections in 2005. Although the Iraqi Security Forces continue to struggle with proficiency and retention, they are able to achieve a level of security with the support of the coalition and local Sons of Iraq groups which now total 92,000 members across Iraq. Many former members of Sunni insurgent groups, have now embraced the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programs and are becoming members of the Iraqi Security Forces.

The improved security situation facilitated gains within the other lines of operation.¹⁹ Nation building operations in Iraq have demonstrated that rule of law is directly linked to the populace confidence in the abilities of the government. Resources must be applied to all facets of rule of law simultaneously. Although there is still intimidation against officials within the legal process which hinders further progress in establishing a complete rule of law system, it has not been enough to adversely affect the gains made thus far such as local Major Crimes Courts, SWAT team training and

neighborhood policing activities. The Ministry of Justice established the Higher Judicial Council and the Judicial Protective Service to combat the threat. Although the judicial capacity continues to grow, the high number of criminal cases coupled with a still inefficient system slows the judicial process. Rule of law gains are confined to the tactical level. For enduring success and progress, these gains must transcend to the strategic level through the efforts of the State Department, Justice Department and Iraqi Ministry of Justice to truly establish a national rule of law system.²⁰ Operations in Iraq have shown that the US military is trained to facilitate execution of policing at the local level. For higher level rule of law tasks within the judicial process interagency augmentation is necessary.

Iraq has made significant gains toward establishing a political process that is right for the country. With the improved security situation, focus of the US military is shifting in support of State Department efforts to, “transform the various central government ministries into functioning bureaucracies and fostering foreign investment in Iraqi infrastructure.”²¹ These words are from the Multi-National Forces – Iraq Strategic Effects Officer, in October 2008, which clearly demonstrates that the military’s role in Iraq nation building extends beyond the security foundation. Key political developments include the Iraqi parliaments overwhelming approval of the Provincial Elections Law in September, 2007, and the agreement on a UN resolution by Shia, Sunni, Kurdish and Turkomen legislators to form a parliamentary committee to review issues concerning Kurdish autonomy in Kirkuk. This required a degree of compromise not previously seen in the government with the greatest victory being the successful provincial elections in 14 of the 18 provinces on January 31st of this year. The four provinces of the semi-

autonomous Kurdish region will hold elections later in 2009. More than 14,000 candidates representing 400 political parties participated. The diverse election results include Prime Minister al-Maliki's State of the Law Party winning in eight provinces showing a popular vote of confidence, and of Sunni Arab al-Hadba Gathering Party winning a majority in Northern Iraq's Nineveh province which had previously been controlled by the Kurds. The more sectarian parties that thrived during the period of violence from 2005 to 2007, did not do well. The, "sectarian and pro-Iranian Shiite religious party was devastated...the pro-Iranian Sadr faction went from 11 percent of the vote to 3 percent..the Sunni Muslim Brotherhood was badly set back."²² Other key successes include the November 2008 action by the Council of Representatives mandating minority representation in the provinces and the national census law. Iraq has also made significant gains within the regional community with the appointment of ambassadors from the United Arab Emirates, Syria, Kuwait, Jordan, Bahrain and the Arab League to Iraq.

Despite these governance successes, there is still an overriding mistrust based on sectarian division, both at the national and local levels. The lack of substantive progress on the Amnesty and Accountability legislative reform (de-Ba'athification) continues to be a significant impediment toward true national reconciliation. To avoid losing the political gains to date, the central government must attain consensus on key legislation in 2009 such as hydrocarbon (oil revenue sharing), provincial powers, de-Ba'ath reform and Article 140 which will decide the future of the semi-autonomous Kurdish region. The strong election showing by the Iraqi Islamic Party, which is the party of the Sunni Vice President, has resulted in threats of violence from other Sunni political

parties if the Iraqi Islamic Party retains control in some provinces. This highlights the continued dissatisfaction and disenfranchisement of Sunni's with, not only the Shia central government, but also within the Sunni political bloc.

The US military's provincial level efforts leading to the successful elections included establishing critical governance forums such as the Provincial Security Committee chaired by the governor and including both political and security authorities, the Provincial Joint Coordination Center which links to national level coordination elements, provincial council proceedings and the budget expenditure apparatus for infrastructure and service improvements. These entities facilitate provincial governing and provide the governor, deputy governor and director's general with a venue for executing their duties and communicating with the citizens. As with rule of law and economics, the US military is neither resourced nor trained for this aspect of nation building, but is in a position to support interagency efforts.

The improved security situation continues to facilitate economic gains ranging from small business growth, privatized banking, and budget expenditures. Iraq's gross domestic product continues to grow while inflation is being adequately managed by the Central Bank of Iraq and the International Monetary Fund. The central government budget has grown steadily over the preceding four years from \$24.4 billion in 2005 to an expected \$72 billion in 2009 due to oil export revenues. Despite the increase in funding, essential services such as quality food, clean water, sufficient electricity generation and distribution, adequate trash and sewage systems and basic healthcare still do not meet the needs of the populace. This is a critical gap and, "...the lack of essential services has now replaced security as the most important concern in the minds of most Iraqis"²³

The economy is steadily improving but the quality of life for the populace does not reflect this increased level of prosperity. Gains in commercial infrastructure, financial infrastructure, budget execution, commercial regulation and sector opportunities such as agriculture, retail, oil refining and distribution, services and manufacturing remain the key to nation building progress at the national level. Work remains to be done but the US military must transfer responsibility to the State Department then posture to provide security in support of Iraqi forces. "The reduced violence has provided time and space in which political and economic development can occur."²⁴

US resources are now shifting to the Afghanistan theater for nation building efforts as part of the larger counterinsurgency campaign. The model that evolved over the previous four years in Iraq provides a start point for Afghanistan as US policy makers review and adjust the long term strategy. But, as the new Central Command Combatant Commander stated after his initial assessment in October, he expects "the fight against the insurgents in Afghanistan and Pakistan to get worse before it (gets) better."²⁵ Initial efforts must focus on attaining that minimum level of security to provide a base line for true nation building successes; locally, nationally and regionally. The increased proficiency of Afghan security forces, political engagement with formal leaders at all levels, political engagement with tribal leaders working toward reconciliation and inclusion in the political process and a plan for non-military nation building resources applied more at the local level than the national level are all critical. Like Iraq, the coalition cannot conduct lethal operations against terrorist networks in a near-failing state like Afghanistan without also, "protecting the population and using

economic and political programs to build support for the government and resistance to insurgents and terrorists.”²⁶

The end state will most certainly include a functioning democratic form of government. This may be more likely at the national level than the local level. Afghanistan has been an independent state since the mid-1700’s and, “a functioning constitutional and parliamentary monarchy in the middle of the 20th century...(but) centrifugal forces in Afghanistan have always been powerful.”²⁷ Unlike Iraq, Afghanistan is not accustomed to a strong central government dictating policy to the provinces. Governance at the local level must be strong without being independent from the central government. It is also important to recognize the difference in population demographics from the Iraqi tribal structure as the US seeks to co-opt the Afghan tribes to support the elected government. As the coalition does this, it must also, “recognize the limitations of the current (national) government...(as) ineffective and deeply corrupt. Provincial governors were not elected, but appointed by President Karzai...”²⁸ With national level elections coming in August 2009, now is the appropriate time for US forces to prompt political progress at the local level. Any local solutions must be nested with the efforts of the central government in order to establish the required credibility with the populace.

The 2009 Quadrennial Roles and Missions Review Report to Congress is based on an analysis of the Defense Department’s core missions and competencies that are required for future threats. Two of the six core missions; irregular warfare and military support to stabilization, security, transition and reconstruction operations, have key elements of nation building inherent to them. In conjunction with these six core missions, the analysis cited the importance of interagency inclusion. In both Iraq and

Afghanistan, coalition forces learned total victory does not equate to military success in tactical battles. The Quadrennial Roles and Missions Review Report cited the requirement for increasing our soft power capability and application for the future saying, “our national ability to promote economic development, institution-building and the rule of law, internal reconciliation, good governance, training...indigenous military and police forces (and) strategic communications...requires whole-of-government approaches.”²⁹ This review provides a comprehensive strategy that US forces must be prepared to support.

Conclusion

After five years of the US national defense focus on fighting a counterinsurgency in two theaters of war simultaneously, many nation building lessons have been learned and refined that will impact national security preparations for the next generation. During this period, the national security apparatus has applied intellectual rigor required to institutionalize the nesting of nation building strategy and tasks with other operational concepts. Successes in Iraq from 2007 to 2009, leading to the current Status of Forces Agreement which initiates the US military withdrawal, were made possible due to the operational change from offensive military operations to nation building. This progress is based on the Iraqi government achieving a degree of legitimacy in the eyes of the populace through governance and legislative reform, economic gains, improvements in key infrastructure and a level of security that facilitates confidence in the institution of government. Successes in these areas are possible in a country such as Iraq while some less developed nations such as Afghanistan pose greater challenges for US efforts.

While recent US policy directives and Army doctrine concurs with United Nations policy that nation building efforts are best applied pre-conflict, US forces must be prepared to conduct these tasks in a semi-hostile environment immediately following major combat operations. An enduring lesson learned from operations in Iraq is that a degree of security must be attained prior to initiating focus on other nation building lines of operation. Force must achieve a minimum desired level in each line of operation by having a 'shifting main effort'. This is done while the security situation is in a 'hold' position, with no loss of security but no significant gains either. Although limited in number, the US military does possess some of the requisite skill sets for facilitating progress in governance, economic growth and rule of law at the local level. The various policy directives, to include the most recent Quadrennial Roles and Missions Review Report stipulate that the US military must be trained and equipped to accomplish all nation building tasks as part of Irregular Warfare and Security, Stabilization, Transition and Reconstruction Operations. Interagency participation as part of the whole-of-government doctrine is absolutely critical if sufficient nation building progress is going to be made at both the local and national levels. The initial two years of operations in Iraq proved that a solely military solution may bring early successes as the US accomplished in Baghdad, but enduring progress and development of the host-nation government requires the expertise resident in the interagency community such as the State Department's Provincial Reconstruction Teams. Recognizing that the application of the whole-of-government approach requires a lead time to deploy and employ these interagency resources, the military will continue to conduct the initial nation building efforts. As the interagency capabilities increase, it can focus resources at the national

level while the military continues its focus at the local level. These efforts can be applied across the spectrum of operations from major combat operations to stability operations, counterinsurgencies or homeland consequence management. The military is a crucial element of nation building efforts in support of national policy objectives and must be prepared for this mission.

Endnotes

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