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The Effective Nation Building of Japan

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Abstract

Many of the world's Arabic nations view our attempts at nation- building as U.S. democratic imperialism and dangerous adventurism that destabilizes countries and political regions. In light our current ongoing difficulties in Iraq and our historical failures and successes in nation- building, the United States government should redesign its nation-building policy into a living and adaptive nation-building model in order to support and strengthen our national security policy. The role of our military in effective nation-building is paramount to success. In the past three decades our presidents have either embraced the military's role in nation-building or railed against military involvement. However, the fact is that whether for or against the premise of our armed forces in nation-building every president in the past three decades has engaged our military in ambitious nation-building missions. Unfortunately, our presidents have also approached each nation-building enterprise with a new label and a new approach irrespective of historical precedents.

Over the past decade, the United States government has made major advancements in the combat effectiveness of its forces. The return on these advancements has been evident in the remarkable improvement in war-fighting demonstrated from the nation building of Japan. There has been no comparable increase in the ability of U.S. armed forces or of U.S. civilian agencies to conduct post combat stabilization and reconstruction operations. The current administration, despite a strong disinclination to engage U.S. armed forces in such activities, has launched two major nation-building enterprises within 18 months. It is clear that nation-building is the inescapable responsibility of the world's only superpower. Once that recognition is more widely accepted, there is much the United States can do to better prepare itself to lead such missions.

The American Air force fire bombed 67 Japanese cities to include the capital city of Tokyo which killed an estimated 395, 000 civilians. The U.S. bombed Nagasaki and Hiroshima with atomic weapons bringing an end to WWII. The Japanese signed the article of surrender aboard the battle ship U.S.S. Missouri on 2 September, 1945.

The final terms of surrender and allied occupation of Japan were finalized at the Potsdam treaty on 26 July, 1945. The U.S. felt it had played the largest role in the defeating of Japan and would lead the occupational force of Japan. The U.S. was facing difficulty in the occupation of Germany due to constant disagreement with the other three Allied nations. The U.S. took the lead and it was supported by China, Soviet Union, and Britain. The Allies agreed to a 600,000 man occupational force that would be shared equally among the four Allies, but it would never come to fruition. The nations of China and the Soviet Union would never send Soldiers to occupy Japan. The occupational burden would fall on the United States and Great Britain. The forces began to occupy Japan in February, 1946. Great Britain would send 45,000 Soldiers to occupy in and around Hiroshima. The U.S. would provide 315,000 Soldiers to occupy 20 other major Japanese cities. General MacArthur felt that security had to be maintained in dense populated areas to stabilize the country. President Truman along with the English Prime Minister pledged unconditional support of MacArthur's occupational efforts and would send as many Soldiers as he deemed necessary to accomplish the mission of security. MacArthur realized that nation building could not take place until security of the nation was complete. The General was given supreme authority to take whatever actions he saw fit to achieve this goal.

One of the first tasks facing the Allied forces was the demobilization and disarmament of seven million armed Japanese Soldiers and the destruction of war material. At the request of the

Japanese, the Allies agreed to let the Japanese to disarm themselves. The Americans provided oversight and surveillance to the Japanese disarmament. The Japanese dumped munitions and sank ships in the sea and recycled whatever they could for reconstruction.

MacArthur was also faced with the daunting task of establishing a democratic based government and eradicating the power of Emperor Hirohito. The American and Allied governments called for the Japanese Emperor to be brought to trial for war crimes. MacArthur made the decision not to try him for war crimes but to make him a puppet of the United States. The General realized that the Emperor could help maintain rule and security for Japan. The Allies launched a massive publicity campaign to make the Emperor look like a democrat and peacemaker. He began to tour his country in 1946 and placed blame on his advisors for the Japanese role in WW II. Just as MacArthur had planned the Emperor supported the occupation and in the end raised the moral of his people. Because of the language barrier MacArthur made the decision to retain some government officials in power and under the supervision of the Allies. MacArthur's decision to leave the emperor in place along with key government officials proved to be key in the establishment of a new democratic government. The remaining government officials to include Prime Minister Hideki Tojo and six other officials were tried and sentenced to death for war crimes. The Allies purged Japan of former military officers, police, and government officials to transform the country from a military based society to a democratic nation. The directive of the Potsdam treaty called for Japan to become to democratic society. The first priority in democratization was to adopt a new constitution and education system. MacArthur assigned General Whitney to draft a new Japanese constitution, he did so in just two weeks in February, 1946. The Japanese constitution was adopted and put into law on 6 March, 1946. The constitution mandated that the government be ruled by a Prime Minister with

Cabinet, House of Representatives, and the Upper House. This new system mirrored the governments of the United States and Great Britain. The first democratic elections were held on 10 April, 1946 with the participation of 363 separate political parties. The Japanese Emperor was reduced to a figure head with no control of the government. The second priority in the democratization process was education reform. The reform would strengthen a new democratic nation. Efforts were made to remove all elements of Emperor worship and militarism. It was also prohibited to bow to the Emperor, salute the flag, and sing the national anthem. Local U.S. military government advisor teams enforced this law. The goal of the Allies was to abolish Japanese nationalism in the youth of Japan. An education law was passed in July, 1948, which freed education from government control. The new law would allow schools to be governed at the local level. The law also made it mandatory that education be free to all and not just the wealthy.

The Reconstruction of Infrastructure would prove to be a daunting and expensive task for the Allies and Japanese. Japan lay in complete ruin from the American fire bombing campaign against 67 major cities. The bombing campaign targeted military complexes, transportation networks, power facilities, and civilian residences. Japan was a military based economy with little non military export. To make matters worse the Japanese dollar was now worthless. The Japanese had produced more money than it had gold to support its value. The Japanese were forced to pay war reparations to the Allies. MacArthur managed to convince the President and other Allied nations to temporarily dismiss payments until the Japanese economy was stable, they agreed. Japan dismantled all financial holding companies and divided wealth equally to the banks of Japan. This enabled banks of Japan to lend money to business owners. This created growth and expansion of a new economy which would flourish to present day. The

Japanese would focus their efforts in dominating the automobile, computer, and electronic industries. These efforts would stabilize their economy by 1963 and Japan would become an economic super power. Additionally 80% of the Japanese population now had a stake in the nation's economy which supported a democratic and capitalist society.

The American bombing campaign left the Japanese Power system all but useless. The war destroyed over 76% of the Japanese power industry. The Allies assembled a top reconstruction team consisting of 300 power plant experts. These experts along with the Japanese were able to provide power to the entire country within two years. Additionally the Japanese would convert from coal powered facilities to nuclear power starting in the mid 1970s.

A massive transportation network began in 1947 to connect the entire country by rail and automobile. The original transportation system revolved around the military complex. This system only connected major cities and gave little access to the population as a whole. The new system allowed travel throughout the country and connected the rural population with the major cities. This new highway and rail system worked hand in hand in strengthening the countries economy. The United States would mirror some of these projects when it implemented the new "Eisenhower" highway system.

The Japanese medical system remained a state sponsored health system. The old system provided health care plans to those who paid health insurance. The new reform provided health care to all. This system was designed for all and grew to one of the best systems in the world. All Japanese are able to choose a hospital and provider of their choice. The Japanese health care costs is 1/3 the cost of American and European health costs.

Over 9,000,000 Japanese living in major cities were left homeless. The fire bombing campaign specifically targeted the cities to displace civilians and cause unrest. The housing

reform of 1945 called for the construction of building made of concrete and brick to prevent total destruction and the spread of fire. The new construction was subsidized through the Japanese government backed by Allied money. By 1949 all Japanese civilians were housed in privately and government housing.

The Allies feared that hunger and starvation would undermine the Japanese democracy. The Allies would provide the Japanese people with 800,000 tons of military food stuffs between 1945 and 1946. MacArthur requested \$250,000,000 for food to sustain the Japanese from starvation between 1947 to 1948. Additionally the Allies launched a humanitarian program asking for citizens to donate cloths and non perishable foods. It has been estimated that the American and British people donated over 20,000,000 tons of food and clothing to the Japanese people. The Allies maintained humanitarian aid to Japan until 1950.

The result of the Allied Nation Building of Japan became of model for future Nation Building. Japan became an economic super power that dominates the world market today. The United States established a democratic nation that is rivaled by few. The Nation building of Japan was successful because General MacArthur was given supreme authority to execute his plan. Additionally the Allies provided him with financial and government support. Within seven years Japan was a fully functional country with a functioning democratic constitution. The success of the Allied nation building effort can be seen to this day in Japan. The lessons learned showed that democracy could be transferred to no western societies, cultural awareness, and unilateral nation-building is faster and less financially burdening.

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