

Are we reaching the threshold to overcome the obstacles for effective CIV-MIL cooperation toward mission achievement?

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INTRODUCTION

The common denominator to all that we do in response to crises is the bottom line in the title above – MISSION ACHIEVEMENT. Our various experiences have demonstrated that each of us can accomplish our tasks – humanitarian assistance, establishing security, forming a new government, restoring essential services – and we frequently perform these tasks with highly effective civil-military cooperation. But our experiences are also demonstrating that we're not achieving our MISSION, that the whole isn't greater than the sum of its parts. Why not? Somalia and Haiti are not resolved. Troops are still deployed in Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq. What are the obstacles and how do we overcome them? We've been hopeful before, and were disappointed. Do the current institutional efforts now being undertaken offer a more realistic hope that we're at the threshold of overcoming the obstacles?

Any attempt to dis-aggregate the issues risks falling into the conventional trap of focusing on the parts to the detriment of the whole. Yet it is necessary to perform some kind of deductive thinking which examines the parts. Here's one list of obstacles:

- The tension between political imperatives and realistic time frames to accomplish mission objectives.
- Falling short of achieving effective security capacity-building.

- Prioritization of use of limited resources heavily oriented toward the short-term.
- Inadequate civilian counterpart for the military's deliberate planning and expeditionary capability.
- Need for high degree of information control during preparations for crisis responses leading to limited interagency coordination.
- Integrated strategic planning for post-conflict actions not done alongside conflict planning.

Is there a "threshold" to cross? In a recent conversation with a researcher at the Center for Naval Analysis I was told that "the trouble with the military is that it has to measure everything". The fact that there is no measurable "threshold" to cross may be symptomatic of the civil-military cooperation issue. Diplomats are very reluctant to get tied down with plans that reduce their negotiation flexibility. Most diplomats saw the Dayton Accords as anathema to their style of operation, for example (while accepting its value as an important step forward at the time).

Yet events are transpiring (would "conspiring" be the more appropriate word?) to overcome some of the obstacles listed above. Here's what is happening in the United States on the obstacles listed above.

TENSION ON TIMEFRAMES

I stood at rapt attention at the entrance to the Sheraton Hotel in Baghdad on June 23, 2003 when Senators Biden, Lugar, and Hagel gave a news conference. They all stated their firm beliefs that the engagement in Iraq toward creation of a model mid-east democracy was critical to U.S. national interests and that it would take time. Five years was the time frame stated by Sen. Biden. President Bush, we were consistently told in Baghdad, was committed to stay in Iraq for the long term. All coalition military commanders, while making plans for partial troop reductions, were also planning for the long term. This is indeed a change from the past, a clear measure of post-9/11 change.

The irony is that while most professionals in the Development Assistance field know that the goals we establish for achieving our Mission require several years, and it is gratifying to see agreement on this from political leaders, the international and internal Iraq political pressures connected with Iraq will give us a *very limited time* to maintain a large international presence there. This stands in direct contrast to preceding missions where we could and we did make plans for minimal efforts.

My brother, who is a writer, has encouraged me to write a book on my accumulated experiences, starting in 1959 when I began work overseas as a volunteer in an NGO in Laos. I told him that if I could ever generate enough ambition to do that, the title of the book would be "Decades, Not Years". The unrealistic expectations to accomplish our missions, whether it be development assistance goals of self-sustained economic growth or re-establishment of a stable security in a post-conflict country, have never been sufficiently examined.

Will the war on terrorism and the experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan help us cross the threshold of developing realistic expectations and planning accordingly? Is that very question a leap of faith?

ESTABLISHING STABLE SECURITY

Developing the capacity of the host country government to manage an effective security sector is a *sin qua non* requirement for all post-conflict reconstruction programs. The ways and means to accomplish this part of the Mission, however, have remained highly contentious. The establishment of “constabulary forces” has been one of the most contentious features when it comes to a U.S. military contribution. The level of effort required to address all aspects to the security sector has not received adequate attention - or planning or resources - at the outset of the interventions. For example, analysts reached a retrospective conclusion that the need to totally transform the judiciary in Bosnia was neglected for years, which in turn set back progress to establishing effective rule of law there for years.

That neglect can be chalked up to the civilians. The military, in turn, has felt its role stops at the establishment of security, and it doesn't follow that through into “nation-building”, i.e., helping build a host country capacity to manage a stable security sector. Interestingly, the term “nation-building” as a pejorative has been heard much less since 9/11, and the Department of Defense volunteered to be in charge of post-conflict reconstruction in Iraq. Yet another military tendency is to conclude effective security is a function of restoring the economy (“it's the economy, stupid!”). In one CPA/Iraq joint civ-mil session in October, 2003 one regional military commander made such a statement only to be told in the summary statement by Ambassador Bremer security was the main issue, not the economy.

Does the commitment to a long-term approach to post-conflict reconstruction in the light of the war on terrorism mean that both the civilians and the military will come forward to fill all the gaps in the security sector, and apply a holistic approach to security sector development? And commit the necessary resources over the long term? This constraint will remain problematic, given the resource requirements.

CIVILIAN PLANNING AND EXPEDITIONARY CAPACITIES

The inadequate civilian capacities in responding to crises abroad, in general, are a quandary to the military. My organization, the U.S. Agency for International Development, does have both capacities. While USAID does have significant humanitarian assistance planning and deployment capacities, the requirements in post-conflict reconstruction have grown considerably and USAID's capacities for this remain limited. The State Department can certainly deploy diplomats rapidly to address political negotiations, but the much more substantial requirements following conflict have proved difficult for State to meet, also. Treasury, Justice and other U.S. agencies have even more limited capacities.

It is this area that has attracted the attention of the U.S. Congress. Senators Biden and Lugar of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee have introduced legislation to establish a

new office of Stability Operations to prepare for and manage post-conflict reconstruction efforts. This legislation has passed the committee by a 19-0 vote and is due on the floor of the Senate soon. It carries with it the funding to staff and operate the new office. Congress's interest has been met with similar efforts within the administration to establish the structure required for a permanent response capacity.

This institutional structure to overcome this obstacle, then, may be crucial to overcome the other obstacles, once established. Can this be the key to crossing that "threshold"?

BALANCING SHORT-TERM AND LONG-TERM PRIORITIES

The realization is gradually setting into the counter-terrorism community that there are certain fundamental deficiencies in much of the world that can be constantly exploited by terrorists unless corrected. These deficiencies – poverty, authoritarian rule, unequal access to health care, poor or wrong education, inadequate resource base to support the population, security structure not accountable to the population - will take decades to overcome.

In the immediate aftermath of a crisis, great attention and voluminous resources are provided – mostly to address the immediate relief and reconstruction requirements. It is the immediate physical needs that are the most visible and the most important. But the patience to maintain that attention and those resources is limited. At the same time, however, all crises have causes, and simply returning to the *status quo ante* does nothing to correct the root causes of the crises. Usually a governance if not societal transformation is required. THAT requires immediately addressing the mid- to long-term assistance requirements. It is by no means just re-establishing security and replacing the leaders. In fact, there are opportunities in each crisis to do that. Economic policy reform is most successful if done immediately. Extensive and intensive training programs need to begin as soon as possible in all areas.

How close are we to reaching consensus on the challenges facing us? First, do we recognize what a long-term commitment means? Are we learning the lessons of past experiences or just repetitively re-identifying them? Are we prepared to commit the resources necessary? This may be the most difficult of all the obstacles.

EFFECTIVE INTERAGENCY COORDINATION

All global crises have a high political profile. It is a given that tight controls must be put on the information going to the public connected with the planning for these crises. Thus there is a major tension between the need for information control and the need to have highly effective interagency coordination. Part of the internal government information control mechanism is to limit the interagency participants. The military has felt the need for more effective interagency coordination so strongly that it has mandated and resourced the Joint Forces Command (JFCOM) to seek ways to more effectively coordinate crisis response with the civilian agencies. JFCOM has conducted annual exercises for both transformation and improving interagency coordination purposes.

One result of Millenium Challenge 2002, for example, was to conclude that post-conflict planning must be performed alongside conflict planning. The subsequent exercises have been Unified Quest 2003 and Unified Quest 2004 which are designed to “Expand the Power of Coherent Joint Operations”.

It’s hard to imagine an experimental exercise which can address this problem. The hope, therefore, is that the result of these exercises over time will be the development of effective institutional solutions to achieve effective integrated strategic planning among civilian and military agencies. The new structure to be established by the U.S. administration in response to the legislative interest will also be an important factor in institutional improvement.

EFFECTIVE CIV-MIL PLANNING

In July 2003, CPA received instructions from the Pentagon to develop an integrated strategic campaign plan with CJTF-7. That effort had already been started at that time, and continued throughout the existence of CPA. The military and the civilians worked side-by-side on planning issues. I was told at the time by Amb. McManaway, who worked for USAID in Vietnam, that this was the first time since Vietnam that joint planning at that scale was being done.

IF post-conflict planning will be done alongside conflict planning, IF joint campaign planning can be made a standard practice, IF a balance can be achieved in planning and implementation of actions to meet short-, mid- and long-term objectives, IF a longer-term time commitment sufficient to address root cause problems is recognized as crucial to the war on terrorism, IF a holistic approach toward security sector capacity-building is taken, IF the new institutional structures in the USG are implemented, THEN does it become more realistic to expect that we can be more successful in performing the necessary integrated strategic planning to ACHIEVE THE MISSION?

SUMMARY – THE WHOLE AND THE PARTS

Note that this whole presentation is in the interrogative mode. One ingredient is not mentioned above, however. That is the need for effective teamwork. It is possible that all the elements mentioned in the previous paragraph can happen and the whole is still not greater than the sum of its parts. Team building efforts are often needed in industry, the government, the military and in NGOs. Doctrine can be written, standard operation procedures revised and refined, and mechanisms for coordination established, but if team-building for each new crisis response is not done then the counterproductive turf issues can jeopardize the efforts. In Baghdad I often explained to visitors that the post-conflict operations for Iraq tended to be personality driven rather than effective teamwork based on good planning.

Are we on the threshold? Are we all working for faith-based organizations?