COMPLEX CIVIL-MILITARY OPERATIONS

A U.S. Military-centric Perspective

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U.S. military forces long have conducted operations having objectives other than, or in addition to, combat. In 1996, the Congressional Research Service counted over 250 foreign deployments of U.S. troops since 1798 but only five declared wars.[1] The United States sent a significant number of military personnel to Somalia in 1992–93 to feed starving people, then in 1993–94 to help "build the nation" of Somalia. The 1994 deployment to Haiti ostensibly was undertaken to "restore democracy" by returning President Jean-Baptiste Aristide to power. Operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina since 1995 have aimed at keeping the peace and returning Bosnia to its momentary status as a unified, multiethnic country. The 1999 deployment to Kosovo had a similarly lofty moral objective.

The military aspects of such complex national endeavors have been labeled, somewhat inadequately, as "low-intensity conflicts" or "military operations other than war."[2] Such operations have significant civil-military components. That is, in these operations armed forces have objectives or employ means that directly involve local civilians and civil institutions, including governments. In such cases American military personnel typically work closely with civilian employees of other U.S. government agencies, international organizations (including foreign-aid agencies of other governments and components of the United Nations), and nongovernmental organizations. Virtually by definition, the participation of such a variety of groups makes these operations complex.

The U.S. armed forces collectively and many members of the American electorate are clearly uncomfortable with some of these roles. This discomfort stems partly from such unpleasant transformations as the descent of

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"nation building" in Somalia into the dragging of dead American soldiers through the streets of Mogadishu, and of the reconstitution of Bosnia-Herzegovina into a complicated, seemingly open-ended mission with little prospect of success. Many Americans, including military personnel, are uneasy (and ignorant) about these undertakings, question whether they are indeed military missions, are insecure about the ability of the military to perform them, and worry that such apparently nonmilitary missions detract from *real* military tasks. There is good reason for some of the concern. U.S. military forces have not performed well in such operations in recent years. The root cause of the problem is a mismatch between the demands of such operations—U.S. national objectives and the situations themselves—and the organization, doctrine, and even culture of the U.S. units assigned to perform them. The purpose of this paper is to identify some of the strengths and limitations of U.S. forces in complex civil-military operations and to suggest ways to improve their performance.

Poor understanding of the essential elements of civil-military operations—compounded by lack of a common terminology—result in inability to relate them to overall national objectives. Even within the special-operations community, including its civil-affairs personnel, there is debate about the meaning of such basic terms as "civil affairs" and "civil-military operations." This confusion is exacerbated when concepts are communicated across institutional and cultural lines. Civilian and foreign military organizations differ from the U.S. military, and from each other, in cultural norms and in perceptions and expectations of, and goals for, relationships between military units and civil institutions—which, broadly defined, include religious, social, and labor organizations. Recent descriptions of humanitarian-relief and peacekeeping missions have inadvertently made matters worse by using different terms for similar concepts and inappropriately generalizing from specific operations.

Many commentators have argued that the American military of the Cold War era, which the United States largely retains, is not well suited to complex civil-military (or "complex contingency") operations. Proposals to develop new capabilities and doctrine, however, while laudable, usually focus on tactical operations without examining civil-military operations in a larger political context.[3] They generally fall short in at least one of two key areas: they do not address the profound cultural or psychological aversion that "warfighters" have to peacekeeping and civil-military operations generally; or they do not propose institutional changes, including structural changes and altered incentives, that would enable the U.S. military to plan and execute civil-military operations consistently well.

The U.S. military and the civil agencies of the governments of the international community with which the military regularly works need badly a

common framework for civil-military operations. They need also concepts and institutions that facilitate planning, the execution of missions, communications, and assessments of results. Such a shared understanding would help the American military in the civil aspects of all its operations, including conventional high-intensity wars, in which civil aspects rightly receive comparatively modest attention. Such a framework would have helped us to conduct better the important civil aspects of the war in Vietnam. It would also be helpful if the Defense Department ever has to grapple with domestic "consequence management" in the wake of large-scale attacks on civilians within the United States.

The framework presented in this article is U.S. military-centric; that is, it focuses on civil-military operations from the perspective of the American armed forces. The process could be reoriented easily, however, to other institutions, including international civil agencies or even the "targets" of peacekeeping or peace enforcement. The examples used here come from peacekeeping operations, because those undertakings are conceptually and operationally complex. Dealings with civilians during conventional combat in sparsely settled areas are comparatively simple in concept, if not execution; they also fall within this construct. Domestic civil-military operations, however, present unique political and constitutional issues (which are beyond the scope of this article).

Civil-military operations contain four general stages, as well as feedback mechanisms that work (or fail) during the conduct of each operation and that (ideally) ensure that the lessons learned in each operation influence decisions about others. The four stages are problem identification, mission determination, planning and execution, and the processes of measurement of effectiveness and of learning.

PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

The world is a complicated place. Some events are small and isolated, some reflect massive civilizational changes yet move slowly, while others proceed rapidly and with great and immediate consequences. Intelligence agencies, diplomatic services, academics, and journalists watch these events with varying degrees of intensity. Governments typically track only a small part of the global human situation, generally caring little about the rest.

Sometimes situations change in ways that alter observers' perceptions and lead governments, international organizations, or nongovernmental organizations to assess that they have become problems—challenges requiring action and, one hopes, susceptible to solution. Usually a tangible event or set of events triggers that reassessment—war, political instability, famine, and so on. However much damage or death has occurred in a given case, however, governments and organizations conclude that a problem has arisen only if they determine

that the course of a situation is "bad" for some reason related to itself. Thus, a government may conclude that events so threaten its political or economic interests, or so engage its ideological or moral sensibilities, as to oblige it to act. The latter factor is particularly strong in natural disasters or apparent atrocities against noncombatants—and it has become a major component of American foreign policy. Governments also justify interventions in moral terms to mask geopolitical, financial, or domestic political issues, like stopping an influx of unwanted refugees.[4] Relatedly, the "CNN effect" produced by televised images of suffering has generated public demands for action; it has been a key definer especially of humanitarian problems. (Television, it must be said, depicts only poorly the political complexities that produce such suffering, leading to inappropriately narrow or even erroneous problem identification.)

Different observers, depending upon their views and interests, may perceive different problems in the same set of events. The reasons a government declares a situation a "problem" drive its efforts to fix it—and those reasons may have little to do with what is important to other agencies of the international community, the people experiencing the problem, or the military forces called upon to deal with it. Those reasons will produce limitations upon intervening forces, with respect to maximum costs (including military lives) and allowable conduct (thus "rules of engagement").

MISSION DETERMINATION

Determination that a serious problem exists is a prerequisite to action to remedy or ameliorate it. Governments may choose after all not to act, because resources are scarce or political considerations preclude commitment, or they may content themselves with criticizing or offering unsolicited advice. Only a decision to spend real resources leads to commitment of military forces; because military forces are valuable assets and have special status as embodiments of national prestige, a decision to use the military signifies a strong national commitment to problem resolution. Such a decision may take time and become the subject of internal political conflict. For this reason, military force is likely to be committed only well after other institutions, particularly United Nations agencies and nongovernmental organizations, have begun to act. The U.S. military therefore typically begins to focus on a civil-military operation later than do the international agencies with which it will work; that is a major disadvantage. To make matters worse, the U.S. military is so complex and hierarchical that the troops who will conduct civil-military operations are almost never represented on Department of Defense (DoD) teams that negotiate prospective civil-military operations in interagency meetings; they get their direction only later, with little indication of context.

When the National Command Authorities (the president, secretary of defense, and their staffs) decide to deploy military forces, they provide guidance and direction that will be translated into formal missions and then into orders. The orders may describe the job vaguely or quite specifically, reflecting in varying degrees the personalities of senior leaders, their perceptions of national interests and ethical considerations involved, and their commitments to human rights and democracy, international agreements, and treaties. Orders also embody the domestic ethical, political, cultural, or parochial interests that led to problem definition. These factors can limit or expand a mission, give it clarity or make it opaque. In recent years, the key results of these concerns for the military have been rules of engagement and force-protection directives—designed largely to protect political and military leaders from the recriminations that often follow casualties.

Small wars are conceived in uncertainty, are conducted often with precarious responsibility and doubtful authority, under indeterminate orders lacking specific instructions.

—HEADQUARTERS, U.S. MARINE CORPS, *Small Wars Manual*, 1940

National-level orders may contain internal inconsistencies that make missions especially difficult or even impossible. By analyzing their directives, commanders can (though the literature suggests they rarely do) largely predict what the courses of their operations will be if guidance is not modified. Flawed specifications lead, if not to failure, to changes in missions while they are in progress. The United States has a term for such adjustment to intelligence, policy, planning, and operational shortcomings: *mission creep*. Frequently, the seeds of failure in mission definitions are fairly obvious. In 1994, for example, no few observers noted that while one might restore to power the winner of one of Haiti's few reasonably free presidential elections, it was (and remains in 2000) impossible to "restore democracy" to a Haiti that in nearly two centuries of independence had never been democratic. If they are to assemble, train, and lead their forces successfully in civil-military operations, commanders responsible for executing such orders must understand both the foreign situation and the concerns that caused their missions to be constructed the way they were. Failure to understand and provide for either one could cause an operation to fail outright, produce negative consequences, or lead to midcourse changes that degrade unit effectiveness and generate recriminations.

To say that military commanders must understand domestic concerns and the perhaps somewhat hidden agendas of the National Command Authorities does not mean that they should either second-guess or criticize their civilian superiors. Nor do efforts to unravel the subtleties of domestic and international political processes amount to military meddling in civilian affairs. They are part

of a command-and-staff preparation of the operational arena that is just as appropriate and essential for complex civil-military operations as "intelligence preparation of the battlefield" is for combat.[5] A correct perception of political concerns and agendas is required in order to achieve the civil objectives that are at the core of the original decision to launch military operations. It is particularly essential for commanders in fast-moving situations who must in essence help make national policy on the fly.[6] Unfortunately, however, the unified command staffs that draft operations plans appear rarely to consider such factors.

OPERATIONAL PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTING ACTIONS

A presidential directive to carry out a complex civil-military operation abroad mobilizes not only armed forces but a constellation of civilian agencies, which participate in planning and coordination. These typically include the State Department, the National Security Council staff, intelligence agencies, and the Agency for International Development, particularly its Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, along with others as needed. Each entity has capabilities, perspectives, objectives, and formal responsibilities that reflect its mandate and individual culture. Each may have a different definition of the problem and a different interpretation of the mission and how to conduct it. Interagency battles and policy disagreements often make coordination contentious and slow.

In response, the government has developed mechanisms for fostering cooperation. Some are embodied in formal institutions (like the National Security Council), procedural orders (such as Presidential Decision Directive 56, for the Clinton administration), and standing interagency "deputies committees." Others are less formal. The interagency coordination process helps reconcile perceptions, judgments, and objectives, but in practice it is complicated, and ever more so as the number of agencies involved grows. Further, reconciliation is rarely complete, and it often involves significant compromises. These compromises lead to divisions of responsibilities on the basis not of operational effectiveness but "turf" concerns.

In recent operations, the Department of Defense has sought only thin—that is, narrowly military—"slices" of responsibility for civil-military operations and has worked hard to keep them thin. This effort to reduce the scope of its role in potential civil-military operations reflects the fact that the DoD neither wants nor prepares extensively for civil-military operations on a continuing basis. It must therefore conduct even its sharply circumscribed—if typically very expensive—parts of most civil-military operations in comparatively ad hoc fashion.

The predictable result of all the above is inefficient U.S. government response to problems calling for civil-military intervention overseas. Elements of this inefficiency include, among other things, less than complete unity of effort, especially incomplete or overlapping command and control structures; forces whose

size and composition have been determined by political considerations; fuzzy statements of desired end-states, crafted more as public relations declarations or advertisements of congenial redeployment ("exit") dates than as meaningful policy documents; and politically driven rules of engagement that interfere with mission accomplishment. Rules of engagement are especially critical, in that they establish much more than the conditions in which troops may fire their weapons: they determine the nature and magnitude of military interactions with civil agencies and with the local populace. They can facilitate, limit, or preclude the accomplishment of a mission.

Once decisions about the division of labor among agencies of the U.S. government are made and the military role in a civil-military operation has been roughly defined, DoD typically turns to its standard operations-planning mechanisms. These sometimes formidable procedures, as applied to complex civil-military operations, make certain Defense Department operational and procurement practices particularly important. These can be divided roughly into five categories: institutions, doctrine, force structure, training, and equipment. These factors determine in large measure the capabilities of a force; they involve definitions, and produce consequences, for civil-military operations that differ from those that arise for combat missions.

The Military Institutions of Civil-Military Operations

The Defense Department and the military services have institutional characteristics that strongly influence their willingness and ability to conduct complex civil-military operations—and thus their effectiveness when they do. These institutions extend well beyond buildings and organizational diagrams.

First, the U.S. military is a fairly insular subculture of American society, with unique ways of doing business and of viewing the world. Honoring the "warrior" ethos, it is uncomfortable with the implications of elevating the status of nonviolent conduct.[7] Also, the hierarchical nature of military forces limits its room for initiative and individuality. Men and women who commit themselves to the military profession are for the most part at ease with such relative rigidity; many are not entirely at home in less structured environments. However, an international crisis that requires commitment of U.S. military force is likely to be chaotic—both the triggering event itself and the response of the international community. Moreover, the multilateral, combined nature of civil-military efforts, wherein diplomatic requirements balance geopolitical interests and responsibilities, produces arrangements that sometimes differ sharply from the unity of command that military people expect and appreciate.[8] Their usual response to the frustrating, strange, and confusing world they encounter is rigid adherence to military norms. The complacency, even gloating, of U.S. troops at

what they perceive as the superiority of military order to civilian chaos damages their effectiveness as members of international civil-military teams.

Second, especially in the wake of defeat in Vietnam and the assertion of the "Weinberger Doctrine" in the 1980s, and later the "Powell Doctrine," the U.S. military generally expects missions to be clearly stated, with explicit definitions of success—ideally "victory"—and clear criteria for at least claiming it.[9] The world is, however, much too complex to allow simple, bipolar defeat-victory or black-white paradigms of performance; civil-military missions usually deal in shades of gray. The characteristic reluctance of American military personnel to acknowledge the complexities of the world is a formidable handicap to their success in operations other than war.

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Relatedly, American military personnel, like Americans in general, tend to be impatient people. They like quick results; they dislike the idea that some missions are achievable only in part, at considerable cost, and over long periods—and perhaps not at all. American military people prefer end-states that are defined not only clearly but in terms of end-*dates*—like 20 December 1996, by which President Clinton initially decreed that Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR in Bosnia would be concluded. The United States has shown little willingness in recent years to make commitments to operations, like the Sinai, Cyprus, or Northern Ireland, whose duration has already been measured in decades (although a proposed long-term commitment in Kosovo suggests that it has learned from past mistakes). This impatience allows potential adversaries, and recalcitrant factions in peacekeeping and peace-enforcement operations, to use patience as a tactic, even a strategy—simply to wait the Americans out.

Americans also are usually quite confident that they know how to accomplish tasks without advice and that their values and ways of doing things are better than other people's. Much evidence indicates that this attitude annoys foreigners, who do not appreciate cultural criticisms. Foreigners are likely to embrace their own value systems as least as firmly as Americans hold to theirs. They are especially likely to resent such carping when Americans display extraordinary concern for their own safety and creature comforts at the expense of the collective. Even the British derisively call Camp Bondsteel in Kosovo—complete with gymnasiums and a Burger King restaurant—"Disneyland."[10]

U.S. personnel must understand their own cultural and collective psychological tendencies in order to appreciate the vulnerabilities that others see, and perhaps take advantage of, in the American military's collective character. There is

some good news here, however: some norms and attitudes characteristic of American military people—such as, in some contexts, their single-mindedness—impress "target" populations and potential colleagues. Commanders and planners should understand these strengths and work to draw maximum benefit from them.

In the organizational realm, Defense Department personnel policy typically calls for rapid rotation and diverse assignments over the course of a career, producing the solid generalist background that a good senior commander needs. However, such assignments prevent individuals from developing expertise, and units from maintaining institutional memories. Military personnel in major intelligence centers, for instance, take for granted that it is the civilian employees who embody corporate memory; civilians, however, typically have little clout in decision making and usually do not deploy on operations. In operational units, rapid personnel turnover means that the process of training and education is forever starting over. U.S. forces often deploy with little understanding of the areas in which they are to operate—and they learn little after they arrive.[11] These patterns are not conducive to good staff work, sound senior-level decision making, or effective execution.

Finally, frequent terrorist attacks on Americans, including military personnel, have raised force protection as a major political and military concern. However well justified individually, the protective measures that have resulted have seriously adverse consequences.[12] In peacekeeping operations especially, close contacts with inhabitants could speed the state of sustained security that would allow withdrawal of the troops. Yet U.S. commanders in recent years have often placed strict limits on such fraternization. Force protection exalted to this degree is, far from a "force multiplier," a force *divisor*—it makes necessary more troops than the mission itself requires; it prohibits U.S. troops from conducting certain activities that would be valuable; and it seems to reflect physical cowardice. In general, it diminishes the credibility of the commitment of American forces to do what other coalition military contingents do.

There are other examples, but the general point is that U.S. institutional characteristics, including culture, values, incentive systems, and procedures, have significant and frequently adverse implications for the effectiveness of U.S. forces in complex civil-military operations, particularly peacekeeping. Commanders and planners must assess these implications in the context of the goals of their operations—whether military, political, economic, social, public health, or environmental. They also must understand the institutions of the civil organizations, American and international, with which they work, and those of military coalitions of which they are part.

Doctrine

U.S. law and policy place civil-military operations below combat operations as budgetary priorities. That means low priority for equipment procurement, training, and doctrine —the development of shared techniques. In doctrine itself, inasmuch as it reflects the attitudes of "warfighters," civil-military operations have an even lower standing. As a result, civil-military doctrine has been limited, somewhat controversial, and inadequate.

The U.S. Army doctrinal publication on the subject, Field Manual 41-10, *Civil Affairs*, is largely a "how-to" guide for organizing civil affairs units, supplemented by generic descriptions of the activities that they perform, to help commanders achieve mission goals through interaction with civilians and civil institutions.[13] However, there has never been a comprehensive listing of tasks, a conceptual framework for civil affairs in operations other than war, or a description of what commanders, international organizations, and nongovernmental organizations should be able to expect from U.S. civil affairs units in that setting. Joint (multiservice) doctrine is modest at best; the Marine Corps, for instance, conducts civil affairs differently than the Army. No doctrinal guide or formal procedure places civil affairs or civil-military operations in a broad context or helps practitioners understand the world of civil-military operations from a conceptual perspective. Most importantly, the conventional units that conduct operations with large civil-military components have essentially no doctrine to guide their training or conduct.

Force Structure

The United States has virtually no troops dedicated to conducting civil-military operations. The active Army's 96th Civil Affairs Battalion and Special Forces groups focus on civil-military operations extensively, but other regular units get little relevant training prior to deployments. Reserve Army and Marine Corps civil affairs troops have roles similar to that of the 96th CA Battalion but typically work in larger and longer-term operations. In either case, however, civil affairs troops are primarily advisors and facilitators. The United States cannot conduct even small-scale civil-military operations without conventional units—which are structured, equipped, and trained primarily for traditional combat or combat support.

In the absence of a standing, specialized force, and of either doctrine or analytical processes to aid the design of such a force, commanders who are given civil-military operations missions must work with ad hoc assemblages of units. The virtually inevitable result is that force structure in complex civil-military operations is suboptimal. The biggest U.S. contribution to JOINT ENDEAVOR in December 1995 was most of an armored division—helpful for peace enforcement

but poorly suited to postwar peacekeeping. In late 1996, the United States replaced some tank units in Bosnia with mechanized infantry and added more military police; this made the U.S. force more like the European nations' original contingents.

Training

Complex civil-military operations have only a small place in the professional training of the U.S. military; doctrine, however apt, is of little use unless troops learn and practice it before they deploy. Because Congress has not declared peacekeeping to be of major importance and the military itself views civil-military operations as a tertiary priority, the nation's forces as a whole are poorly trained for both. While there are exceptions, the civil dimension of military operations receives little classroom time and seldom appears meaningfully in the scenarios of command-post and field exercises. This effectively ensures that deploying units will not have adequately assessed the situations they are about to enter, will not fully understand their explicit missions, let alone the implied tasks, and will not have prepared for them. Each is essential.

Even formal instruction and exercises, however, are not enough. Training for civil-military operations must also address the decision-making processes of the U.S. government. Officers may have encountered this material in high school civics courses, but the military does not address it systematically outside of senior service schools. Similarly, there is no room in most military courses for detailed treatments of foreign affairs. Promotion prospects are notoriously poor for specialists like Foreign Area Officers, a fact that discourages officers from pursuing such fields. Personnel-rotation policies, as noted, often diminish whatever expertise individuals may accumulate by regularly transferring them from theater to theater. In mid-1996, for example, there were no U.S. military specialists on the Balkans in either the Implementation Force headquarters at Sarajevo or in the U.S. National Intelligence Cell at Ilidza.[14] Finally, training is needed on international entities—at the global level, especially the United Nations; on regional organizations such as the European Union and the Arab League; and on the thousands of nongovernmental organizations, some of which will participate in any peacekeeping operation or humanitarian-relief mission. Nongovernmental organizations rarely have roles in exercise play, and even special operations troops have little contact with international organizations and nongovernmental organizations when not deployed.[15]

The U.S. intelligence community has made complex civil-military operations still more difficult in recent years by focusing on force protection at the expense of mission execution. It has diverted, at the request of the Defense Department, human-intelligence collection resources that could foster understanding of situations toward identification of "threats."[16] The overall result is a dearth of information in

the U.S. government of the day-to-day political, social, and economic activities of countries that could be sites of complex civil-military operations tomorrow. The limited effort that intelligence agencies devote to foreign societies, as such, makes any new crisis more likely to be a surprise and hinders preparations and planning for deployments to respond to it. Military institutional practices already mentioned, such as short tours and deployment of "grab bags" of personnel and units sometimes chosen with more regard for the services' bureaucratic desires than for unit qualifications, ensures that what little understanding exists cannot be adequately applied to the planning and conduct of civil-military operations.

Equipment

U.S. conventional military units typically do not have equipment designed specially for peacekeeping operations or other such missions. In Bosnia, for example, tactical vehicles, built wide to resist rolling over, often do not fit in narrow Bosnian streets or on makeshift replacement bridges, which are just wide enough for a single narrow, European vehicle. Army civil affairs troops who traveled extensively in hilly terrain in 1996 had no good communications equipment and borrowed Motorola handheld radios from the Office of the High Representative—itself a woefully underequipped organization. U.S. units initially did not have riot-control gear, because the military refused to involve itself in "police" duties.

At the same time, much equipment designed for combat and combat support, especially engineer and transportation equipment, could be useful in complex civil-military operations. A sound assessment of the physical setting of a civil-military operation, along with analysis of the international community's objectives (those that are also objectives of the United States), should lead staff planners to anticipate the equipment needs of stated and implied tasks.

A concomitant study of the physical resources and deficiencies of prospective international and nongovernmental partners would suggest what assistance these civil organizations are likely to request. U.S. commanders in complex civil-military operations should expect to share equipment (in which coalition partners are likely to consider them rich) and to use their equipment and people to provide services. Moreover, they should take for granted that requests may become orders; if they do not either share equipment or supply services, they can expect civil agencies to lobby Washington with sufficient energy to stimulate directives through the military chain of command. Many international and nongovernmental organizations are familiar with political processes and have the ears of decision makers in Washington and other capitals, and in UN offices in New York and Geneva.[17] Indeed, many of these entities are based in Washington or are staffed heavily by Americans. It is essential that commanders

and their staffs understand their equipment strengths and limitations in the context of the civil-military operations environment as well as the needs of international civil agencies—and that this awareness be prominent in mission planning and execution.

Capabilities

The major contribution of the military in a civil-military operation may be to prevent war or large-scale violence, by the presence and potential use of ground combat power and, to a much lesser extent, air and naval power. While specifics vary by force structure and operation, the capabilities of the U.S. military to support the international community in complex interventions are likely to be concentrated in a few discrete functional areas: air and ground transport, especially the transportation of civilian members of the international mission, the press, displaced persons and refugees, and supplies; medical facilities and skills; military police services, to help establish security, conduct reconnaissance, and provide security-related equipment and training; engineering equipment and skills, including road and bridge repair, water desalinization and purification, and land-mine neutralization; and public information and communications, including radio and television programming. In addition, American military air-traffic management is useful until a local government or international regime can restore scheduled civil air transportation, as are civilian technical skills (embodied in some civil affairs personnel) in a wide variety of areas. Further, characteristic U.S. military organizational skills, discipline, and standard operating procedures may be valuable to under-resourced civil agencies, especially ad hoc bodies that are not well led or that international diplomatic imperatives have made inefficient.[18]

Finally, American resources can inject a financial stimulus, through the hiring of local workers and purchases of locally produced light-industrial products (such as building materials) and consumer goods (such as bakery items). The hard currency thus introduced may be invaluable for monetary systems in shambles. Contractors (such as Dyncorp and Brown & Root) that provide logistical support for U.S. components of civil-military operation should be made integral parts of the planning processes.

The value of American wealth to civil-military operations and "target" localities is diminished, however, by the small amount of cash allocated to field units. Also, the complexities of interagency financial transfers make it difficult for, say, an engineer unit to use Agency for International Development funds to repair a bridge.[19] Cash may be essential for even small-scale civil-military projects that require procurement of local resources.[20]

In general, the impact of an international intervention force on a locality is a question that U.S. military planners typically do not address but that may heavily influence the effectiveness of the American military contribution. Decision makers may assess certain of the pieces of the situation correctly but fail to place them in complete context or to anticipate the dynamic effects of an "occupation" force. They are more likely to define and perceive military areas of responsibility geographically than functionally. Even the format of operations plans—designed for combat operations—inhibits sophisticated analysis. For example, it pushes staff planners to cram local and international institutions into template-driven categories like "friendly forces" and "enemy forces."

The United States thus may design, and pressure the international community to accept, relief programs or peace processes that fail to address key elements of the conflict—in military jargon, the "center of gravity." Such an intervention is likely to fail. Planning fails if it does not address key issues, addresses them in dysfunctional ways, or introduces stresses that prolong a conflict by encouraging its spillover into other arenas. The latter can happen when a military intervention is so lengthy or offensive to local sensibilities that it generates an insurgency against the force itself. The transparent pro-Muslim bias of the United States in Bosnia risks stimulating such a reaction among Bosnian Serbs and, to a lesser extent, Bosnian Croats. Nato forces have alienated both Serb and ethnic Albanian sensitivities in Kosovo, further damaging prospects for achievement of the alliance's ostensible goal of a peaceful, pluralistic Kosovo.

Its abundance of human and physical resources often makes the U.S. military a particularly significant member of a civil-military team, despite the sometimes narrow applicability of its resources and its lack of sophistication about how to use them. The ultimate usefulness of its assets in a given operation depends upon the situation, force composition, the extent to which military assets complement those of local and international civil agencies, and a host of intangible factors, including interpersonal relations. U.S. joint doctrine does not address these issues well. The regional commands that typically plan American military contributions to civil-military operations have no structural capacity to address them either, let alone use nontraditional methods to prepare for deployments.[21] These handicaps are formidable.

MEASURING PROGRESS AND INSTITUTIONALIZING LESSONS

It is essential that the Defense Department and the government as a whole have ways to measure progress of civil-military operations both as they unfold—against stated objectives and also in comparison to the actual situation—and when they have ended, to institutionalize lessons. Despite expenditure of substantial

resources and notwithstanding some progress, the United States (like the international community as a whole) is not close to achieving either goal.

While individual people and country desks at the State Department and in the intelligence community follow developments and watch certain issues closely, there is no government-wide analytic framework for such assessments and no organization to sponsor them. Nor are there effective means to ensure interagency communications; if anything, turf concerns hamper them. There is thus no usable set (or collection of sets) of measures of effectiveness to assist policy and decision making, to be embedded in military plans, or to use in the field. Such measures must be sophisticated and flexible enough to be tailored to each situation; this is a difficult task. The often-used but crude "stoplight" charts—red-amber-green "metrics" of easily observable variables—may be useless or even counterproductive if they oversimplify complex situations, inaccurately and incompletely measure key variables or address peripheral ones, or stimulate unwarranted confidence about how well the situation "outside the wire" is understood.

Most after-action reviews and Joint Universal Lessons Learned System reports focus on narrow aspects of operations. While these official vehicles can be useful in certain respects (not least for historians), many of these papers have several unfortunate characteristics. They describe only specific local operations; they are unable, because of their brevity and narrowness in functional and temporal terms, to establish the broader context of the society a military intervention has influenced.[22] They offer only anecdotal measures of what worked and what did not, ending with a jumble of incompletely explained or sourced comments, and recommendations of tactics whose histories may well be checkered. Moreover, after-action reports are inherently political documents; self-censorship limits their candor and completeness, and therefore their accuracy and credibility. Some are quashed in draft as politically incorrect, especially if they reflect decisions that, with hindsight, might be judged to have been mistakes. This is ironic, since (as should be no surprise) they are little read or heeded in any case.

When high-quality recommendations do arise, there is no formal mechanism for transferring them into U.S. policy formulation and operational planning processes. That is, there is no consistent way for the lessons of an operation to enter the process of situation monitoring, problem identification, or policy decision making at the national level, or planning and operational preparations in the Defense Department. The unified commands that prepare operational plans are largely independent fiefdoms with no requirements or incentives to study the past or the current operations of other commands. Their staffs may well feel they have no time to collect and study such material, even if they wanted to;

neither do they like either to ask for or receive advice from other organizations—particularly civilian ones.

Systematic data gathering and assessment of the civil aspects of civil-military operations would greatly aid in the crafting of measures of effectiveness. It would also enable intelligence officers, State Department desk officers, and Defense Department personnel to identify trends that could give rise to problems the United States will feel obliged to address. Purposeful early warning would identify opportunities for action that could, in some cases, preclude any need for military intervention. Also, with a coherent model of worldwide trouble spots and a body of experience in hand, policy makers and military planners could better prepare forces for deployments where they are needed.

There is good reason for some of the concern. U.S. military forces have not performed well in [complex civil-military] operations in recent years.

Rudimentary measures can be found outside the U.S. government. The Fund for Peace has a generic twelve-indicator scheme, based to a large degree on physicians' assessments of the incidence of diseases; this may be a good approach, because failed states and civil conflict are arguably the collective societal equivalent of disease.[23] Humanitarian nongovernmental organizations have good measures on disease outbreaks. The Allied Command Europe Rapid Reaction Corps in Bosnia developed in 1996 "normality indicators" to measure a number of symptoms of normalcy.[24] Canada also uses normality indicators.

Certainly some lessons of experience do reach troops, policy makers, and voters. Most Americans believe that dead American soldiers should not again be dragged through streets; most Americans now think that the Vietnam War was "bad." However, these are matters of folklore, not systematic learning processes that appropriately introduce meaningful lessons into decision making, analytic processes, and information and intelligence collection. Indeed, such partial learning may be counterproductive when its "lessons" are based on factual error, poor judgments, or bias.

Even with such a data-gathering and analytical framework, there will be planning and operational obstacles. Chronic opposition of conventional military personnel to special operations was so great that Congress in 1986 created the U.S. Special Operations Command over their objections and gave it an independent budget. In 1995, resistance within the armed forces to complex civil-military operations was widespread enough during the Dayton talks to prompt Richard Holbrooke, then assistant secretary of state, to decry Pentagon "minimalists" who were trying to avoid a role in Bosnia.[25] This attitude evidently continues today.

SELF-EVIDENT REALITY

The failures and flawed successes of recent years in complex civil-military operations and the evident unwillingness of the Defense Department to adapt to self-evident reality indicate that fundamental institutional changes are required. Legislation may again be necessary; current law, emphasizing as it does (appropriately enough) traditional security threats, gives the Defense Department an excuse to avoid preparing for civil-military operations. An example is the congressional and executive-branch attitude that annual supplemental or emergency appropriations are adequate ways to pay for such unwelcome, if chronic, obligations as civil-military operations in places like Bosnia and Kosovo. Even narrowly military functions inevitably are affected by the ad hoc decision making this practice reflects and engenders, and by the budgetary "taxes" on the rest of the Defense Department that are a direct result. Such unwillingness to address civil-military operations directly and on a long-term basis causes disruption throughout the department, even as it hinders the planning and execution of operations that arise.

The military's internal culture is another issue. The denigration of foreign area and political expertise, as well as Defense-wide policies that disperse whatever skills exist, will continue, in the absence of internal reforms, to hamper the ability of the U.S. military to conduct sophisticated civil-military operations. The result is foreign-affairs amateurs planning civil-military operations for regional commanders in chief without the benefit of pertinent service, joint doctrine, or such wisdom as arises from recent experience. This is a major leadership challenge at the national level; it may warrant another "Goldwater-Nichols" act.

All of this points to the value of an interagency body composed of diplomats, intelligence officers, and military personnel—perhaps aided by adjunct academics and representatives from international and nongovernmental organizations—to assist military planners when civil-military operations loom. Such a group could work as interagency organizations now do, and thus avoid the appearance of a radical and threatening institutional change, but could focus on areas in which there have been clear problems. It could better mobilize the resources of member agencies; supply analytic rigor and broad regional or historical context; and generate intelligence-collection requirements, identifying categories of data that would help the United States to determine how it could be useful and to assess results.[26]

A reorganized Joint Forces (formerly Atlantic) Command with its new force-provider mission might establish a standing joint task force devoted to civil-military operations. Such a force would be able to respond globally to provide expertise and institutional memory to regional commanders in chief.

Congress may prefer to consider giving the U.S. Special Operations Command expanded responsibility for planning and conducting civil-military operations. Alternatively, the Defense Department or Congress might direct the Army to create a new force specifically for peacekeeping operations and other civil-military operations, building it around a division headquarters having larger-than-normal intelligence, logistics, and civil-military sections but small fire-support elements. The division or joint task force–equivalent ought to be unusually "rank heavy," to allow it to function in diplomatically sensitive environments. It might regularly contain medical, transportation, military police, intelligence, and engineer units but acquire combat battalions only in supporting roles and as needed. In a reversal of usual practice, the traditional "combat support" elements listed above would be the "teeth" of civil-military operations. Detachments of this unit would form the planning and headquarters elements of military contingents for proposed civil-military operations.

Defense-wide institutional changes also are needed in command emphasis, doctrine, and training in many individual disciplines that are critical to mission success in civil-military operations. The RAND Corporation has demonstrated convincingly, for instance, that the peacekeeping operations of the mid-1990s had markedly negative effects on the performance of the U.S. Air Force as a whole; it has proposed, in essence, that the Air Force do its peacekeeping operations tasks in a new way.[27] The ground portions of civil-military operations, which typically are much more complex, can also be much improved. The U.S. military role in complex civil-military operations, in all its aspects, merits fundamental reconsideration and reform.

NOTES

1. Congressional Research Service, *Instances of Use of U.S. Armed Forces Abroad*, CRS Report 96-119F (Washington, D.C.: 6 February 1996).
2. "Military operations other than war" comprise a diverse group of tasks, including disaster relief, humanitarian assistance, peace operations, arms control, military support to civil authorities, enforcement of sanctions, foreign internal defense, counterdrug operations, evacuation of noncombatants, hostage rescue, and others. See U.S. Defense Dept., *Joint Doctrine for Military Operations Other than War*, Joint Publication 3-07 (Washington, D.C.: 1995).
3. See, for example, several good articles in *Parameters*, Winter 1998–99: Max Manwaring, "Peace and Stability Lessons from Bosnia," pp. 28–38; Mark Walsh and Michael Harwood, "Complex Emergencies: Under New Management," pp. 39–50; and Kurt Mueller, "Toward a Concept of Strategic Civil Affairs," pp. 80–98.
4. A major reason for U.S. intervention in Haiti was a desire to halt illegal immigration. Germany states as a formal policy objective of its involvement in Bosnia the fostering of stability sufficient to encourage Bosnian refugees in Germany to return home.
5. "Intelligence preparation of the battlefield" involves an assessment by a unit's intelligence section of the enemy and friendly situation, supplemented with facts and judgments

about enemy dispositions and likely courses of action.

6. For a description of the fast pace of Operation PROVIDE COMFORT in northern Iraq, see Chris Seiple, *The U.S. Military/ Nongovernmental Organization Relationship in Humanitarian Interventions* (Carlisle, Penna.: U.S. Army War College, 1996), pp. 21–63.

7. John Hillen, "Must U.S. Military Culture Change?" *Parameters*, Autumn 1999, pp. 9–23.

8. The U.S. military is in fact a far from hierarchical organization. The services, the defense agencies, the Joint Staff, the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and the nine unified commands are power centers with significant independent authority and acute senses of their respective prerogatives.

9. The so-called Weinberger Doctrine, named for Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger, held basically that U.S. troops should not be deployed unless: the mission was clear; public support was strong; and the objectives were overt, limited, and quickly achievable. It reflected lingering unhappiness about the conduct of the war in Vietnam. Such views continue to be strongly held in the Defense Department and Congress.

10. R. Jeffrey Smith, "A GI's Home Is His Fortress," *Washington Post*, 5 October 1999, p. A11.

11. See the author's "Knowledge-Based 'Warfare': Lessons from Bosnia," *American Intelligence Journal*, vol. 18, nos. 1 and 2, 1998, pp. 73–80.

12. For a discussion, see the author's "Military Force in an Age of National Cowardice," *Washington Quarterly*, Autumn 1998, pp. 179–91.

13. The U.S. Army Special Operations Command at Fort Bragg, which contains the U.S. Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command (USACAPOC), spent several years in the mid and late-1990s revising the manual, at a modest level of effort—strong evidence in itself of the low priority of civil-military operations doctrine, even within the Army's special operations community. A new edition was published in February 2000.

14. Source is the author's on-site survey of expertise at both locations.

15. The U.S. Army Special Operations Command at least has a formal liaison relationship with representatives of the nongovernmental-organization community and makes an effort to understand them. See Dana P. Eyre, "Working with Nongovernmental Organizations: What Every SOF Soldier Should Know," *Special Warfare*, Spring 1998, pp. 14–23.

16. See, for example, Frederick P. Hitz, "The Incredible Shrinking Spy Machine," *Washington Post*, 15 September 1998, p. A21.

17. UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) officials in Bosnia in 1996 came close to asking High Commissioner Sadako Ogata to use her influence to overturn what they considered to be meddling by the Supreme Allied Commander, General George Joulwan, with refugee issues.

18. Because of the large number of nations and multilateral organizations involved in some operations, diplomatic wrangling sometimes leads to inefficient organizational structures. Nations negotiate to control aspects of operations or key personnel assignments. Differences in enthusiasm for operations, and differing objectives, lead to foot-dragging or interference with the agencies empowered to conduct complex operations. Indeed, the United Nations as a whole reflects these traits.

19. For a comment about financing, see Michael A. Quinn [Col., USAR] and Douglas W. Daniel [Col., USAR], "Civil Affairs Organization in Haiti," *Military Review*, July–August 1998, pp. 3–10.

20. By contrast, the United Kingdom allocated reconstruction project funds to its army commanders in Bosnia.

21. Joint planning doctrine is focused on combat operations, as are tactical planning methods. See *The Joint Staff Officer's Guide 1993*, Armed Forces Staff College Publication 1 (Washington, D.C.: 1993), esp. sec. 7 and app. C.

22. The incompleteness of written records is exacerbated by the tendency of all services to man long-standing operations in the regular way, by rotating personnel through in short tours. These people cannot become familiar with local conditions, and they cannot place their actions (and inaction) in a historical context. Still shorter tours designed to

improve the troops' "quality of life" would make this situation worse.

23. Pauline H. Baker and Angeli E. Walker, "An Analytical Model of Internal Conflict and State Collapse: Manual for Practitioners," Fund for Peace, memorandum, 1998. For the usefulness of, and cautionary notes concerning, such early warning generally, see Richard J. Norton and James F. Miskel, "Spotting Trouble: Identifying Faltering and Failing States," *Naval War College Review*, Spring 1997, pp. 79–91, and James Miskel, "Are We Learning the Right Lessons from Africa's Humanitarian Crises?" *Naval War College Review*, Summer 1999, pp. 136–47.

24. Due to resource constraints, the analyst, George Rose, concentrated on indicators like prices and physical phenomena (such as damage) that junior IFOR soldiers could readily observe and quantify. His system did not include demographic, macroeconomic, or political factors. It was therefore, while helpful, quite limited. At the same time, an IFOR and Office of the High Representative effort to include data from the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the World Bank in a larger collection effort failed to win adequate backing. At the behest of U.S. special envoy Richard Sklar, the preliminary work became instead an infrastructure-reconstruction management tool.

25. Richard Holbrooke, *To End a War* (New York: Random House, 1998), pp. 216, 220–1.

26. For proposals to improve the interagency processes, see Bruce Pirnie, *Civilians and Soldiers*, MR-1026-SRF (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 1998).

27. Alan Vick, David T. Orletsky, Abram N. Shulsky, and John Stillion, *Preparing the U.S. Air Force for Military Operations Other than War*, MR-842-AF (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 1997).