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**NAVAL  
POSTGRADUATE  
SCHOOL**

**MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA**

**THESIS**

**MEASURING EFFECTIVENESS  
IN CONFLICT ENVIRONMENTS**

by

Sean P. Sutherland

September 2009

Thesis Advisor:  
Second Reader:

Robert McNab  
Douglas Porch

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**MEASURING EFFECTIVENESS IN CONFLICT ENVIRONMENTS**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
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**MASTER OF ARTS IN SECURITY STUDIES  
(STABILIZATION AND RECONSTRUCTION)**

from the

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## **ABSTRACT**

Traditional warfare has taken on a new meaning in the wake of the September 11 terrorist attacks. Winning peace has become just as important as winning the war. In the military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq that followed the terrorist attacks, it has become increasingly clear that winning peace is a complicated process. In this regard, the concept of stabilization and reconstruction is no simple task and requires planning in advance of combat operations. Unfortunately, current measures of effectiveness are either too narrowly constructed or far too complex for application in the hostile environment that accompanies stabilization and reconstruction. This thesis examines the concept of stabilization and reconstruction and exposes the weaknesses and strengths of measures of effectiveness (MOE). The underlying goal is to formulate a simplified and effective MOE for the successful post-combat stabilization and reconstruction efforts. It is the author's position that the success of stabilization and reconstruction depends in large part on the ability to monitor progress and to respond to obstacles that arise in the course of stabilization and reconstruction.



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# I. CHAPTER I

## A. INTRODUCTION

Current operations in Afghanistan and Iraq illustrate the seamless connection between the conflict and the post-conflict stages of warfare. While the United States defeated both the Iraqi army and Taliban insurgents quickly, years later both countries remain challenged by “spoilers.” For example, according to The Millennium Challenge Corp., an agency President George W. Bush established in 2004 to distribute aid, both countries failed in 2007 in six areas of post-conflict operations: rule of law, civil liberties, corruption control, accountability, security and government effectiveness.<sup>1</sup> Prior planning, a focus on long-term goals, and civil-military cooperation throughout all stages of field operations can increase the probability of success in post-conflict state-building enterprises.<sup>2</sup> U.S. government agencies tend to compile metrics on measures of effectiveness (MOEs) without the benefit of comparative models.<sup>3</sup> In the end, variables with diverse values are accumulated with the emphasis on incident evaluation, such as deaths and other casualties. However, important data on governance, economics, population perceptions and ideology might be overlooked.

Colonel William Flavin (Ret.), Associate Professor of Peace Operations Concepts and Doctrine for the U.S. Army Peacekeeping Institute, cautions that it “is always easier to get into a conflict than to get out of it,”<sup>4</sup> and notes the distinction between conflict termination and conflict resolution. The former denotes the “formal end of fighting, not the end of conflict,” while “conflict resolution” relates to resolving the causes of the

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<sup>1</sup> B. Murray, “Iraq, Afghanistan Fail in U.S.–Compiled Democracy Rankings,” (October 16, 2008), *Bloomberg.com*, <http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601087&sid=abLODyD2Yo4E> (accessed July 30, 2009).

<sup>2</sup> P. Hughes, “Planning for Post-Conflict Reconstruction: Learning From Iraq,” *National Defense University Institute for National Strategic Studies* (July 29, 2004).

<sup>3</sup> A. Cordesman and A. Burke, “Analyzing the Afghan-Pakistan War,” *Center for Strategic and International Studies* (July 2008): 3.

<sup>4</sup> W. Flavin, “Planning for Conflict Termination and Post-Conflict Success,” *Parameters* (Autumn 2003): 95–112, 95.



conflict.<sup>5</sup> Conflict resolution requires a coherent strategy of stabilization and reconstruction to mitigate those factors that created the instability and violence while building local and state capacity to sustain peace.<sup>6</sup>

Successfully executing Stability, Security, Transition and Reconstruction (SSTR) operations requires the commander to develop MOEs that assess “the progress in achieving the goals set forth in the” SSTR objectives for the conflict’s operations.<sup>7</sup> For example, the use of force to quell an insurgency may provide an improved security environment in the short term, but also foster sectarian distrust and thus hinder the transition to a long-term representative government. The difficulty arises in the attempt to measure the level of sectarian distrust in a society. One can easily quantify the number of insurgent attacks and correlate that measure (presumably a negative correlation) to an increase in security patrols. However, does a decline in insurgent attacks necessarily indicate an upswing in sectarian trust?

Current and previous MOE theories are unsatisfactory in that they typically rely on analyses that pay scant attention to those factors that produce instability and conflict in the first place. Additionally, MOEs utilized by the military tend to measure ongoing progress by reference to “a fundamental systemic problem through a systematic approach.”<sup>8</sup> In other words, military MOEs typically rely on past models of assessment—body counts, territory taken—rather than MOEs tailored to the uniqueness of a specific conflict. Reliance on previous, “military centric” MOEs in today’s SSTR operations threatens to distort strategic choices and ultimately disillusion public opinion at home, not to mention in the warzone. Recognizing the flaws in the military centric MOEs, a newer assessment tool for Iraq was developed by the Brookings Institute *The Iraq Index: Tracking Variables of Reconstruction and Security in Post-Saddam Iraq*, a

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<sup>5</sup> Flavin, “Planning for Conflict Termination and Post-Conflict Success,” 95–112, 95.

<sup>6</sup> Craig Cohen, “Measuring Progress in Stabilization and Reconstruction,” *United States Institute of Peace: Stabilization and Reconstruction Series* (2003): 1–12, 1.

<sup>7</sup> C. Schauppner, “Measuring the Immeasurable: Applying Hierarchical Holographic Modeling to Developing Measures of Effectiveness for Stability, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction Operations,” A Paper Submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in Partial Satisfaction of the Requirement of the Department of Joint Military Operations, (May 16, 2006): 1–43, 1.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

set of MOEs that largely focuses on the security pillar of reconstruction.<sup>9</sup> Similarly, the *Afghanistan Index: Tracking Variables of Reconstruction and Security in Post-9/11 Afghanistan*, also developed by the Brookings Institute relies heavily on measuring security indicators. But at least the Afghanistan Index puts greater emphasis on other indicators such as advances in governance, rule of law, economy, and quality of life.<sup>10</sup>

Other organizations have developed SSTR MOEs of their own: The RAND Corporation has developed “sector-specific” security indicators,<sup>11</sup> Freedom House and Transparency International focus on developed governance indicators,<sup>12</sup> while the World Bank targets rule of law.<sup>13</sup> The Collaborative for Development Action has devised MOEs for peace building.<sup>14</sup> The American Bar Association’s Central European and Eurasian Law Initiative (ABA CEELI) tracks discrimination against women.<sup>15</sup> The United States Institute of Peace (USIP), the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), and the United States Army Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute (PKSOI) collaborated to produce *Measuring Progress in Conflict Environment (MPICE)* which measures longer term trends in governance, economics, security, rule of law and social well-being.<sup>16</sup>

While each of these systems demonstrate a more satisfactory approach to measuring progress in the post-conflict environment, there is room for improvement.

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<sup>9</sup> M. O’Hanlon and J. Campbell, “Iraq Index: Tracking Variables of Reconstruction and Security in Post-Saddam Iraq,” *Brookings Institute* (June 4, 2009): 4–58.

<sup>10</sup> Campbell and Shapiro, “Afghanistan Index: Tracking Variables of Reconstruction and Security in Post-9/11 Afghanistan,” 4–49.

<sup>11</sup> Craig Cohen, “Measuring Progress in Stabilization and Reconstruction,” *United States Institute of Peace: Stabilization and Reconstruction Series* (2003): 1–12.

<sup>12</sup> L. Diamond and M. Plattner, *Democracy after Communism* (John Hopkins University Press, 2002), 157.

<sup>13</sup> M. Trebilcock and R. Daniels, *Rule of Law Reform and Development: Charting the Fragile Path of Progress* (Edward Elgar Publishing, 2008), 42.

<sup>14</sup> Development Studies Network, “Organisations,” *Development Bulletin* (2000): 53, 114–118, 114.

<sup>15</sup> T. Landman, “Map-Making and Analysis of the Main International Initiatives on Developing Indicators on Democracy and Good Governance,” *University of Essex–Human Rights Centre*, Eurostat Contract No. 20022120005, Final Report (July 14, 2003): 1–95.

<sup>16</sup> United States Institute of Peace, “Metrics Framework for Assessing Conflict Transformation and Stabilization,” *United States Institute of Peace* (February 2008), [www.usip.org/peaceops/mpice.pdf](http://www.usip.org/peaceops/mpice.pdf) (accessed January 3, 2009).

Aside from MPICE, these MOEs are too narrowly focused and fail to collect sufficient information from each of the four pillars of reconstruction. MPICE takes a more comprehensive approach to each of the factors that contribute to creating and dissolving conflict and provides a good basis for the development of more satisfactory MOEs. However, the overly complex nature of MPICE's massive data collection and analysis requirements makes it difficult for commanders to decipher trends, let alone adjust their strategy to take account of them. The optimum solution would be to combine the academic and statistical rigor of MPICE with a field-friendly method to assess progress.

Each of these MOE systems has been developed specifically to guide analysts and planners in their strategic choices to achieve the desired outcomes in post-conflict environments. However, neither conflict nor SSTR operations are linear enterprises. Rather, they are subject to the tensions and unpredictable nature of conflict, in which operational demands may pre-empt longer-term strategic priorities. Ultimately, MOEs are only useful so far as they take account of the operational demands/requirements while not compromising the strategic focus. A successful MOE should factor in progress in a fluid environment. In the opinion of this author, current MOEs are useful, at best, for long-term planning, but inadequate for adjusting to operational demands that inevitably arise.

## **B. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

At present, the U.S. government lacks the capacity and the tools to monitor and measure military progress before, during, and after field operations, because it lacks adequate MOEs for measuring both long and short-term social, economic, and political progress within the ambit of an SSTR environment. In 2003, then Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld admitted to his top generals: "We lack the metrics to know if we are winning or losing."<sup>17</sup>

The current MOEs provide tools that are best suited to measuring outputs and inputs as opposed to outcome (effects). As a result, they fail to elicit thoughtful responses to a changing environment with an eye on the long-term consequences. They are either

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<sup>17</sup> Donald Rumsfeld, "Rumsfeld Memo," *USA Today* (October 13, 2003), <http://www.usatoday.com/news/washington/executive/rumsfeld-memo.htm> (accessed January 2, 2009).

too narrowly focused on the collection and analysis requirements, or far too complex for effective application in a hostile environment. Although current MOEs provide an operational framework for application to stabilization and reconstruction in the post-conflict environment, a far more comprehensive set of MOEs suitable for application before, during, and following the actual conflict is required. Intelligence and progress before and during the conflict will inevitably influence operations in the post-conflict environment. The purpose of this thesis is, therefore, to identify the current MOEs, assess their weaknesses and strengths, and formulate a comprehensive set of MOEs for satisfactory application to SSTR.

The author takes the position that where MOEs exist, they are typically ad-hoc and focus almost entirely on inputs, with an emphasis on quantitative indicators of limited utility. They tend to discount the quality, rationale, and appropriateness of the initial inputs and fail to factor in the evaluation of external conditions. Ultimately, the connection between performance indicators and underlying goals is lacking. Similarly, minimal attention is paid to benchmarks, which are essential for monitoring progress. In other words, the current MOEs place far too much emphasis on outputs and inputs, and very little, if any, on outcomes.

### **C. RESEARCH QUESTION**

As previously noted, current MOEs are flawed in that they either focus too narrowly on one aspect or are too complex to usefully measure progress in a dynamic environment. In order to substantiate this claim, this thesis will examine both the current MOEs and the conflict environment to which they apply to determine their strengths and weaknesses. The largest (current) models of MOEs developed by the Brookings Institute, RAND, and MPICE are particularly relevant as they were designed for the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as integrate MOEs used in past conflicts.

This thesis will examine how MOEs should be utilized to form a more comprehensive assessment tool by taking into account the differences in the political and cultural environment of states in which SSTR is applied. By exposing inadequacies, it is

possible to redesign a more comprehensive set of MOEs. Moreover, by taking the strengths of each of these MOEs and eliminating their weaknesses, a more suitable system can be devised.

#### **D. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The current conflicts in both Afghanistan and Iraq have changed the concept of conflict resolution in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>18</sup> Both conflicts have shown that without satisfactory MOEs, strategies are muddled and conflict may be prolonged. For instance, in 2005, Lieutenant General David Petraeus reported that the United States had successfully trained at least 24 Iraqi battalions (approximately 24,000 troops) to operate independently. An additional 40 Iraqi battalions were deemed able to manage counter-insurgencies with U.S. or other coalition assistance. Unfortunately, Petraeus' report proved to be wildly inaccurate because only one Iraqi battalion proved capable of operating without outside assistance. Obviously, inaccurate assessments are worse than meaningless—they can also be dangerous. Although progress reports indicate that 211,026 Iraqi security forces had been trained by November 2005,<sup>19</sup> no attempt was made to calculate operational effectiveness. In the final analysis, Petraeus' report focused entirely on the output of “trained” soldiers rather than “input” of “operationally capable” maneuver units. By the first standard, one might argue that great progress had been achieved; by the second, the goal of sustainable security remained elusive.

A poll conducted in October 2007 by the Center for American Progress revealed that 80 percent of the Iraqi's “strongly oppose” having foreign military in Iraq. Worse, another 57 percent believed it is perfectly permissible to attack coalition forces in Iraq.<sup>20</sup> This poll indicates that after six years of occupation, SSTR strategies had still failed to win over a majority of the Iraqi population. In the absence of MOEs that take into

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<sup>18</sup> R. Litwak, “The Imperial Republic after 9/11,” *Wilson Quarterly* (Summer 2002): 76–82, 77–78.

<sup>19</sup> “Huge Progress,” Made in Training Iraq Troops: U.S. General, *Washington AP* (November 7, 2005), [http://www.spacewar.com/reports/Huge\\_Progress\\_Made\\_In\\_Training\\_Iraq\\_Troops\\_U.S\\_General.html](http://www.spacewar.com/reports/Huge_Progress_Made_In_Training_Iraq_Troops_U.S_General.html) (accessed July 22, 2009).

<sup>20</sup> L. Korb and C. Wadhams, “Afghanistan is Not Iraq,” *Center for American Progress* (February. 19, 2008), [http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2008/02/afghanistan\\_iraq.html](http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2008/02/afghanistan_iraq.html) (assessed July 29, 2009).

account the attitudes and desires of the population, and measure other aspects of the environment as the basis of a realistic net assessment, progress in SSTR will remain guesswork. Our experience in Afghanistan and Iraq suggests that current MOEs are insufficiently comprehensive. For example, in 2007 and 2008, MOEs used in Iraq primarily included measuring the numbers of trained security forces, the quantity of electricity supplied to Iraqi homes, U.S. casualties, and other measurements of interest to the U.S. public.<sup>21</sup> While U.S. public opinion is important, measuring all aspects of the environment, including the local population's perspective and attitudes, is equally if not more vital to success.

The ability to satisfactorily measure and follow progress helps organizations prioritize efforts and resources in each phase.<sup>22</sup> For instance, the United States and its coalition partners have had to adjust to an evolving and increasingly hostile environment in Afghanistan. In 2001, the Afghan invasion was directed against al Qaeda and the Taliban. The goal was to create a friendly central government. However, since 2008, the United States has been engaged in a "multifaceted counterinsurgency effort."<sup>23</sup> Strategies and priorities had to be changed in the middle of the conflict, which required an unanticipated reassignment of personnel and resources.<sup>24</sup> Had adequate MOEs been in place in Afghanistan, perhaps the various government, military, and civilian agencies might have been able to track the deteriorating security situation and react accordingly. Additionally, in post-conflict environments, global standards of progress and success ensure accountability and transparency, both important in building support for SSTR operatives among allies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the international community. For instance, MOEs that focus exclusively or primarily on casualties do not

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<sup>21</sup> G. Lubold, "In Afghanistan, Time is Running Out, Pentagon Worries," *The Christian Science Monitor* (June 2, 2009), <http://www.csmonitor.com/2009/0603/p02s01-usmi.html> (accessed July 29, 2009).

<sup>22</sup> National Performance Review, "Serving the American Public: Best Practices in Performance Measurement," *University of North Texas Libraries Government Documents* (June 1997), <http://govinfo.library.unt.edu/npr/library/papers/benchmrk/nprbook.html> (accessed January 3, 2009).

<sup>23</sup> U.S. Accountability Office, "Afghanistan and Iraq: Availability of Forces, Equipment, and Infrastructure should be Considered in Developing U.S. Strategy and Plans," Statement of Janet St. Laurent, Managing Director Defense Capabilities and Management (February 12, 2009): 1.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

encourage support of the operations in Afghanistan and Iraq.<sup>25</sup> While satisfactory MOEs have the capacity to expose mistakes and help to avoid them in future, too much focus on casualties and not enough on progress in other areas can discourage those who might otherwise assist in the effort.

An organization that can accurately assess its strengths and weaknesses is in a better position to make timely adjustments, thereby avoiding the complications that necessarily follow from inflexible and rigid strategies. When organizations implement benchmarks and baseline definitions for success, a systematic method of measurement will permit them to know if they are successful. This allows them to credibly request stakeholders' resources as well as support from political constituencies. The post-conflict operations in Japan and Germany following the Second World War offer an example of how obtaining international cooperation can lead to successful reconstruction.<sup>26</sup>

## **E. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN**

The hypothesis of this thesis is that the evolution of meaningful MOEs significantly increase the probability of the success of SSTR missions. The theory and past application of MOEs will serve as a starting point. This thesis will begin with an exploration of the metrics deployed in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom.<sup>27</sup> Both operations provide a basis for analyzing the desirable framework for stability operations and establishing a framework for assessing the effectiveness of MOEs. As this research is more concerned with qualitative than quantitative analysis, the two chosen case studies provide a sufficient basis for evaluation.

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<sup>25</sup> Bill Roggio, "U.S. Military Ends Enemy Bodycounts in Afghanistan," *The Weekly Standard* (July 24, 2009), [http://www.weeklystandard.com/weblogs/TWSFP/2009/07/us\\_military\\_ends\\_enemy\\_bodycou.asp](http://www.weeklystandard.com/weblogs/TWSFP/2009/07/us_military_ends_enemy_bodycou.asp) (accessed July 29, 2009).

<sup>26</sup> D. Quayat, "Policy Options for Post-Conflict Operations in Iraq," *The John Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies* (December 13, 2002): 1–8, 3.

<sup>27</sup> The author limits the point of reference to two operations because two examples can be successfully used to validate a hypothesis. Moreover, by limiting the research to two current MOE approaches in modern conflict resolution, it is easier to evaluate complicated details effectively. By focusing on two operations, a more detailed evaluation is possible. Focusing on a number of operations will limit the attention given to specific events.

## **F. ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY**

Chapter I defines the problem, the main research question, and sub-questions for investigation. It also explains the significance of this research and the methodology, design, and organization of the study.

Chapter II examines the theory, history, and doctrine of stabilization and reconstruction operations. It highlights the importance of SSTR and defines how satisfactory MOEs can dictate the success of these operations. The Brookings Institute framework provides a basis for understanding the intent of MOEs as well as a device for understanding what MOEs should accomplish in the post-conflict environment.

Chapter III will suggest a more reliable set of MOEs and apply them to the selected OEF and OIF case studies via the MPICE and RAND frameworks to expose current MOE weaknesses as hands-on tools for commanders. It will then offer a more commander-friendly MOE operational design.



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## II. CHAPTER II

### A. INTRODUCTION

Assessing the strengths and weaknesses of current measures of effectiveness (MOEs) in post-conflict environments is only possible after a thorough examination of the aims and objectives of post-conflict operations, which are essentially to end or contain conflict through the successful completion of stabilization and reconstruction. This chapter will explore the doctrinal basis of SSTR with reference to its history and development. This author argues that interagency coordination is key because MOEs must measure progress across a range of areas covered by various agencies, as well as the military.

This chapter will first define the scope and content of SSTR before giving a brief overview of its history since World War II. OEF and OIF are offered as cases in which MOEs too narrowly conceived to assess progress were applied. Finally, the end of this chapter will evaluate current MOEs in general and how they are used in stabilization and reconstruction operations. Specific MOEs better adapted to current SSTR environments will be discussed in the third chapter.

### B. DEFINING STABILIZATION AND RECONSTRUCTION

Behsahel, Olikier and Peterson argue that SSTR encapsulates a wide range of overlapping missions, each of which involves a broad range of approaches.<sup>28</sup> SSTR prioritizes peace-building and the transition from military to civilian control.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> N. Bensahel, O. Olikier, and H. Peterson, *Improving Capacity for Stabilization and Reconstruction Operations* (RAND National Defense Research Institute, 2009), 3.

<sup>29</sup> A. Rathmell, "Planning Post-Conflict Reconstruction in Iraq: What Can We Learn?" *International Affairs* 81, no. 5 (2005): 1013–1038.

In this regard, stabilization and reconstruction can best understood as peace-building followed by peacekeeping missions.<sup>30</sup> For instance, stabilization itself encompasses attempts to enforce peace, as well as terminate “social, economic, and political upheaval.”<sup>31</sup> A more protracted view of stabilization involves a process which manages and reduces underlying tensions that could give way to violent resurgence.<sup>32</sup> Stabilization efforts also manage and reduce the underlying problems that cause “break-down in law and order.”<sup>33</sup> It is a pivotal part of the process following actual combat and can result in intentional or unintentional “additional conflict,” which requires counterinsurgency operations where progress is measured by metrics that assess the impact of operations on the local population. By definition, this means SSTR aims to control violence and unrest and promote peace by getting to the root of the underlying causes of violence and encourage key actors to compete in the political arena, not with arms.<sup>34</sup>

Reconstruction works in tandem with stabilization. It involves social and economic rehabilitation and/or reconstruction immediately following combat operations.<sup>35</sup> In the immediate aftermath of conflict, state governments are typically weakened. Moreover, war-related deaths, psychological stress, displacement, and damage

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<sup>30</sup> D. Smith, “An Expanded Mandate for Peace Building: The State Department Role in Peace Diplomacy, Reconstruction, and Stabilization,” *A Report of the CSIS Post-Conflict Reconstruction Project* (April 2009), [http://csis.org/files/media/csis/pubs/090423\\_smith\\_expandedmandate\\_web.pdf](http://csis.org/files/media/csis/pubs/090423_smith_expandedmandate_web.pdf) (accessed August 5, 2009).

<sup>31</sup> Bensahel, Olikier and Peterson, *Improving Capacity for Stabilization and Reconstruction Operations*, 3.

<sup>32</sup> United States Joint Forces Command, “U.S. Government Draft Planning Framework for Reconstruction, Stabilization, and Conflict Transformation,” *J7 Pamphlet Version* (2005): 1.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> J. Schmidt, “Can Outsiders Bring Democracy to Post-Conflict States?” *Orbis* 52, no. 1 (2008): 107–122.

<sup>35</sup> S. Anderline and J. El-Bushra, “Post Conflict Reconstruction,” (n.d.), [http://www.huntalternatives.org/download/39\\_post\\_conflict.pdf](http://www.huntalternatives.org/download/39_post_conflict.pdf) (accessed August 5, 2009).

to infrastructure are impediments to a return to normality.<sup>36</sup> If stabilization is unsuccessful, reconstruction will be delayed.<sup>37</sup> The two work in tandem.<sup>38</sup>

Put another way, stabilization endeavors to terminate violence while reconstruction seeks to eradicate those factors that will favor a reoccurrence of violence. Benbsahel, Olikier and Peterson maintain that:

Although stabilization and reconstruction tasks are distinct, they affect each other in important ways. Once basic security has been established, reconstruction tasks are critical to eliminating many of the factors that can drive further violence.<sup>39</sup>

In order for reconstruction operations to eliminate the factors that drive further violence, the nation building process must focus on reshaping the way in which citizens interact with the state, public services and the market. In other words, MOEs that measure citizen perceptions and outlooks will be more effective in measuring the success of reconstruction operations.

Even so, stabilization efforts often form a necessary part of the reconstruction efforts as many of the pre-existing tensions that produced conflict in the first place are often increased by struggles over the spoils of war, including but not limited to struggles for power and/or resources.<sup>40</sup> Both stabilization and reconstruction are directly related to national security. Regional conflict and under-development are simply two of several conditions that compromise national security because they spark “radicalism and spread

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<sup>36</sup> Final Report of the Bi-Partisan Commission on Post-Conflict Reconstruction, “Play to Win,” Center for Strategic and International Studies and the Association of the U.S. Army (January 2003), <http://csis.org/files/media/csis/pubs/playtowin.pdf> (accessed August 5, 2009).

<sup>37</sup> J. Cerami and J. Boggs, “The Interagency and Counterinsurgency Warfare: Stability, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction Roles,” *Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College* (December 2007): 5.

<sup>38</sup> H. Binnedjk and S. Johnson, “Force Planning for Ungoverned and Failed States,” Statement for the Record, Center for Technology and National Security Policy National Defense University for the House of Armed Service Committee, November 8, 2005, [http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/ndu/hasc\\_testimony\\_8nov05.pdf](http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/ndu/hasc_testimony_8nov05.pdf) (Accessed August 11, 2009).

<sup>39</sup> Bensahel, Olikier and Peterson, *Improving Capacity for Stabilization and Reconstruction Operations*, 4.

<sup>40</sup> C. Call and E. Cousens, “Ending Wars and Building Peace: International Responses to War-Torn Societies,” *International Studies Perspectives* 9, no. 1 (2008): 1–21.

violence.”<sup>41</sup> The underlying problems are far more profound than mere underdevelopment. If underdevelopment were the primary source of conflict, efforts by the World Trade Organization to assist least developing nations should have eradicated conflict many years ago. Perhaps it is more accurate to state that the political and social factors that contribute to underdevelopment also fuel conflict. Realizing that conflict has complex origins, stabilization and reconstruction require constant management and monitoring.

### C. STABILIZATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OVERVIEW

The doctrinal basis of stabilization is predicated on the theory that winning the war means winning the peace.<sup>42</sup> From the U.S. Army’s standpoint, this doctrinal approach is achieved by counterinsurgency, terrorism interception and deterrence, and peace missions, all of which contribute to security.<sup>43</sup> The four pillars of reconstruction require restructuring governance, improving public safety, establishing the rule of law and initiating economic development.<sup>44</sup> These missions seek to contain internal instability that abets conflict and create an environment that is both stable and that conforms to international standards or norms.<sup>45</sup> In a typical case, the host countries of stabilization and reconstruction operations are dysfunctionally governed, if not in total chaos. This invariably requires that those executing stabilization and reconstruction

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<sup>41</sup> Bensahel, Olikier and Peterson, *Improving Capacity for Stabilization and Reconstruction Operations*, 1.

<sup>42</sup> T. Rooms, “Beginning with the End in Mind: Post-Conflict Operations and Campaign Planning. A Monograph,” *United States Army, School of Advanced Military Studies*, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas (Academic Year 04-05), <http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA436237&Location=U2&doc=GetTRDoc.pdf> (accessed August 11, 2009).

<sup>43</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, *Stability Operations and Support Operation, Field Manual 3-07* (Washington: Department of the Army, 2003), 1–2.

<sup>44</sup> M. McNerney, “Stabilization and Reconstruction in Afghanistan: Are PRTs a Model or a Muddle?” *Parameters* (Winter 2005-06): 32–46, 33.

<sup>45</sup> S. Metz and R. Millen, “Intervention, Stabilization, and Transformation Operations; The Role of Landpower in the New Strategic Environment,” *Parameters* 35 (Spring 2005): 42.

operations restore order, distribute humanitarian relief, and carry out a program of disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) for former combatants.<sup>46</sup>

Historically, the antecedents of SSSTR have evolved from the “conquest” of the Spanish Empire, to the imperialism or colonialism of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century empires, the to “occupation” of Germany and Japan following the Second World War.<sup>47</sup> Military stability operations in Somalia, Haiti, and the Balkans were referred to as peacekeeping or “peace enforcement” operations.<sup>48</sup> Similar efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan are currently identified as stabilization and reconstruction missions. The common thread that runs throughout each of these operations is that the military functioned as an instrument of the international community to transition conflict societies toward a stable peace.<sup>49</sup>

Some salient differences emerge however, in the approaches taken to these post-conflict military operations. For instance, the occupations of Germany and Japan, arguably two of the United States’ largest and most complex ventures into post-conflict occupation, were designed to bring about “rapid societal change.”<sup>50</sup> At that point, according to a study conducted by the School of Advanced Military Studies, post-conflict military operations in the aftermath of the Second World War were regarded by the United States and the United Nations as precedent and standard setting for successful nation-building.<sup>51</sup> As a result, the United States for the next 60 years emphasized combat operations on the assumption that victory paved the way for peace as “defeated” populations saw the errors of their ways and sought to rejoin the community of civilized nations.

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<sup>46</sup> Bensahel, Oliker and Peterson, *Improving Capacity for Stabilization and Reconstruction Operations*, ix–x.

<sup>47</sup> H. Binnendijk and S. Johnson, *Transforming for Stabilization and Reconstruction Operations* (Diane Publishing, 2004), 11.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>51</sup> T. Tooms, “Beginning With the End in Mind: Post-Conflict Operations and Campaign Planning,” *School of Advanced Military Studies/United States Army Command and General Staff College*, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas (2004-05), <http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA436237&Location=U2&doc=GetTRDoc.pdf> (accessed August 4, 2009).

The fallacy of this approach was showcased in Vietnam, where the United States focused on the destruction of the enemy's military forces while largely shortchanging the SSTR dimensions of the conflict.<sup>52</sup> This overly militarized focus invites body count metrics and overlooks or undervalues MOEs that measure progress in stabilization and reconstruction. Clearly, assessing the perceptions and desires of the Vietnamese people would have provided a better metric for assessing stabilization and reconstruction progress than counting the number of enemy insurgents or military personnel killed in combat operations. As John Robb, former Air Force officer and author of *Brave New World* explains, the days of third generation wars as witnessed in the WWII have long gone. Third generation warfare focuses on taking down the enemy by "deep penetration and disruption."<sup>53</sup> Measuring casualties would obviously correspond with these kinds of objectives but do not provide the kind of information necessary for measuring success in today's fourth generation (or decentralized) warfare, particularly in post-combat stabilization and reconstruction operations.

In 2007, General Peter Pace, Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman, stated the obvious that in Iraq measures of violence reduction mean nothing if the Iraqi people lack confidence in the competence or contest the legitimacy of their newly constituted government.<sup>54</sup>

The rehabilitation of Germany and Japan succeeded for a number of contingent reasons. To begin with, the plan to stabilize Germany was driven by the recognition that it was the economic powerhouse of Europe, that needed to be demilitarized and denazified, and reintegrated into the political life of the continent. Moreover, this reflected the desire of the West German population and its post-war leaders, chastened, not to say shamed, by their Nazi past.<sup>55</sup> Following Japan's surrender, General Douglas

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<sup>52</sup> D. Ducharme, "Developing Objective-Based Measures of Effectiveness for Maritime Containter Security," *Joint Military Operations Department*, Naval War College, Newport, RI (May 17, 2005): 10.

<sup>53</sup> J. Robb, *Brave New War* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons Inc., 2007), 22–24.

<sup>54</sup> A. Koppleman, "The Wrong Metric," *War Room* (June 22, 2007), [http://www.salon.com/politics/war\\_room/2007/06/22/pace/](http://www.salon.com/politics/war_room/2007/06/22/pace/) (accessed August 11, 2009).

<sup>55</sup> E. Ziemke, "The U.S. Army in the Occupation of Germany, 1944-1946," *U.S. Army Center of Military History* (1975): 26.

MacArthur was appointed as proconsul of Japan and took pains to preserve the integrity of the Japanese imperial family and to work his changes through the government. Furthermore, the Japanese are a homogeneous people who place a high premium on respect, and they cooperated fully with MacArthur's forces by order of the emperor.

This sort of receptive mentality was absent initially in Vietnam, a post-colonial state with a history of rebellion, strong nationalism, and an armed and active communist-led insurgent movement determined to resist integration into a western economic or political framework. In 1968 General Creighton Abrams took over from General William Westmoreland as the commander of Military Assistance Command in Vietnam. Recognizing the previous focus on traditional military metrics of body counts and land acquired was not effective, General Abrams made significant changes. Under his authority, American forces were broken up into small units that would live with and train the South Vietnamese civilians to defend their villages from northern incursion. He also devoted vastly more time than his predecessor, General Westmoreland, to expanding, training, and equipping the ARVN. His strategy was surprisingly successful and as a result the South was able to confront the NVA's 1972 Easter Offensive, although U.S. troop strength under Abrams decreased from 535,000 in December 1968 to 140,000 in December 1971 to 30,000 combat troops at the end of 1972. Abrams' focus on the population provided the right metrics to affect change, although the war was already politically and popularly unpalatable in the United States.

#### **D. STABILIZATION AND RECONSTRUCTION IN THE POST-COLD WAR ERA**

The post Cold War stabilization and reconstruction efforts have been less successful than those carried the post-World War II.<sup>56</sup> For most of the Cold War, the U.S. military was primarily deployed to "preserve the status quo" and engage in crisis management rather than the resolution of underlying problems.<sup>57</sup> Since the end of the

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<sup>56</sup> Binnendijk and Johnson, *Transforming for Stabilization and Reconstruction Operations*, 12–13.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.



Cold War, the focus of MOEs remains the tracking of military progress rather than economic, social, and political outcomes in the stabilization and reconstruction operations.<sup>58</sup>

As James Dobbins, former Assistant Secretary of State, explains, both the United Nations and the United States have, since the Cold War, engaged in post-conflict military operations designed to secure democratization.<sup>59</sup> Ever since 1989, these nation-building missions have intensified in frequency, scope, range, and duration.<sup>60</sup> During the Cold War, the U.S. engaged in military operations at least once in every ten years while the UN's nation-building operations occurred at least once every four years. After 1989, the U.S. military operation missions increased to at least one each alternating year while the UN's nation-building exercises increased to at least twice a year.<sup>61</sup> For instance, the occupation of Somalia began as a humanitarian mission and developed into a state-building effort.<sup>62</sup> The occupation of Haiti established security that permitted the election of a president.<sup>63</sup> This security in Haiti however, was short-lived and continues to be compromised by environmental problems and poverty, civil unrest, disenchantment with the government and wide-scale rioting.<sup>64</sup> The occupation of Bosnia ended with the implementation of a multiethnic nation state that nevertheless remains fragile.<sup>65</sup> Kosovo

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<sup>58</sup> The Fund for Peace, "Metrics for Stability and Reconstruction Operations," (n.d.) [http://www.fundforpeace.org/web/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=191&Itemid=229](http://www.fundforpeace.org/web/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=191&Itemid=229) (accessed August 11, 2009).

<sup>59</sup> James Dobbins, "The U.S. and the UN Ways of Nation-Building," *UNA-USA Policy Brief No. 8*. (June 1, 2005): 1.

<sup>60</sup> F. Fakuyama, *Nation-building* (The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 219.

<sup>61</sup> Dobbins, "The U.S. and the UN Ways of Nation-Building," 1.

<sup>62</sup> E. Heinze, "Humanitarian Intervention and the War in Iraq: Norm, Discourse, and State Practice," *Parameters* (Spring 2006): 20–33, 24.

<sup>63</sup> Binnendijk and Johnson, *Transforming for Stabilization and Reconstruction Operations*, 12.

<sup>64</sup> S. Fass, *Political Economy in Haiti* (Transaction Publishers, 2004,) xix.

<sup>65</sup> Col. T. Muir, "The United States Experience in the Balkans and its Implications for Post-Conflict Operations in Iraq," *USAWC Strategy Research Project* (May 3, 2004): 6–9, <http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA423933&Location=U2&doc=GetTRDoc.pdf> (accessed June 20, 2009).

also saw efforts to create a democracy and a market economy.<sup>66</sup> However, by carving out the small state from Serbia, the United States destabilized the region and created a situation that led to ethnic cleansing.

During the 1990s, the approach to stabilization and reconstruction depended on intense force for rapid resolution of instability.<sup>67</sup> The U.S.-led interventions in Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia and Kosovo were designed to discourage any thought of resistance.<sup>68</sup> However, in the Somalia operation, the “American force was drawn down too quickly” and the resulting casualties reinforced the United States’ determination to “establish and retain a substantial overmatch in any future” stabilization and reconstruction mission.<sup>69</sup> It also encouraged the persistence of MOEs that focus on military progress

The occupation of Afghanistan has been characterized by the removal of the Taliban in 2001 followed by a half-hearted attempt to create a democracy. The post-conflict military operation in Iraq can be compared in scope to the transformational attempts in Bosnia and Kosovo and in scale to the occupations that took place in Germany and Japan.<sup>70</sup> In each of these post-conflict military operations, the challenges were essentially the same. Each was characterized by widescale population displacement and similar damages to infrastructure. In each case, the United States was required to work closely with other partners. Unlike post-World War II, stability operations in Afghanistan and Iraq have been impeded by insurgency.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Muir, “The United States Experience in the Balkans and its Implications for Post-Conflict Operations in Iraq.”

<sup>67</sup> W. Murray, “Army Transformation: A View from the U.S. Army College,” *The Strategic Studies Institute* (July 2001): 41–43.

<sup>68</sup> A. DeConde, R. Burns and F. Logevall, *Encyclopedia of American Foreign Policy* (Charles Scribner’s Sons, 2002): 223.

<sup>69</sup> Dobbins, “The U.S. and the UN Ways of Nation-Building,” 2.

<sup>70</sup> Binnendijk and Johnson, *Transforming for Stabilization and Reconstruction Operations*, 12.

<sup>71</sup> R. Chait, A. Sciarretta and D. Shorts, “Army Science and Technology Analysis for Stabilization and Reconstruction Operations,” *Center for Technology and National Security Policy* (October 2006): 7.

The rapid occupations in Afghanistan and Iraq contrasts with the lack of preparedness to respond to the chaos that built in its aftermath.<sup>72</sup> The gap between military success and a sputtering SSTR that followed has been a direct result of gaps in operational planning and strategies. The planning and intelligence that went into the invasion were neglected in Phase 4.<sup>73</sup>

## 1. Operation Enduring Freedom

Two months after initial combat operations began in Afghanistan, U.S.-led forces were successful in overthrowing the Taliban.<sup>74</sup> By virtue of UN Security Council Resolution 1386, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) was established to aid in the formation of an Afghan Interim Authority.<sup>75</sup> The ISAF's primary goal of establishing security in and near Kabul was largely successful.<sup>76</sup> As a result, Afghanistan's President Hamid Karzai, UN delegates, and other officials enlisted the ISAF to extend its mandate to other parts of Afghanistan.

U.S. military officials took a different approach, operating on the belief that "traditional peacekeeping" would be ineffective, unless backed up by "large numbers of troops to patrol Afghanistan's remote cities and towns."<sup>77</sup> This belief was based on a 2003 RAND study that claimed that in Bosnia and Kosovo some 18 to 20 peacekeepers were required per one thousand civilians.<sup>78</sup> Therefore, borrowing from this example,

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<sup>72</sup> J. Carafano, "Post-Conflict Operations from Europe to Iraq," *The Heritage Foundation Lecture* #844 (July 13, 2004), <http://www.heritage.org/research/iraq/hl844.cfm> (accessed August 5, 2009).

<sup>73</sup> N. Behshal et al., *After Saddam: Prewar Planning and the Occupation of Iraq* (RAND Corporation, 2008), xx.

<sup>74</sup> M. McNerney, "Stabilization and Reconstruction in Afghanistan: Are PRTs a Model or a Muddle?" *Parameters* (Winter 2005-06): 32-46, 32.

<sup>75</sup> UN Security Council Resolution 1386, December 20, 2001.

<sup>76</sup> McNerney, "Stabilization and Reconstruction in Afghanistan: Are PRTs a Model or a Muddle?," 32.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>78</sup> J. Dobbins, *America's Role in Nation-Building: From Germany to Iraq* (RAND Corporation, 2003), 151.

Afghanistan would require “hundreds of thousands of troops,” all the more so as Afghans had a history of being averse to intense “foreign presence.”<sup>79</sup>

However, the idea of hundreds of thousands of troops was unpalatable to the public and beyond the capacities of U.S. forces, especially after the Bush administration decided to invade Iraq. Therefore, in 2003, the United States established the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) to supplement the ISAF efforts.<sup>80</sup> PRTs are comprised of between 60 and 100 or more military personnel and soon included Afghan advisors and delegates for civilian agencies such as the U.S. State Department, the U.S. Agency for International Development and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Additionally, representatives from over 12 nations began participating in approximately 22 PRTs in Afghanistan for the purpose of providing security and reconstruction.<sup>81</sup> PRTs have also participated in institutional transitions such as providing support for elections, building schools, disarmament and conflict resolution.<sup>82</sup>

PRT successes depend on garnering support for the coalition in support of local governance.<sup>83</sup> Although PRTs have enjoyed some success in Afghanistan, they have been hindered by a number of setbacks, one of the greatest being the lack of MOEs that collates all the information relative to progress. For example, Robert Perito from the U.S. Institute for Peace said that the MOEs employed by PRTs are no more than “anecdotal information” which relate that “a PRT is doing this or not doing that” and providing

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<sup>79</sup> McNerney, “Stabilization and Reconstruction in Afghanistan: Are PRTs a Model or a Muddle?,” 32.

<sup>80</sup> DACAAR’S Position on Relations to PRTs in Afghanistan. Kabul and Copenhagen, (2005), 3, [http://www.dacaar.org/upload/Source/PDF/dacaar\\_position\\_on\\_prt.pdf](http://www.dacaar.org/upload/Source/PDF/dacaar_position_on_prt.pdf) (accessed August 6, 2009).

<sup>81</sup> United States Institute of Peace, “Oral Histories: Afghanistan Provincial Reconstruction Teams,” (November 2005), <http://www.usip.org/resources/oral-histories-afghanistan-provincial-reconstruction-teams> (accessed August 6, 2009).

<sup>82</sup> Y. Hasegawa, “Is a Human Security Approach Possible? Compatibility between the Strategies of Protection and Empowerment,” *Journal of Refugee Studies* 20, no. 1 (2007): 1–20.

<sup>83</sup> Department of Defense, “DoD Briefing with Maj. Gen. Tucker From Afghanistan,” (April 22, 2009), <http://www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=4406> (accessed August 6, 2009).

impressions with the result that it is not possible to analyze what PRTs are accomplishing.<sup>84</sup> As Michael McNerney, Director of International Policy and Capabilities in the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Stability Operations, observes:

Despite their potential and record of success, however, PRTs always have been in a bit of a muddle. Inconsistent mission statement, unclear roles and responsibilities, ad hoc preparation, and, most important, limited resources have confused potential partners and prevented PRTs from having a greater effect on Afghanistan's future.<sup>85</sup>

PRTs have had many hurdles to overcome. They were created in a hostile and constantly changing environment. And they were largely subject to lofty and unattainable standards.<sup>86</sup> For instance, a November 2002 Coalition briefing described the PRTs mission in a variety of ways, including "to monitor, assist, coordinate bodies, facilitate, and aid cooperation."<sup>87</sup> McNerney observes:

The impression was that the PRTs were to be observing and facilitating everything being all things to all people but not actually accomplishing anything vital to the political or military missions.<sup>88</sup>

From the onset, PRTs were also taxed by constraints on resources and tensions between the civilian and military personnel.<sup>89</sup> The military personnel attached to PRTs utilized DoD's Overseas Disaster and Civic Aid (OHDACA) financial support to construct schools, repair health clinics, and dig wells and other forms of infrastructure management. However, the OHDACA had limited experience with these kinds of humanitarian endeavors and did not allow the PRTs the "flexibility to implement projects

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<sup>84</sup> R. McMahon, "Afghanistan: PRTs Spreading, Though Impact Remains Unclear," *Radio Free Europe* (October 20, 2005), <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1062276.html> (accessed August 12, 2009).

<sup>85</sup> McNerney, "Stabilization and Reconstruction in Afghanistan: Are PRTs a Model or a Muddle?," 33.

<sup>86</sup> R. Oakley, P. Lohman, M. Casey and F. Gaby, "Interagency Structures in 'Surge' Environments Statement of Problems," *Project on National Security Reform* (October 2008): 11–12.

<sup>87</sup> McNerney, "Stabilization and Reconstruction in Afghanistan: Are PRTs a Model or a Muddle?," 32–46, 35.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> S. Azarbaijani-Moghaddam et al., "Afghan Hearts, Afghan Minds: Exploring Afghan Perceptions of Civil-Military Relations," *British and Irish Agencies Afghanistan Group* (June 2008): 4–5.

like repairing major infrastructure, building police stations or prisons, and training or equipping security forces.”<sup>90</sup> In other words, PRTs had scant access to the kind of resources that were necessary for true stabilization and reconstruction in a post-conflict environment. Moreover, communications were poor and their poorly maintained SUVs were entirely inadequate for stabilization and reconstruction operations.<sup>91</sup>

Ultimately, the stabilization and reconstruction efforts by PRTs in Afghanistan were characterized by vague roles, poor communications, inadequate resources and tensions between civilians and the military “particularly over mission priorities.”<sup>92</sup> Civilians within the PRTs often complained that military personnel attached to the PRTs often treated them with ambivalence and regarded them as outsiders. Military personnel, were put off by the fact that their civilian counterparts had little if any resources and scant authority “vested in them by the State Department or Embassy Kabul” and on occasion little or no real understanding of their specific roles.<sup>93</sup>

Complicating matters, PRT civilian members in particular were only deployed on a short-term basis, typically for three months at a time.<sup>94</sup> While they cultivated close relationships with the Afghan communities, the interruption in the tour of duty made it impossible for them “understand local politics and distinguish relatively good from relatively bad actors.”<sup>95</sup> Many PRT members complained that “just as they were

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<sup>90</sup> McNerney, “Stabilization and Reconstruction in Afghanistan: Are PRTs a Model or a Muddle?,” 32–46, 36.

<sup>91</sup> A. Hoshmand, “Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan,” *International Security and Economic Policy Project Course* (May 10, 2005): 20–23.

<sup>92</sup> McNerney, “Stabilization and Reconstruction in Afghanistan: Are PRTs a Model or a Muddle?,” 36.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>94</sup> M. Scotto and J. Alexander, “The Role of PRTs on the Battlefield,” *Small Wars Journal* (2009), <http://smallwarsjournal.com/blog/journal/docs-temp/223-scotto.pdf> (accessed August 6, 2009).

<sup>95</sup> McNerney, “Stabilization and Reconstruction in Afghanistan: Are PRTs a Model or a Muddle?,” 32–46, 40.

beginning to gain some influence” their tour of duty would come to an end.<sup>96</sup> Ultimately, the U.S. addressed this difficulty by extending the time to one year and other countries would soon follow this trend.<sup>97</sup>

Eventually PRTs did begin to have greater impact and by 2003, they had more defined objectives. These objectives were to enhance security, strengthen “the reach of the Afghan central government” and facilitate reconstruction.<sup>98</sup> More importantly, coordination between military-led PRT projects and civilian projects began to improve and PRTs obtained funding from the State Department Economic Support Funds to supplement OHDACA funds.<sup>99</sup>

While the PRTs were accomplishing some relative success by 2005, there was still no satisfactory MOEs in place for calculating their success rate. McNerney notes that:

The most common measure of success cited to the author by PRT representatives was the number of smiling Afghan children. Anecdotal evidence abounds of the positive impact PRTs have had on changing attitudes of local Afghans, as villagers went from throwing rocks at PRT convoys to smiling and waving as they saw the benefits of a PRT presence in their region.<sup>100</sup>

Another means used for measuring success was the fact that in regions influenced by the Taliban, coalition forces obtained the assistance of Afghan civilians in locating weapons.<sup>101</sup> And calculating the funds spent and projects completed is a simple matter, but not an adequate metric. As McNerney explains:

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<sup>96</sup> McNerney, “Stabilization and Reconstruction in Afghanistan: Are PRTs a Model or a Muddle?,” 40–41.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 32–46, 37.

<sup>99</sup> O. Eronen, “PRT Models In Afghanistan: Approaches to Civil-Military Integration,” *CMC Finland Civilian Crisis Management Studies* 1, no. 5 (2008): 37–38.

<sup>100</sup> McNerney, “Stabilization and Reconstruction in Afghanistan: Are PRTs a Model or a Muddle?,” 39.

<sup>101</sup> T. Johnson, “On the Edge of the Big Muddy: The Taliban Resurgence in Afghanistan,” *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly* 5, no. 2 (2007): 93–129.

These projects were effective only to the extent that they improved the ability of the PRTs to influence local events. Influence is extremely hard to quantify, but it must be assessed nevertheless.<sup>102</sup>

The MOEs used by PRTs were devoid of any semblance of a systematic metric.

The ad hoc nature of PRTs has still not improved to an appreciable level. PRTs continue to function in a decentralized manner. Each Agency has failed to set clear goals for the overall PRTs missions and have no effective means of evaluating effectiveness or performance. The U.S. House of Representatives' Committee on Armed Services reported in April of 2008 that following an investigation of PRTs in Afghanistan and Iraq, findings were that among the major deficits of PRTs was a lack of leadership, identified goals, coordination and measures of effectiveness.<sup>103</sup>

As of 2008, the reported metrics used for measuring the success and progress of PRTs have been inefficient. The U.S. House of Representatives stated in its 2008 report that neither the DoD nor the Department of State have subscribed to an "ends, ways, and means" system for measuring PRTs' progress and how they fit in with the operations' strategies and objectives.<sup>104</sup> The metrics used so far have been for the funds expended or the number of buildings erected.<sup>105</sup> These metrics may provide output information, but they do not quantify PRT impact. Although PRT impact cannot ultimately be mathematically measured, MOEs can give planners a reference point for evaluating the value of action taken and planned actions.

According to McNerney, the most satisfactory MOE for stabilization and reconstruction operations is assessment on the basis of:

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<sup>102</sup> McNerney, "Stabilization and Reconstruction in Afghanistan: Are PRTs a Model or a Muddle?," 32-46, 39.

<sup>103</sup> U.S. House of Representative Committee on Armed Services, "Agency Stovepipes vs. Strategic Agility: Lessons We Need to Learn from Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Iraq and Afghanistan," (April 2008), [http://armedservices.house.gov/pdfs/Reports/PRT\\_Report.pdf](http://armedservices.house.gov/pdfs/Reports/PRT_Report.pdf) (accessed August 11, 2009).

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.



- The extent to which tactical-level coordination is improved
- How well relationships are built
- How well capacity is built<sup>106</sup>

However, making these kinds of assessments can only be as good as the information obtained and shared between different agencies.<sup>107</sup> With the poor communications and the tensions between civilian and military PRTs, whose primary function is to foster coordination between agencies, information sharing is problematic and MOEs will continue to lack an adequate metric system.

It is obvious that the stabilization and reconstruction mission in Afghanistan was poorly planned. This is evidenced by the ad hoc measures taken only after the combat terminated. For instance the UN Resolution that created the ISAF came only after the combat terminated. It was this ad hoc preparedness that gave way to poor organizational structure, which in turn gave way to inadequate methods for measuring effectiveness of ongoing operations.

President Barack Obama acknowledged the metrics used in Afghanistan focused on wrong indicators. MOEs report on the numbers of enemies killed, the number of U.S. deaths, and the numbers of trained Afghan police or military personnel. As stated earlier, these metrics can be false indicators of progress. In fact, U.S. commanders in Afghanistan have accepted the futility of this kind of information and are focusing instead on taking account of cooperation on the part of Afghan citizens and coalition forces.<sup>108</sup> President Obama promises to continue assessing U.S. “efforts to train Afghan security forces” and the progress in combating insurgents.<sup>109</sup> However, greater emphasis will be placed on measuring the development of the Afghan economy.

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<sup>106</sup> McNerney, “Stabilization and Reconstruction in Afghanistan: Are PRTs a Model or a Muddle?,” 39.

<sup>107</sup> W. Flavin, “Planning for Conflict Termination and Post-Conflict Success,” *Parameters* (Autumn, 2003): 95–112.

<sup>108</sup> D. Sanger, E. Schmitt and T. Shanker, “White House Struggles to Gauge Afghan Success,” *The New York Times*, August 7, 2009, 4A.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*

The lessons learned from the lack of coordination among PRTs and with the military and congress can be gleaned from President Obama's statements. Those lessons indicate that the U.S. has come to accept that the metrics used for gaining public support or justifying the deployment of troops, are insufficient for measuring progress in stabilization and reconstruction operations. PRTs are very important to the ability to measure progress in Afghanistan, quite simply because it is the "operational center of gravity for security, reconstruction and governance."<sup>110</sup>

## **2. Operation Iraqi Freedom**

Military operatives anticipated from the outset that there would be a period of instability once Saddam's regime was overthrown<sup>111</sup>. However, the military operation began with a specific form of resistance in mind. Believing that Baghdad would offer the greatest resistance and the South would fall relatively easy, troops would begin in the South and "civil affairs troops and humanitarian aid organizations" would follow "once key cities like Basra and Nasiriyah were secured" as the troops moved forward to Baghdad in the North.<sup>112</sup> However, contrary to expectations, resistance in the South was much stronger and Baghdad fell rapidly. The prolonged operation in the South meant that follow-on forces could not be deployed to Baghdad fast enough. Looting and vandalism immediately followed, forcing combat troops to shift "from the role of warfighters to peacekeepers overnight."<sup>113</sup> These "unexpected" contingencies complicated stabilization and reconstruction efforts and provide proof of MOE deficiencies used from the outset.

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<sup>110</sup> USAID, "Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan: An Interagency Assessment," (June 2006).

<sup>111</sup> R. Copson and P. Gallis, "Iraq War? Current Situation and Issues for Congress," *Report for Congress*, Order Code RL31715, 22–23.

<sup>112</sup> R. Powers, "An Effective Framework for Stabilization and Reconstruction: Kosovo or Iraq?" A Paper Submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in Partial Satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations, (May 16, 2003), <http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA420285&Location=U2&doc=GetTRDoc.pdf> (accessed June 20, 2009).

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

As CSIS associate vice president Craig Cohen argues, initial analysis will be flawed when the “fundamental drivers of conflict and instability” are skimmed over or ignored.<sup>114</sup>

Stabilization and reconstruction in Iraq was challenged from the outset. There was neither coordination nor method for assessing challenges faced by the reconstruction officials.<sup>115</sup> The widespread devastation caused by the actual combat and the subsequent looting, vandalism and chaos increased the challenges for measuring the effectiveness of post-combat stabilization and reconstruction. As former Senior Advisor to the U.S. Department of State David L. Phillips explains:

Worsening security conditions eroded America’s standing with Iraqis and transformed the ‘liberation’ into what U.S. officials described as ‘occupation.’<sup>116</sup>

There were not enough civil affairs troops to provide the critical link between combat and civil governance,<sup>117</sup> therefore order could not be restored and reconstruction could not commence.<sup>118</sup> Complicating matters, civil affairs officers are typically army reserves and as Commander Richard Powers, USN, explains:

The frequency that they are away from their full-time civilian jobs makes retention difficult. Effectiveness of the future military force will increasingly depend on the integration of civil affairs troops into the active army.<sup>119</sup>

Each of these difficulties and challenges indicate that MOE based on false assumptions had been relied on. As Washington Post Report Tom Ricks explained, the

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<sup>114</sup> C. Cohen, “Measuring Progress in Stabilization and Reconstruction,” *United States Institute of Peace, Stabilization and Reconstruction Series* (March 2006): 5.

<sup>115</sup> P. Hughes, “Planning for Post-Conflict Reconstruction: Learning for Iraq,” Workshop Proceedings National Defense University Institute for National Strategic Studies (July 29, 2004), [http://www.ndu.edu/inss/Repository/INSS\\_Proceedings/Post\\_Conflict\\_Stabilization\\_Series/PostConflict\\_Iraq\\_July2004.pdf](http://www.ndu.edu/inss/Repository/INSS_Proceedings/Post_Conflict_Stabilization_Series/PostConflict_Iraq_July2004.pdf) (accessed August 6, 2009).

<sup>116</sup> D. Phillips, *Losing Iraq: Inside the Postwar Reconstruction Fiasco* (Basic Books, 2005), 8.

<sup>117</sup> Hughes, “Planning for Post-Conflict Reconstruction: Learning for Iraq.”

<sup>118</sup> J. Hamre et al., “A Field Review and Recommendations,” *CSIS* (June 27, 2003): 1.

<sup>119</sup> Powers, “An Effective Framework for Stabilization and Reconstruction: Kosovo or Iraq?”

U.S. went into Iraq with “scant international support” and “on the basis of incorrect information”.<sup>120</sup> Eventually, they resorted to intermittent assessment missions rather than an ongoing coordination of information regarding progress and failures.<sup>121</sup>

Satisfactory MOEs help planners identify problem areas and how to remedy those problems. This is particularly important in a hostile and chaotic environments. There is nothing to be gained from focusing on measuring violence. As General Peter Pace argued, you can have “zero violence” and the populace could still have a pessimistic view of the future.<sup>122</sup> MOEs should reflect the Iraqi perceptions of success of the stabilization and reconstruction operations. This is particularly challenging when metrics are predisposed to measure outputs such as deaths and destruction rather than outcomes.

An “anti-coalition insurgency” developed in Iraq and it took the U.S.-led military operatives a year to adjust to this new development.<sup>123</sup> This development resulted in the discontinuation of the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA) and the introduction of the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA). Many delays in stabilization and reconstruction were caused by unexpected developments. For instance, at a summit in Madrid in 2003, foreign donors committed \$13 billion to the reconstruction of Iraq. But by 2007, only \$3 billion in loans and grants had been deposited.<sup>124</sup> Making matters worse, some coalition forces who were engaged in the initial combat phase began pulling out following the termination of the actual war. By 2007, the forces of an additional 15 countries pulled out as a result of terrorist threats.<sup>125</sup> Each of these incidents added to the ad hoc nature of the stabilization and reconstruction operations. The withdrawal of donors and coalition forces could have been avoided by

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<sup>120</sup> T. Ricks, *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq* (The Penguin Press, 2006), 3.

<sup>121</sup> A. Rathmell, “Planning Post-Conflict Missions in Iraq: What Can We Learn?” *International Affairs* 81, no. 5 (2005): 1013–1038.

<sup>122</sup> Koppleman, “The Wrong Metric.”

<sup>123</sup> Project on National Security Reform, “Opting for War: An Analysis of the Decision to Invade Iraq,” (n.d.), <http://www.pnsr.org/web/page/741/sectionid/579/pagelevel/3/interior.asp> (accessed June 20, 2009).

<sup>124</sup> J. Sharp and C. Blanchard, “Post-War Iraq: Foreign Contributions to Training, Peacekeeping, and Reconstruction,” in *Surging Iraq?* ed. S. Costel (Nova Science Publishers, 2008), Ch. 10, 177.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, 177.

the use of a set of MOEs with clear end goals and a focus on inter-agency and inter-government coordination. In the absence of a sound metric for assessing progress, it is hardly surprising that funding and support was so tenuous.

Critics have long maintained that the ad hoc and compartmentalized pre-war planning was the greatest contributing factor to the well-documented blunders in Operation Iraqi Freedom.<sup>126</sup> Phillips maintains that the Bush administration went into Iraq ill-prepared for the post-war phase and relied too strongly on Ahmad Chalabi, the man earmarked for replacing Saddam. The information coming from Chalabi seemed to be sufficient for Washington's decisions, but ultimately proved unreliable. Chalabi provided intelligence of Iraq's possession of weapons of mass destruction and claimed with equal fervor that Iraqis would welcome coalition forces with flowers. The U.S. believed that authority would be transferred to an interim government after a brief transition period. Likewise, the U.S. operated on the erroneous belief that once the Ba'ath Party fell, "Iraq's technocrats would transfer their loyalties to a new administration" and stability would be accomplished.<sup>127</sup>

The combat operations and reconstruction planning was characterized by conflicting patterns that emerged at important times. At times, U.S. officials took their cues only from Iraqis "who told them what they wanted to hear." But at other times, U.S. officials "ignored the advice of Iraqis" altogether.<sup>128</sup> The futility of this kind of planning obviates the need for an effective metric system for measuring the likelihood of. In the absence of such a system, the U.S. miscalculated the needs in Iraq to such an extent that the entire stabilization and reconstruction mission can be accurately described as a colossal failure.

Problems continued to emerge and the CPA made a number of tactical errors, which added to security problems. The CPA issued a decree dissolving the Iraqi army and effectively terminated their services without pay nor earned pensions. The result was

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<sup>126</sup> Phillips, *Losing Iraq: Inside the Postwar Reconstruction Fiasco*, 7.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*

the transformation of 400,000 Iraqis and their extended families from potential partners into antagonists. The risks and benefits of issuing this decree were not accurately or meaningfully assessed. The CPA also failed to take into account that many of Iraq's civil servants were forced into service. In fact, doctors and teachers were quite often forced to join the Ba'ath party in order to secure employment.<sup>129</sup>

Other tactical errors were made by key U.S. officials. For instance, the United States was ambivalent rather than proactive in regards to the United Nation's participation in the post-conflict resolution strategies and missions. The United States also failed to take into account what Iraqis truly expected. Phillips notes that after so many years of being subjected to a rogue and tyrant regime, Iraqis were determined to achieve self-governance immediately following the war. The result was that when the CPA appointed the Iraqi Governing Council, Iraqis rejected the appointment, viewing it as no more than an American puppet.<sup>130</sup>

Ultimately, the ongoing stabilization and reconstruction efforts in Iraq continue to be characterized by "endemic violence, a shattered state, a nonfunctioning economy and a decimated society."<sup>131</sup> When Major General Rick Lynch of the U.S. Army's 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry in Iraq was asked how success was measured, he replied:

Measures of success are based on controlling key terrain; weapons caches that you've taken away; key individuals that you've either killed or captured...<sup>132</sup>

This kind of information is useful during the battle phase of the operation but does not provide a conceptual basis for assessing the underlying difficulties that gave rise to conflict in the first place. Flawed MOEs are based on taking count of captured territory, enemy bodies, captured enemy weapons and so forth. Plans and strategies for

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<sup>129</sup> A. Dawisha, "Iraq: Setbacks, Advances, Prospects," *Journal of Democracy* 15, no. 1 (2004): 5–20.

<sup>130</sup> Phillips, *Losing Iraq: Inside the Postwar Reconstruction Fiasco*, 9.

<sup>131</sup> D. Hendrickson and R. Tucker, "Revisions in Need of Revising: What Went Wrong in the Iraq War," *Strategic Studies Institute* (December 2005): vi, <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/pub637.pdf> (accessed June 21, 2009).

<sup>132</sup> S. Krefling, "Measuring Success in Iraq: Is the U.S. Military Using the Wrong 'Metrics'?" *Roguely Stated* (July 2007), <http://www.roguelystated.com/2007/07/07/measuring-success-in-iraq-is-the-us-military-using-the-wrong-metrics/> (accessed August 11, 2009).

stabilization and reconstruction cannot rely on these kinds of metrics. There is often a fine line between useful and useless information. For example, reports on the numbers of schools built do not measure the effectiveness of an education system. However, data on the number of persons actively enrolled in those schools and their retention rate provide better indicators.

MOEs are that they are purely retrospective and require considerable and protracted analysis in order to apply them to the post-conflict environment. In a hostile and unpredictable environment, studying and evaluating existing trends is entirely impractical. Decision makers in post-combat environments where incidents are quite often unpredictable require a model by which to redirect or direct resources for the most practical and desired result.<sup>133</sup> MOEs that focus on numbers of deaths and weapons taken do not provide a strategy for stabilization and reconstruction but rather a strategy based on “kill, capture and destroy.”<sup>134</sup>

Relying on meaningless metrics led to a number of tactical errors. The most common cited errors can be summarized as follows:

- The actual combat plan was sufficient but failed to include a comparative strategy for peace.
- The number of troops deployed to stabilize Iraq in the post-combat stage were insufficient.
- There was no plan in place for the prevention of looting nor was there a plan for effective response to it.
- The termination of the Iraqi army was erroneous in that the Iraqi army could have played a pivotal role in the restoration of security.
- Harsh decrees against Ba’ath party members only antagonized the Sunnis propelling many into insurgency.

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<sup>133</sup> L. Carroll, J. Farr, and T. Trainor, “Weighted Scoring Model for Resource Allocation in Postconflict Reconstruction,” *Journal of Infrastructure Systems* 14, no. 3 (September 2008): 169–177, 169.

<sup>134</sup> Krefling, “Measuring Success in Iraq: Is the U.S. Military Using the Wrong ‘Metrics’?”

- Isolating and disregarding the international community, particularly the UN and European allies contributed to the difficulties with gaining their aid with the stabilization and reconstruction of post-war Iraq.<sup>135</sup>

These early mistakes have carried over into the ensuing years and have complicated efforts at stabilization and reconstruction. Reports of blunders continue to reach the public via the media. In the early aftermath of the actual war, journalist Krugman described for the *New York Times* a scenario that characterizes much of the post-conflict resolution difficulties. Chaos continues to expand, “attacks on convoys have multiplied,” main roads have been closed off and “reconstruction has slowed where it hasn’t stopped.”<sup>136</sup>

Testifying before the Committee on Foreign Relations, Joseph Christoff, Director of International Affairs and Trade, explained that there were three key problems creating obstacles to the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Iraq.<sup>137</sup> The first being the security challenges the U.S.-led coalition faces on a daily basis and the “continuing strength of the insurgency.”<sup>138</sup> These difficulties combine to truncate virtually all efforts made for the transfer of security and administration to Iraqi officials and forces. Secondly, the U.S. lacks an adequate MOE for checking and balancing progress and performance. This not only makes it difficult for the U.S. to assess impact but also to effectively allocate appropriate resources and priorities.<sup>139</sup> The problems is related to the inability to sustain reconstruction efforts as a result of security problems and difficulties with continuous access to water and electricity.<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> D. Hendrickson and R. Tucker, “Revisions in Need of Revising: What Went Wrong in the Iraq War,” *Strategic Studies Institute* (December 2005), v.  
<http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/pub637.pdf> (accessed June 21, 2009).

<sup>136</sup> P. Krugman, “What Went Wrong?” *New York Times* (April 23, 2004)  
<http://www.nytimes.com/2004/04/23/opinion/23KRUG.html> (accessed June 21, 2009).

<sup>137</sup> J. Christoff, “Rebuilding Iraq: Stabilization, Reconstruction, and Financing Challenges,” *United States Government Accountability Office*, Testimony before the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate (February 8, 2006), 4.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*



The U.S. government realizes that decision-making in stabilization and reconstruction operations in Iraq has been burdened by unsatisfactory MOEs. In this regard the government has recently turned its attention to gathering more meaningful information from field operators. This information includes economic and infrastructure improvements.<sup>141</sup> However, this information does not assess whether or not Iraqis are contented and have an optimistic outlook for the future. Likewise, the U.S. government's commitment to documenting the numbers of trained Iraqi security forces does not in any way indicate if the root problems of the conflict have been eradicated. These indicators are merely reflective of inputs and outputs and not actual outcomes. As former Pentagon and State Department intelligence analyst Anthony Cordesman pointed out, even with the new approach to MOEs in Iraq, the information provided by the U.S. Army and USAID focuses primarily on details about the allocation of funds and very little on accountability.<sup>142</sup>

Unsatisfactory MOEs are at the core of the continuing security problems and lack of successful stability and reconstruction efforts in Iraq. Adequate MOEs could have anticipated and planned for effective security measures and helped avoid the re-allocation of reconstruction resources to cover security costs. MOEs that simply report on outputs and inputs rather than outcomes will not resolve the problems that are delaying stabilization and reconstruction efforts in Iraq.

## **E. CURRENT STABILIZATION AND RECONSTRUCTION STRATEGIES**

The approach taken to military operations and post-conflict missions following the September 11 terrorist attacks marked a sharp departure from the U.S.'s previous

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<sup>141</sup> P. Levy, "Obama Administration," *Foreign Policy* (July 31, 2009), <http://shadow.foreignpolicy.com/Obama> (accessed August 11, 2009).

<sup>142</sup> "U.S. Probe Says Iraq Reconstruction Effort Marred by Vast Waste," *Radio Free Europe* (December 18, 2009), [http://www.rferl.org/content/U.S.\\_Probe\\_Says\\_Iraq\\_Reconstruction\\_Effort\\_Marred\\_By\\_Vast\\_Waste\\_/1361068.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/U.S._Probe_Says_Iraq_Reconstruction_Effort_Marred_By_Vast_Waste_/1361068.html) (accessed August 11, 2009).

strategies for an “overwhelming preponderance in favor of the ‘small footprint’ or ‘low profile’ force posture.”<sup>143</sup> This new post September 11 approach to stabilization and reconstruction can be summarized as follows:

- Allied forces in post-combat Afghanistan represent one-fortieth the troops to population ratio that NATO deployed in Bosnia.
- The United States deployed approximately three times more troops to Iraq than NATO deployed to Kosovo four years earlier. However, the troop to population ratio in Iraq was at least one-third the ratio of that in Kosovo.
- In 2004, the U.S. troops deployed in Haiti were only one-tenth of the size deployed to Haiti some ten years earlier.<sup>144</sup>

In each of these cases, the low profile or small footprint U.S.-led forces proved unsuccessful and in each case additional troops were added. In both Iraq and Afghanistan, the United States was forced to increase force presence.<sup>145</sup> In Haiti, the 2004 U.S.-led troops were supplemented by additional U.N.-led troops.<sup>146</sup> Essentially, the smaller forces were not able to obtain security.

The U.S. history of construction and rehabilitation in military operations has provided a hard learned lesson. This lesson is unambiguously stated in the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) Directive 3000.05 of 28 November, 2005. The relevant part of Directive 3000.05 reads as follows:

Stability operations are a core U.S. military mission...They shall be given priority comparable to combat operations...and incorporated into all phases of planning.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> Dobbins, “The U.S. and the UN Ways of Nation-Building,” 2.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

<sup>145</sup> S. Myers, “Iraq,” *The New York Times* (July 1, 2009), <http://topics.nytimes.com/topics/news/international/countriesandterritories/iraq/index.html> (accessed August 6, 2009).

<sup>146</sup> United States, Government Accountability Office, *Peacekeeping: Cost Comparison of Actual UN and Hypothetical U.S. Operations in Haiti* (Diane Publishing, 2006), 15.

<sup>147</sup> U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) Directive 3000.05, November 28, 2005.

It appears from the comments of the new International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) Commander, General Stanley McChrystal, that message is now being applied. McChrystal said that the MOEs will no longer be marked by enemies killed, but by “the number of Afghans shielded from violence.”<sup>148</sup>

OEF and OIF illustrate how long and complicated stabilization and reconstruction operations can be.<sup>149</sup> In both cases, U.S.-led forces saw rapid and decisive victories in the combat phase. However, the post-combat environment stabilization and reconstruction efforts continue. The post-conflict phase largely depends on satisfactory MOEs, but in a recent report to Congress, the focus of MOEs continues to depend on security issues<sup>150</sup> rather than the underlying factors that influence long-term stability, such as infrastructure, economy, rule of law and population perspectives. A closer examination of these two military stabilization and reconstruction efforts can help us understand how these efforts can be improved upon for optimum results by employing a more satisfactory MOE.

Each of these operations remain in place for the purpose of stabilization and reconstruction within the ambit of peace building aspirations. More importantly perhaps, each of these military operations are a manifestation of the fact that success requires that the first phase of military operations involve planning well in advance of initiating the process. Similarly, advance planning is also required for the “subsequent phase of conflict.”<sup>151</sup> Ultimately, the success of each phase requires a satisfactory method for measuring progress and not merely assessing inputs and outputs such as these.

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<sup>148</sup> T. Shanker, “A New Afghanistan Commander Rethinks How to Measure Success,” *The New York Times*, June 30, 2009, A8.

<sup>149</sup> T. Kelly et al., *Stabilization and Reconstruction Staffing: Developing U.S. Civilian Personnel Capabilities* (RAND Corporation, 2008), xiii.

<sup>150</sup> Department of Defense, “Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq,” *Report to Congress*, (December 2008), [http://www.defenselink.mil/pubs/pdfs/9010\\_Report\\_to\\_Congress\\_Dec\\_08.pdf](http://www.defenselink.mil/pubs/pdfs/9010_Report_to_Congress_Dec_08.pdf) (accessed August 6, 2009).

<sup>151</sup> S. Berger, B. Scowcroft and W. Nash, “In the Wake of War: Improving U.S. Post-Conflict Capabilities,” *Report of an Independent Task Force, Sponsored by the Council on Foreign Relations* (2005): 3.

### III. CHAPTER III

#### A. MEASURES OF EFFECTIVENESS OVERVIEW

Military commanders and politicians alike increasingly emphasize the significance of MOEs. The military utilizes MOEs to analyze and justify courses of action to political leaders, higher headquarters, and the public. Administratively, the military uses Unit Reports (USR), Operational Readiness (OR) statistics and other administrative assessments to evaluate the military's operational/combat readiness.<sup>152</sup> Beyond administrative and public accountability, the military is also required to measure the effectiveness of combat operations.

For operational purposes, MOEs provide a basis for commanders to make decisions in a timely manner. The key is to develop a metric that informs strategy. Metrics are typically useful for making course corrections, rather than anticipating trends.<sup>153</sup> The accuracy of these metrics may determine whether an operation will fail, succeed or otherwise drag on.<sup>154</sup> Inaccurate MOEs may result in poor decisions that ultimately lead to a chain reaction of "negative effects that will not bring the organization closer to reaching its objectives."<sup>155</sup> Moreover, following through on inaccurate and ill constructed MOEs can waste time and resources.<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> G. Geertz and P. Diehl, "Measuring Military Allocations: A Comparison of Different Approaches," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 30, no. 3 (September 1986): 553–581.

<sup>153</sup> B. Brehmer, "Reasonable Decision Making in Complex Environments," in *Judgment and Decision Making: Neo-Brunswikian and Process-Tracing Approaches*, ed. P. Juslin and H. Montgomery (Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 1999), Ch. 2.

<sup>154</sup> S. Shadrick, D. Leedom, and J. Bell, "Development and Assessment of Battlefield Visualization Training for Battalion Commanders," *Interservice Industry Training, Simulation and Education Conference (VITSEC)* (2008), <http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA501650&Location=U2&doc=GetTRDoc.pdf> (accessed September 4, 2009)

<sup>155</sup> Douglas Jones, "Understanding Measures of Effectiveness in Counterinsurgency Operations," (Monograph presented to the School of Advanced Military Studies, United States Army Command and General Staff College, March 2006), 2.

<sup>156</sup> W. Murray, "A Will to Measure," *Parameters* 31, no. 3 (Autumn 2001): 134–147, 134.

Rumsfeld noted that in the new age of terrorism and insurgencies, the United States had an increasing need to “reorient” its “military capabilities to contend with such irregular challenges more effectively.”<sup>157</sup> It is therefore essential that the military acquire an improved method for calculating MOEs and better integrate them into operational missions. U.S. Army Major Douglas Jones notes that:

As the United States addresses the admittedly growing problem of worldwide insurgencies, an effective way to husband valuable resources and military efforts is to develop effective metrics that would enable military commanders and policy makers to evaluate analytically if the execution of their strategy was successfully defeating the insurgents.<sup>158</sup>

Jones obviously favors an approach to metrics that assumes that insurgency alone created the conflict and will impact goals in SSTR. However, Craig Cohen vice president for research and programs at the Center for International and Strategic Studies in Washington, D.C., argues for a metrics system that would measure progress of SSTR missions by assessing the success of a strategy that not only minimizes the means, but also the incentive for conflict. MOEs would also evaluate and assess both institutional and local abilities to keep the peace. In other words progress should be measured by outcome, rather than on “the number of products and services delivered or the amount of resources consumed.”<sup>159</sup>

Insurgencies are a well-known source of security problems in Iraq and a major obstacle to accomplishing SSTR operations in that country. To this end, MOEs have become so central to the efforts in Iraq that the U.S. Congress has mandated DoD is to provide a quarterly report entitled *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq*, which includes “specific performance indicators and measures of progress toward political, economic, and security stability in Iraq.”<sup>160</sup> While this report may provide a useful tool

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<sup>157</sup> Department of Defense, *The National Defense Strategy of the United States of America*. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, March 2005), 3.

<sup>158</sup> Douglas Jones, “Understanding Measures of Effectiveness in Counterinsurgency Operations,” (Monograph presented to the School of Advanced Military Studies, United States Army Command and General Staff College, March 2006), 3.

<sup>159</sup> Cohen, “Measuring Progress in Stabilization and Reconstruction,” 1, 2–16, 3.

<sup>160</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, “Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq,” *Quarterly Report*, (2009): iii.

for Congress, it is far less so in helping commanders to make decisions on the ground. Another difficulty is that MOEs used by Congress provide a broad-based approach that is open to a variety of interpretations.<sup>161</sup> DoD describes MOEs as “tools used to measure results achieved in the overall mission and execution of assigned tasks,”<sup>162</sup> which is fine as far as it documents (no paragraph) completed tasks and missions. In testimony to the U.S. Senate, Joseph A. Christoff, Director of International Affairs and Trade, argued that a report based on a number of completed missions in Iraq do not accurately reflect progress toward mission goals. For instance, a number of reports documented the completion of water supplies stations and sanitation services, but failed to indicate how many Iraqis, as a result of these projects, have access to clean water.<sup>163</sup>

Another example of a flawed metric is provided by the U.S. State Department, which tracks completed health facilities as indicators of access by Iraqis to health care, without taking into consideration the nature of medical equipment, staff quantity, or any measure of quality of care. Attention to these and other details—such as cost, or access if a clinic is located in a Sunni or Shi’a neighborhood, would provide a more accurate indication of the effectiveness of reconstruction missions and how they impact Iraqis.<sup>164</sup>

## **B. RAND CORPORATION MOE**

In 2001, the Director of Strategy, Plans and Policy, together with the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans and the Department of the Army Staff, commissioned the RAND Corporation to leverage information technology to collect a large body of information which could be subjected to quantification or measurement.

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<sup>161</sup> D. Soban and D. Mavris, “The Need for A Military System Effectiveness Framework: the System of Systems Approach,” *American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics* (2001): 1–11, 1.

<sup>162</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, Joint Publication 1-02, *Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, April 2001), 331.

<sup>163</sup> J. Christoff, “Rebuilding Iraq: Stabilization, Reconstruction, and Financing Challenges,” *United States Government Accountability Office*, Testimony before the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate (February 8, 2006).

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*

The mandate noted, “Chief among the analytical tools required are good measures of effectiveness that can demonstrate the value of information in terms of military outcomes.”<sup>165</sup>

Jones maintains, however, that, the 2001 RAND report was not altogether successful in persuading the Army of the utility of MOEs,<sup>166</sup> primarily because RAND used the DoD’s definition of MOEs as a reference point and as a result overemphasized assigned tasks (inputs?) over mission results (outputs). For instance, calculating tonnage of logistics and timeliness of support does not shed light on whether or not a particular insurgency is weakening. This method of measuring progress in terms of outputs is more suitable to a conventional war in which production equals results, rather than an asymmetric conflict.<sup>167</sup> Body counts, troop “surges,” munitions expended, enemies targeted and so on are poor indicators of “progress.” MOEs should not only tell what is being done and what has been done, but also how the completed and ongoing tasks are accomplishing the stated end goal.<sup>168</sup>

Additionally, the 2001 RAND report used calculus and equations to measure data, a method difficult to imagine commanders applying in the field. As a result, the RAND approach simply inundated field commanders with information that they are incapable of interpreting.<sup>169</sup> As Jones explains:

Measures of effectiveness that reveal the quality of assigned tasks and require an extensive math background to understand are not useful in discerning to an operational commander if his military actions are being conducted along logical lines of operations...<sup>170</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> R. Darilek, *Measures of Effectiveness for the Information-Age Army* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2001), xiii.

<sup>166</sup> Jones, “Understanding Measures of Effectiveness in Counterinsurgency Operations,” 26.

<sup>167</sup> J. Robb, *Brave New War* (Hoboken, N.J.: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 2007), 22–24.

<sup>168</sup> T. Brown, “Success in Civil Military Operations,” *Naval Postgraduate School*, Monterey, California, (September 2005), <http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA439373&Location=U2&doc=GetTRDoc.pdf> (accessed September 4, 2009).

<sup>169</sup> J. Clancy and C. Crossett, “Measuring Effectiveness in Irregular Warfare,” *Parameters* (Summer 2007): 88–100, 98.

<sup>170</sup> Jones, “Understanding Measures of Effectiveness in Counterinsurgency Operations,” 26.

Capitalizing on this concept, MOEs for military operations should consist of the following attributes:

- Be meaningful and closely connected to the ascribed end state goals
- Link causes and consequences
- Be observable
- Be quantifiable
- Be specific

Applying these suggested characteristics to a hypothetical situation in which a commanding officer has identified the improvement of the critical infrastructure in his area of operations as a goal, he would conclude that electricity production is a critical MOE. The commander will carefully take account of a MOE for assessing and/or predicting how successful his mission will be and will avoid “the simple megawatts of electricity produced and adroitly chooses average hours of available power.”<sup>171</sup>

The unanswered question in this MOE is: how is the quantification of megawatts of electricity benefiting Iraqis so that stabilization and reconstruction missions are meeting the end state goal? NATO may have finally found the formula for measuring progress relative to completed infrastructure. In December 2007, NATO reported that it had devised at least 63 indicators for measuring progress in Afghanistan. These indicators focus on analyzing the effect that completed missions produced. For example, NATO’s Supreme Allied Commander in Europe said that it is not enough to know that a road was constructed. NATO would endeavor to find out if Afghan farmers had meaningful access to those roads so that they could market crops, earn more and thereby become less likely to fall prey to insurgent recruitment. Account would also be taken of whether or not insurgents were preventing locals’ use of newly constructed roads.<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> Jones, “Understanding Measures of Effectiveness in Counterinsurgency Operations,” 28.

<sup>172</sup> A. Gray, “NATO Revamps Measures of Afghan Progress,” *Reuters* (December 4, 2007), <http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/N04516292.htm> (accessed April 27, 2009).



In this regard, the commander is not concerned with the meaningless data with respect to the megawatts of electricity or the number of roads constructed. He focuses instead on the how often electricity is available and how he can manage his time and resources to further support availability. Likewise, the information about the number of roads constructed and use by Afghans tells the commander whether or not Afghans are utilizing the new roads effectively, so that a decision regarding road blocks or security checks can be taken. In this regard, the MOE is only meaningful if it is linked to strategic end state, has links cause and effect, and is observable, quantifiable and precise.

The MOE is meaningful because it provides a metric that permits a decision for time management, space and asset purposes in the commander's operational framework. As Jones explains:

By measuring, the average hours of available power the commander can assess the effectiveness of this line of operation within his region. If there is a sudden shift in either, the average hours or the available power the commander has an effective tool to realize there will be a change in the environment. The information allows the commander to consider the consequences of the environmental changes and adjust his friendly forces and resources accordingly.<sup>173</sup>

Counterinsurgency operations require knowledge about the state's historical narrative: its culture, habits, governance, society, insurgency, psychology and religion. Failure to come to terms with these aspects of a state will render insurmountable consequences. In terms of the number or hours that electricity is provided to the populace, there is a definite link between cause and effect. For instance, commanders in active duty in Iraq concluded that there was a definite link between electrical supplies and other aspects of critical infrastructure with job decline and insurgency activities.<sup>174</sup>

The available hours of electrical power is an observable MOE. Likewise, the number of Afghans gaining effective access to constructed roads is an observable MOE. In other words, this characteristic of a MOE is a "distinct" feature. However, if a MOE is

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<sup>173</sup> Jones, "Understanding Measures of Effectiveness in Counterinsurgency Operations," 28.

<sup>174</sup> P. Chiarelli and P. Michaelis, "Winning the Peace: The Requirement for Full-Spectrum Operations," *Military Review* 85, no. 4 (July-August 2005): 4-17, 10.

not capable of observation it becomes useless information. For example, the methods used by insurgents are not capable of “complete” observation. The practice of planting bombs, blending in with the general population and the use of “hit and run” tactics makes it difficult to observe. Insurgents also compromise detection and observation by exploiting the anonymity and complexity of urban regions.<sup>175</sup> In general, insurgencies are characterized by ambush and harassment, but for the most part, attacks are executed by surprise and covert action.<sup>176</sup> In this regard, many aspects of insurgencies are unobservable and incapable of precise measurement.

Precision is just as important for making decisions. The fact that the available hours of electricity can be calculated, allows the commander to gain precise information, and avoids making decisions based on false or misleading data. Acting on imprecise information can result in mismanagement of forces, resources, time, space and goals. As Major Mark Brock explains, commanders and those under his or her command have time constraints with respect to making decisions and carrying out their respective tasks.<sup>177</sup> Perhaps more importantly, the MOE must be the subject of constant review because as the environment changes, adjustments must be made to correspond with those changes.<sup>178</sup> This is particularly important in counter-insurgency operations that create a particularly turbulent and violent environment. Reliance on inaccurate information for decision-making in hostile environment is akin to gambling.<sup>179</sup> MOEs will necessarily have to be modified to accommodate those constant changes. For example, in the hypothetical electricity scenario, it is conceivable that with economic improvements more members of the general population would purchase and use more electrical appliances with the result that more electricity will be required.

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<sup>175</sup> C. Alexander, C. Kyle and W. McCallister, “The Iraqi Insurgent Movement,” (November 13, 2003), <http://www.comw.org/warreport/fulltext/03alexander.pdf> (accessed September 4, 2009).

<sup>176</sup> A. Davis “Back To the Basics: An Aviation Solution to Counter-Insurgent Warfare,” *Air Command and Staff College Air University* (April 2005): 1.

<sup>177</sup> M. Brock, “How to Organize the Headquarters for Information Operations at the Division and Brigade,” *U.S. Army Command and General Staff College* (June 2005): 1.

<sup>178</sup> W. Murray, “A Will to Measure,” *Parameters* 31, no. 3 (Autumn 2001): 134–147, 136.

<sup>179</sup> Metz and Millen, “Intervention, Stabilization, and Transformation Operations: The Role of Landpower in the New Strategic Environment, 41–52, 44.

For any MOE to be useful some party or parties are selected to gather and evaluate data. In the absence of delegated observers, modes and places of observation, MOEs are no more than ad hoc exercises delinked from strategic goals.

### **C. THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTE MOES**

The Brookings Institute's Afghanistan Index June 2, 2009, provides a wealth of information that can be used to measure the success of stabilization and reconstruction operations in Afghanistan from 2001-2009. While this index may be helpful for the ongoing operations, it is far too comprehensive for field operators faced with spur of the moment decisions in a hostile environment. The information compiled originates from U.S. Government, foreign journalists, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), but only a small amount originates from Afghan sources.<sup>180</sup>

This information requires compilation over time and is specific to Afghanistan. It requires taking data from the start of operations and comparing it with new information to detect trends. For instance, between 2007 and 2009 Afghan civilian deaths rose from 50 for the month of January 2007, to 253 by June 2007. By January 2008, they had dropped to 56 per months. However there was a sharp increase in February 2008 to 168 with slight declines in the next three months. In June 2008 those numbers again rose sharply from 172 deaths in May to 323. In June the numbers went up to 341, dropped again in August to 162, rose in September to 194 and began a steady decline so that by April 2009 the number of civilian Afghan deaths was 77.<sup>181</sup> Based on this information, it is reasonable to conclude that security operations are not bringing about the stability.

In 2008, 13 percent of the Afghan civilian deaths were attributed to anti-government entities (AGE), 34 percent were attributed to suicide and IED attacks by AGE, 26 percent to pro-government air strikes and 2 percent to pro-government forces. Twenty-five percent were designated "other incidents."<sup>182</sup> The numbers of U.S. troops

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<sup>180</sup> Campbell and Shapiro, "Afghanistan Index: Tracking Variables of Reconstruction and Security in Post-9/11 Afghanistan," 4-49, 4.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*, 4-49, 5.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

wounded or killed in Afghan have also shown a marked increase in 2009. This information demonstrates that security operations are largely unsuccessful. There has been a marked increase in the number of troops in the Afghan National Army from 10,000 in 2003 to 90,000 by 2009. However, the “capability milestone” demonstrates that, while some of these troops are battle trained, the majority require assistance from international forces.<sup>183</sup> Similarly, the Afghan police are not yet capable of “conducting primary operational missions.”<sup>184</sup>

In terms of economic effectiveness, the Afghan index demonstrates that opium production has spiked since the war in Afghanistan began. Annual inflation also dropped from 2003 to 2009. However, opinion polls indicate that Afghans are losing confidence in the ongoing stabilization and reconstruction efforts: while 77 percent of the respondents felt that things were going in the right direction in 2005, by 2009 only 40 percent thought so. In 2005, 68 percent of Afghans rated the U.S. performance as either good or excellent. However, by 2009 that number declined to only 32 percent.<sup>185</sup>

According to Frederick Barton, Co-Director of the Post Conflict Reconstruction Project Centre for Strategic and International Studies, opinion polls can be valuable assessment tools.<sup>186</sup> They can influence change and direction in ongoing reconstruction operations.<sup>187</sup> For the most part, apprehension about the Taliban increased over the years and support for the current government remains relatively high. Likewise, a large majority of respondents felt the Taliban posed the greatest danger to Afghanistan. Afghans participating in the polls were also satisfied that the main reasons things were going in the right direction was because of the rebuilding, opening schools for females, and increased security. For those who thought things were going in the wrong direction,

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<sup>183</sup> Campbell and Shapiro, “Afghanistan Index: Tracking Variables of Reconstruction and Security in Post-9/11 Afghanistan,” 12–13.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

<sup>186</sup> F. Barton, “Measuring Progress in International State Building and Reconstruction: A Paper for the Aspen European Strategy Forum,” *Center for Strategic and International Studies* (August 20, 2008): 4.

<sup>187</sup> M. Franklin, “Iraq Reconstruction: Time for a Plan,” *USAWC Strategy Research Project* (2004), <http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA423333&Location=U2&doc=GetTRDoc.pdf> (accessed September 4, 2009).

the primary reasons cited were insecurity and poor economic conditions. Perhaps more telling, respondents agreed that their families were more prosperous than they had been during Taliban rule.<sup>188</sup>

The information compiled in the Afghanistan Index does measure the success and shortcomings of the stabilization and reconstruction operations. However, the metric relies too heavily on comparing and evaluating trends from one year to the next, which keeps coalition strategists in a reactive mode. The Brookings Institute Iraq Index calculates the complex variables that must be taken into account. But it can be far too complex for a dynamic environment. The Iraq Index also leaves one with the impression that the complex problems the U.S.-led coalition encountered in post-conflict Iraq might have been avoided with better planning based on more accurate MOEs.

Iraqi civilian deaths since 2003 show a marked monthly increase in the mid years peaking at 3,500 deaths in January 2007, followed by a slow decline to 350 deaths by April 2009.<sup>189</sup> The incidents of enemy attacks on coalition forces also peaked in 2007, with rapid decline thereafter. Shiite suicide bombings were the most prevalent in March 2007 with fluctuations throughout the ensuing years. In April 2009, there was a marked increase in Shiite suicide bombings over the previous months, but a rapid decline by May 2009.<sup>190</sup>

The number of U.S. troop fatalities since the start of the war also shows an increase in the middle years over and above those in the initial and latter stages. Interestingly, the number of foreigners crossing over into Iraq for the specific purpose of supporting the insurgency have declined from between 80 and 90 monthly in early 2007 to just 20 a month in May 2009.<sup>191</sup>

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<sup>188</sup> Campbell and Shapiro, "Afghanistan Index: Tracking Variables of Reconstruction and Security in Post-9/11 Afghanistan," 41.

<sup>189</sup> O'Hanlon and Campbell, "Iraq Index: Tracking Variables of Reconstruction and Security in Post-Saddam Iraq," 4-58, 4.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

Capability measurements indicate that a majority of Iraq's security force is currently prepared to plan, execute, and sustain counterinsurgency operations only with coalition support. Economically, oil exports from Iraq have increased from zero in 2003 to \$28 billion in 2008, before declining to \$11.5 billion in 2009. Unemployment shows no appreciable changes from 2003 to 2009 with the rates in June 2003 showing 50-60 percent unemployment variable and fluctuating to between 40-50 percent and 25-40 percent to December 2008. In January 2009, there was a slight improvement of 23-38 percent unemployment.<sup>192</sup>

Opinion polls indicate that 52 percent of participants believe that, as of 2009, security has improved in Iraq, compared to just 8 percent in 2007. Confidence in the Iraqi military has also increased over the years, as has confidence in the Iraqi police, the Iraqi government and the U.S. military. Approval ratings for the current Iraqi Prime Minister vary. The Shi'a approval ratings for Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki improved from 67 percent in March 2007, declined slightly in August 2007, and improved to 70 percent in 2009. The Kurds, however, started with a 60 percent approval rating before it dropped to 51 percent in 2009. The Sunni's approval rating has always been low, but improved from 3 percent in 2007 to 31 percent in 2009.<sup>193</sup>

According to the opinion poll, security has always been the greatest cause for concern for Iraqis, with politics and the military a close second. Interestingly, concerns about the economy have increased over the years, as have social concerns. While respondents felt that access to fuel improved over the years, there is a general consensus that access to medical facilities and clean water have declined.<sup>194</sup>

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<sup>192</sup> O'Hanlon and Campbell, "Iraq Index: Tracking Variables of Reconstruction and Security in Post-Saddam Iraq," 40.

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

Again, the problem with these measures of effectiveness is that they are purely retrospective and require considered and protracted analysis in order to apply them to the post-conflict environment. Decision makers in post-combat environments where incidents are quite often unpredictable require a model for MOEs that will allow them to redirect resources to achieve strategic results.<sup>195</sup>

#### **D. MPICE**

Measuring Progress in Conflict Environments (MPICE) is a metrics framework that attempts to assess conflict transformation and stabilization. MPICE acknowledges the weakness of the U.S. government's approach to MOEs: that they only reveal what has been done rather than what has been achieved.

Outcomes reflect success or failure rates as they occur in the course of a mission.<sup>196</sup> An outcome attempts to discern the conditions that either cultivate or curtail stability and reconstruction. DoD, the U.S. Institute of Peace (USIP), U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Department of State have been cooperating with other partners such as academics and NGOs to develop an improved strategy for stabilization and reconstruction operations. MPICE has created a framework of indicators that are designed to measure outcomes in the realms of governance, economics, security, rule of law and social well being over time.<sup>197</sup>

Using these five indicators as a measuring base makes it possible to monitor those factors that fuel conflict as well as measure the success of reconstruction. MPICE takes the position that conflict stabilization and societal reconstruction occur at far ends of the spectrum divided between conflict and security with peace standing somewhere in the

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<sup>195</sup> Carroll, Farr and Trainor, "Weighted Scoring Model for Resource Allocation in Postconflict Reconstruction," 177, 169.

<sup>196</sup> B. Watson, *Reshaping The Expeditionary Army to Win Decisively: The Case for Greater Stabilization Capacity in the Modular Force* (Diane Publishing Co., 2005), 3.

<sup>197</sup> M. Dziedzic, B. Sotrin and J. Agoglia, "Measuring Progress in Conflict Environments (MPICE)—A Metrics Framework for Assessing Conflict Transformation and Stabilization," *Corps of Engineers. Final Report* (June 2005-August 2008).

middle. The MPICE indicators are calculated to provide actors with an instrument for gaining insight with respect to the conflict in the environment and to monitor success and failure rates by reference to this spectrum.<sup>198</sup>

MPICE focuses on what is called “cooperative security.”<sup>199</sup> The approach taken to measuring progress is multifaceted and relies on a system of research and development for measuring the progress in stabilization operations. MPICE is also outcome oriented in that progress is collated to goals in the context of the five sectors previously noted. In measuring these outcomes, MPICE relies on perceptions as well as quantitative data. Progress is also measured by reference to the balance between “drivers of conflict” and “institutional performance.”<sup>200</sup>

MPICE focuses on three stages of conflict transformation:

- Imposed stability (where intervention is active and necessary).
- Assisted stability (where outside military and other sources of intervention is diminished.)
- Self-sustaining peace (when the state can function independently).

Ultimately, MPICE measures transformation, essentially a new concept.<sup>201</sup> Measuring transformation can be very useful in terms of monitoring objectives and determining where the operation is in terms of achieving those goals. However, transformation does not actually take into account changing environments and as such does not provide a reference point for responding to a lack of progress or a change in the environment.

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<sup>198</sup> Dziejdzic, Sotrin and Agoglia, “Measuring Progress in Conflict Environments (MPICE)—A Metrics Framework for Assessing Conflict Transformation and Stabilization.”

<sup>199</sup> G. Al-Chaar, “Measuring Progress in Conflict Environments and the Haiti Stabilization Initiative,” *U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Research and Development* (May 7, 2009): 2.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid.

<sup>201</sup> K. Guttieri, “Measures of Progress in Conflict Environments,” *Review at the Naval Postgraduate School* (January 14-16, 2008): 7.



Overall, MPICE MOEs are predicated on the theory that evaluating a specific state at the time of intervention to ascertain whether there are conditions favorable to conflict. It goes on to measure the state's capacity peacefully to resolve conflict. In other words, MPICE creates an instrument for measuring conflict transformation.

The MPICE MOE consists of a series of questions calculated to determine progress. For instance, does a particular location have electricity or sanitation? These kinds of questions cannot illicit accurate information because they can only be answered by crossing off a "yes" or "no." In circumstances where there is no electricity, the army might provide power generators. It therefore follows that there either "yes" or "no" can accurately respond to the question. Moreover, it is unclear whether or not the absence or presence of electricity is a security risk since lack of power might either impede or encourage insurgency activity. Much depends on the culture and/or habits of the insurgents.

MPICE's MOE for political moderation and stable democracy sets forth a two-staged objective. (See Figure 1) Stage one requires international assistance to respond to "competition for power and political grievances that" generate violence and channeling those conditions into peaceful "processes and participatory institutions. Stage II has as its objective getting "political institutions and participatory processes" to "function legitimately and effectively" in the absence of international assistance. Encapsulated within these objectives are two goals: diminish the "drivers of conflict" and strengthen "institutional performance."<sup>202</sup>

Both objectives and their goals provide a sound basis for creating a link between decreasing violence and increased governmental effectiveness. It also provides a base measure for determining how capable state institutions are to prevent a return to violence. However, these objectives are based on assumptions of democratic governments and cannot be effectively applied in countries with more autocratic, tribal, or religious-based notions of legitimacy. In these conditions, objectives would have to be framed on a case-

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<sup>202</sup> Dziedzic, Sotrin and Agoglia, "Measuring Progress in Conflict Environments (MPICE)—A Metrics Framework for Assessing Conflict Transformation and Stabilization," 11.

by-case basis. In other words, governmental structures reflect value systems and these value systems will vary from one country to another. It is also erroneous to assume that all violence is politically motivated.

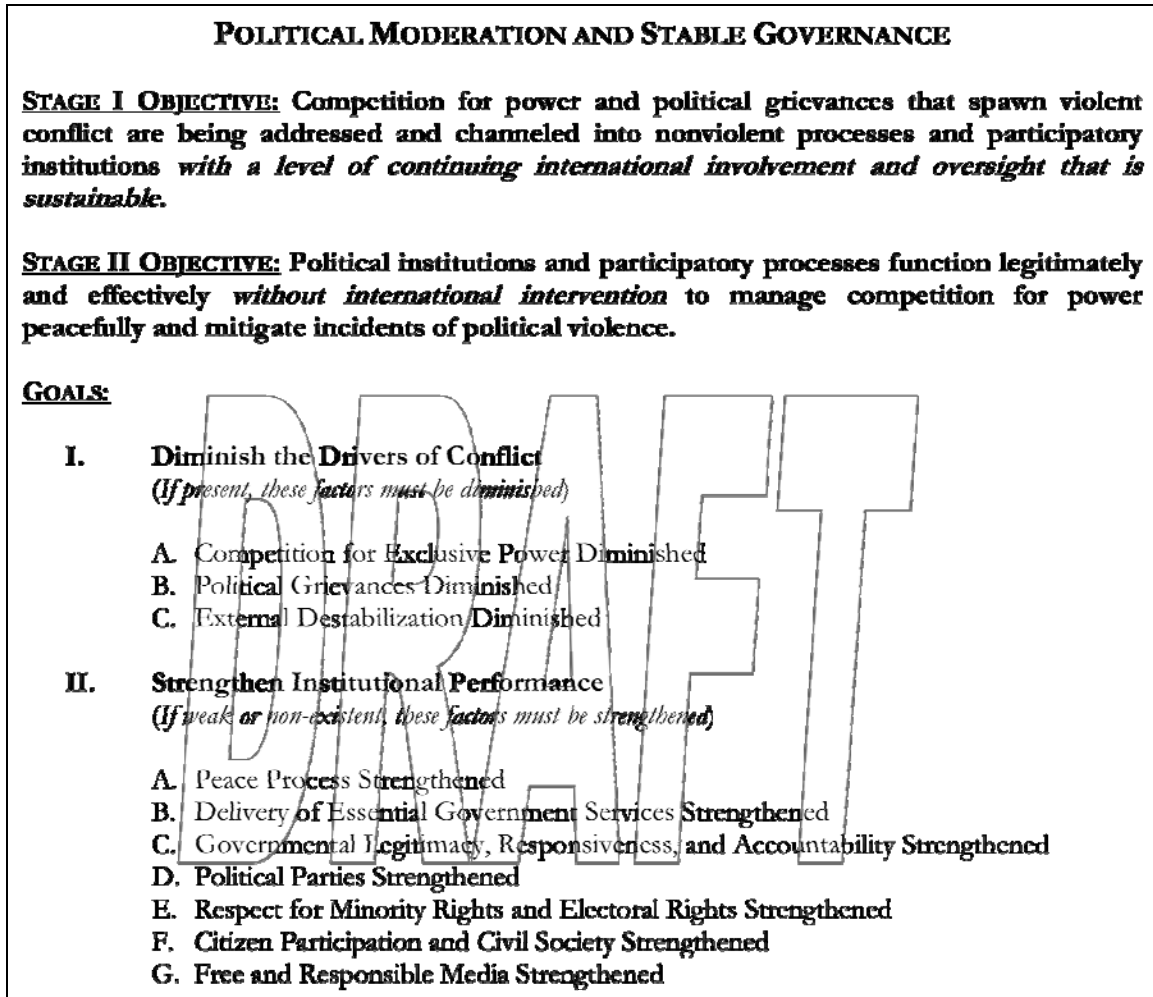


Figure 1. Political Moderation and Stable Democracy.<sup>203</sup>

MPICE sets frameworks for measuring fiscal strength, democratization, drivers of conflict (see Figure 2) among many others. While these frameworks are comprehensive, they lack specificity and can illicit imprecise information. For instance, the framework for drivers of conflict counts new combatants. But it may be virtually impossible to take a census of combatants, old or new, as neither is likely capable of identification unless

<sup>203</sup> Dziejdzic, Sotrin and Agoglia, “Measuring Progress in Conflict Environments (MPICE)—A Metrics Framework for Assessing Conflict Transformation and Stabilization,” 12.

captured. It would seem that in the face of these non-specific questions, quantification is virtually impossible. Again it comes down to imprecise information, the consequences of which can lead to erroneous decisions in an environment that is essentially in a constant state of change.<sup>204</sup> It therefore renders that kind of information almost entirely useless for the purpose of a satisfactory MOE.

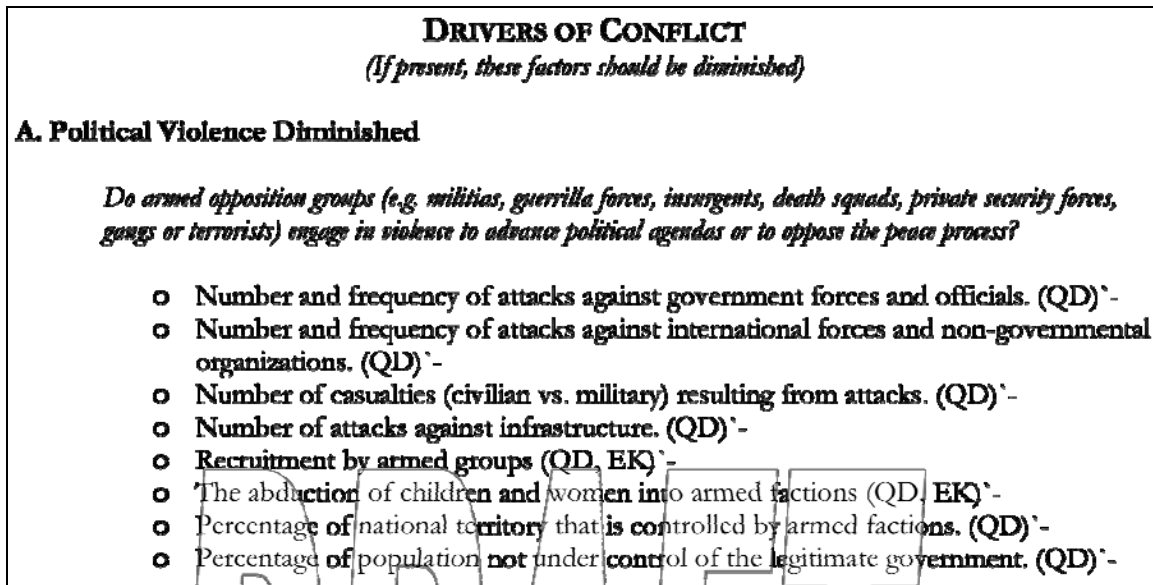


Figure 2. Drivers of Conflict.<sup>205</sup>

The primary problem with the MPICE approach is that it is best suited to times of peace. The data it requires is difficult to measure in a conflict environment. It therefore lacks specificity and makes blanket assumptions about the causes of violence. For this reason a SSTR strategy based on the MPICE analytical method is likely to be flawed. MPICE presupposes that inter-operational techniques and communications for information sharing can be coordinated by field operators. However, the Center for Technology and National Security Policy reported in 2007 that, despite improvements, field commanders continued to experience problems with coordination and cooperation between military factions, and between the military and the government agencies.

<sup>204</sup> K. Gerbick, M. Browne, N Serafino and M. Weiss, *Peacekeeping and Stability Issues* (Nova Science Publishers, 2007), 53.

<sup>205</sup> Dziedzic, Sotrin and Agoglia, “Measuring Progress in Conflict Environments (MPICE)—A Metrics Framework for Assessing Conflict Transformation and Stabilization,” 22.

Moreover, the most frequent means of communication was by cellular phones through liaison officers who lacked translators, or at least translators who were comfortable with working for the military<sup>206</sup>

Therefore, information is both difficult to collect and coordinate in SSTR operations. Much information must be collected from the host country, which requires communication in a foreign language. Lack of translators can compromise field operations. The MPICE framework is not going to provide much of an aid unless the process is conducted in advance of the conflict. Once undertaken, field operations make it virtually impossible recruit personnel able to follow through with the MPICE framework. At best, imprecise information is useless for measuring progress, and may lead to uninformed decisions in the field.

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<sup>206</sup> R. Chait et al., “A Further Look at Technologies and Capabilities for Stabilization and Reconstruction Operations,” *Center for Technology and National Security Policy* (September 2007): 4–6.

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## **IV. CHAPTER IV**

### **A. CONCLUSION**

Accurately assessing progress in conflict environments is among the most critical challenges the United States Government (USG) faces in Stability, Security, Transition and Reconstruction (SSTR) operations today. While the USG can accurately track military progress in battle operations, it lacks sufficient tools to track short- and long-term social, economic, and political progress throughout the course of stabilization and reconstruction operations.

A number of MOE frameworks have been developed in recent years, including MPICE, RAND and the Brookings Institute's Afghanistan and Iraq frameworks that are discussed in Chapter Three. These tools have been developed to provide planners and analysts with the ability to apply metrics to tasks developed in support of complex contingency operations. Unfortunately, these tools are often too complex or impractical to implement in a conflict environment. In some cases, the metrics are too specific or require data that is virtually impossible to collect in non-permissive environments. Still others fail to take account of the interaction of factors and their impact. These MOEs are too imprecise to allow an operational commander to know if his actions are having the desired impact.

What is required for the post-conflict environment is a set of relatively simple, robust MOEs that can be adapted to different situations. Given the complex environment of SSTR operations, this might not always be possible. Nevertheless, this thesis has argued that current MOE frameworks can be improved. In particular, commanders should pay more attention to results (outcomes) rather than merely looking at inputs and outputs. For instance, if a specific goal is to improve access to local health facilities, measuring the numbers of clinics completed will not reveal whether or not access to local health facilities has improved. In order effectively to measure, progress it will be necessary to determine whether or not the completed clinics are properly equipped and staffed and whether locals have access to these facilities.

Current measurement systems tend to focus too greatly on quantitative indicators of limited utility. They also fail to appreciate the quality, rationale, and appropriateness of the initial inputs in relation to the environment. Too often, performance indicators and milestones are not clearly defined, and few benchmarks are created to evaluate progress. Bottom line, current performance measures capture inputs and outputs, but fail to capture outcomes.

Even the best MOEs that monitor and quantify progress too often fail to take sufficient account of the diverse political and societal cultures. Part of the problem lies in the fact that missions often utilize quantitative output measures as their objectives. For instance, establishing internal security through the development of local police services is a key outcome in Afghanistan and Iraq. However, organizations that measure internal security by the number of police officers trained and the number of uniforms and equipment issued often fail to consider the quality of the training, improvements in security, or the effectiveness of the new police in controlling crime and violence.<sup>207</sup> This is because quantitative measures are visible, easy to measure and monitor, and thus can be pointed to by government officials, NGOs, or contractors as examples of progress. Outcomes are notoriously hard to measure in the short-run when the requirement to show success to maintain the support for the mission may be most critical.

But even faulty MOEs that buy time in the short run may prove costly over time because they can lead a commander or policy maker to make inappropriate and costly decisions based on a faulty net assessment. For example, merely counting the miles of roads constructed in Afghanistan without knowing if the locals have meaningful access to those roads can lead to a conclusion that progress is being made. When in reality, locals may not be using those roads at all because the insurgency makes them too dangerous or police shakedowns make them too expensive. Therefore, measuring miles of asphalt without dealing with underlying problems of insecurity or corruption as not a meaningful

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<sup>207</sup> J. Williams-Bridgers, "Iraq and Afghanistan: Security, Economic, and Governance Challenges to Rebuilding Efforts Should Be Addressed in U.S. Strategies," United States Government Accountability Office, Testimony before the Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives (March 25, 2009).

MOE. Organizations often fall short of mission objectives and waste time and money when pursuing analysis and collection based on poorly developed measures of effectiveness.

By taking time to understand the post-conflict environment, it may be possible to develop metrics that can measure the effectiveness within each pillar of reconstruction. Accurate MOEs would allow commanders to assess effectiveness and make well-informed strategic and resource adjustments. By using MOEs as a tool that links the logical lines of operations to the operational objectives, and eventually the strategic end state, while taking into account the political and cultural dimensions of the conflict environment, commanders can develop the measurement techniques necessary to evaluate the progress of counterinsurgency operations. It is possible to link measures of effectiveness to logical lines of operations because many of an insurgency's characteristics can be assessed, defined, and quantified. However, measuring data in SSTR operations can be difficult. For instance, it is possible to monitor the degree to which locals move freely and the frequency and degree to which they conduct their daily lives. This idea can be accounted for by looking at the number of locals that attend newly constructed schools and use newly constructed roads. One can also measure market prices to assess, for instance, insecurity or corruption impacts the economy. These measures will be a good indicator of whether an insurgency continues to impede progress in stabilization and reconstruction efforts.

Likewise success of the security pillar in SSTR operations cannot be measured by looking at the number of insurgents captured or killed. Unlike conventional operations, tactical and operational victories alone do not equal success against insurgents because psychological, political, and strategic factors also play a key role. This concept was illustrated by the United States in Vietnam and by Israel against Hezbollah in Lebanon. In both cases, the conventional armies won nearly every "battle" but failed to achieve their strategic objectives because the enemy simply went to ground, blended into the population, and lived to fight another day.

Effective metrics must be developed to the characteristics of adequate measures of effectiveness. They must be: meaningful, linked to the strategic end state, observable,



quantifiable, precise, and have a strong identifiable relationship between cause and effect. Planners must not stop there—they must also determine who will observe data, when, how, and where to observe the data. Like any reconnaissance mission, planners must allocate the required force structure and resources to ensure the information required to obtain MOE data is properly staffed. These challenges must be considered when MOEs are developed to ensure the commander can synchronize his operational framework.

Counterinsurgency and SSTR operations are likely to continue as primary contingencies for U.S. forces for years to come. The National Security Strategy and corresponding military doctrine are adapting to meet this threat. Although insurgency is a complex phenomenon shaped by geography and culture, it does contain common characteristics that allow a military to apply lessons learned from one insurgency to another. These common characteristics make it possible to design metrics that can evaluate the success of an operational framework and enable a commander to make an informed decision about resources allocation, force structure and strategic adjustments to enhance SSTR outcomes.

The difficulty with devising a MOE for SSTR operations is due to the fact that each operation faces unique. The author takes the position that it is not possible to devise a MOE that can be applied “across the board”. What is required is a standard guideline for constructing an adequate set of MOEs which is designed to collect information and data that is relevant to the specific SSTR environment and local political, social and economic conditions.

## **B. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The aim of this research was to expose and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of MOEs in stabilization and reconstruction environments. This thesis set out to examine how MOEs can be utilized to form a more comprehensive assessment tool by taking into account the differences in the political and cultural environment of states in which SSTR is applied. By exposing inadequacies, and taking the strengths of each of these MOEs, I hoped to design a comprehensive set of MOEs for commanders that was field-friendly, yet robust. Unfortunately research findings indicate that the best approach to MOEs is to

measure only that which is quantifiable and observable, and what is quantifiable and observable will not be known until a specific target is identified. For example, history dictates that the post-conflict environment in Iraq is quite different from the post-conflict environment in Europe and Japan following World War II. The economic, political, cultural and social conditions were vastly different and what might indicate success in one environment may not indicate success in the other. The author has therefore come to the conclusion that rather than devise a comprehensive MOE that can be used in SSTR operations, it would be more practical to devise a guideline that is amenable to constructing MOEs for the divergent environments that inevitably confront SSTR operations.

Current MOEs such as those devised by the Brookings Institute, RAND and MPICE seek to improve on past approaches to MOEs but tend to focus too strongly on comprehensive information that is impractical to evaluate in post-conflict environments. As stated, some of these MOEs may solicit information that is not relevant to all post-conflict environments. In other instances, the information solicited in surveys, such as the number of newly recruited combatants, is so abstract that they render responses unreliable.

I concluded that MOEs should be results-based management instruments that help commanders determine how and to what degree desired outcomes are being met; therefore, they require both a target and a baseline. These MOEs should be entirely objective, capable of quantification and should be earmarked within a certain time frame. Results-based MOEs would also focus on progress with respect to meeting goals rather than assessing the completion of specific tasks. The key is to assess progress made by reference to observable and quantifiable results in relation to strategies and field missions that are designed to meet end goals. MOEs must use indicators of progress that can be measured objectively and preferably by independent parties.

I was unable to produce a set of MOEs that fully encapsulated the necessary factors, as each post-conflict environment will have its own unique goals and its own set of factors requiring different concepts of progress. However, below are recommendations for developing MOEs for a specific situation.

The development of an appropriate MOE should begin by taking a pre-conflict baseline survey of the political and cultural/social nature of the targeted state rather than on the intervening state's own policies and strategies. Efforts should also be made to determine what the population wants and to ensure that those aspirations are consistent with operational goals. If the interveners and the populace are in agreement in their objectives, the chances of a return to conflict are minimized and security will not become an insurmountable problem. In this regard, less time spent measuring security provides more time and resources allocated to reconstruction.

Analyzing the current conditions will aid in setting realistic goals and by doing so, will set a guideline for what ought to be measured. Then it must be determined what political, economic and social factors contributed to the conflict and instability. This must be balanced against local capacities effectively to respond to these factors. Once these factors are analyzed, efforts should be made to determine what steps can be taken to close the gap between what is required and the capabilities of the local population. The emphasis with respect to measuring success should therefore be on assessing the state's long-term ability to achieve and sustain progress in these core areas.

Ultimately, a MOE in a conflict environment is intended to gauge the effectiveness of operations in the context of objectives and goals. If those goals and objectives are clearly defined at the outset, there is at least a yardstick for measuring progress. The MOE seeks to provide a basis for knowing what results are desired, how those results are being accomplished, whether or not there are obstacles to accomplishing those goals, and how those obstacles can be removed or minimalized at the very least. The goals of the operation should be divided among core results that define its success. Invariably, these results should be the four pillars of reconstruction: security, governance, rule of law, and economic and social welfare. For example, to help assess progress in the security pillar, one proposal would be to measure freedom of movement by monitoring the number of roadblocks and checkpoints. Another useful assessment would be taking account of the number of people who feel safe or threatened travelling to work, school, or to the markets. Each of these assessments are useful indicators of whether or not progress is being made and to what degree. Similarly, progress in terms of social and

economic welfare can be assessed by school attendance and graduation rates, employment, access to health care, election participation, justice and the protection of basic human rights. Each of these measures of progress is tied to the strategies and goals of the stabilization and reconstruction mission.

The author plans to use these recommendations during his upcoming deployment to Afghanistan to develop further a set of MOEs that is robust yet field-friendly. The author does believe that it will be possible to develop a “core set” of MOEs that will allow commanders a starting point to work from. This “core set” of MOEs is envisioned to be no more than 4-5 indicators for each of the four pillars of reconstruction. These twenty or so indicators would give a commander a “down and dirty” assessment and provide the backbone to develop a more comprehensive set of MOEs specifically tailored for the operation.

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