



UNITED STATES INSTITUTE OF PEACE www.usip.org

SPECIAL REPORT

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ABOUT THE REPORT

This report explains why the United States should carry through current plans to create a federal-level police reserve for international peace and stability operations. The report is part of an effort by the United States Institute of Peace to examine the use of civilian police in peace and stability operations. It should be read in connection with earlier USIP reports on this subject.

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SPECIAL REPORT 191

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CONTENTS

Introduction	2
Controlling Civil Disorder	2
Breakdowns in Public Order	3
Conclusion	11
Recommendation	11

Robert M. Perito

U.S. Police in Peace and Stability Operations

Summary

- The first obligation of an international intervention force in a peace or stability operation is to provide security for the civilian population. Inevitably the arrival of foreign military forces is followed by a breakdown of public order.
- Historically U.S. military forces have been unable or unwilling to perform police functions to control large-scale civil unrest. This was true in Iraq, where looters destroyed government buildings, cultural centers, and commercial areas.
- The United States lacks civilian constabulary (gendarmes) or other national police forces specially trained for crowd and riot control. Instead the U.S. relies on civil police provided by commercial contractors that do not perform this function.
- Fortunately the U.S. government is taking steps to address this deficiency. Current State Department plans call for creation of a Civilian Reserve Corps that would have a police component.
- There is no agreement on the ultimate size and character of this police capacity. However, the history of U.S. interventions from Panama to Iraq argues for a robust capability.
- A review of U.S. interventions in post-conflict environments demonstrates that the United States has repeatedly needed highly capable police forces but has lacked the capacity to respond effectively. The case studies in this report provide lessons applicable to future operations.
- The State Department's current efforts are a useful first step that will give an opportunity to create the basic infrastructure for expansion of U.S. capabilities in peace and stability operations.

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ABOUT THE INSTITUTE

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Introduction

When the U.S. Army's Third Infantry Division reached the center of Baghdad on April 9, 2003, Iraqi security officers, intelligence personnel, and Baath Party operatives went into hiding, while Iraqi police officers and members of the regular army took their weapons and went home. Jubilant crowds poured into the streets and began looting Baghdad's commercial district, ransacking government buildings, and pillaging residences of regime officials. Organized criminal groups worked their way through government ministries, removing the contents, tearing out the plumbing and wiring, and setting the buildings on fire. The small number of U.S. troops in Baghdad had no orders or nonlethal capability to interfere. So U.S. military commanders watched the looting but had neither the requisite number nor type of forces that would have enabled them to intervene successfully. In the words of the one American general, "I do not shoot people for stealing television sets and mattresses."

The first obligation of an international intervention force in a peace or stability operation is to provide security for the civilian population. Inevitably the arrival of foreign military forces is followed by a breakdown of public order; looting of stores, public agencies, and cultural facilities; and the destruction of critical infrastructure. Military forces are normally unwilling or untrained and ill equipped to deal with civilian-led violence, particularly when armed conflict continues with armies or paramilitary forces. This is especially true of U.S. military forces, which have sought historically to avoid responsibility for preserving public order.

In such circumstances the intervention force would be well served by the inclusion of civilian police, which by their very nature are trained and equipped to deal with civilian disorder. National police forces, including both stability police units (gendarmes) and civil police, exist in most European countries. For the United States, however, policing is a responsibility of state and local authorities. The United States has no national police force, nor do state or local authorities maintain stability police units (constabulary). As a result, the U.S. has been unprepared to deal with the initial consequences of foreign interventions. This was most painfully evident in Iraq.

Controlling Civil Disorder

Fortunately the United States is now moving to create the capacity to put the hard lessons learned in Baghdad into practice. On November 28, 2005, the fundamental importance of U.S. military participation in peace and stability operations was acknowledged with the issuance of Defense Department Directive 3000.05, "Military Support of Stability, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction." The directive identified peace and stability operations as a core mission of the U.S. military, of equal importance with the conduct of combat operations. The directive noted that proper planning and execution of the post-combat phase of operations is essential to achieve victory and the rapid withdrawal of U.S. forces. It instructed the U.S. military to develop new skills in rebuilding indigenous institutions, including local police, correctional facilities, and judicial systems. It also instructed the military to work closely with civilian government agencies to rebuild indigenous institutions and restore war-ravaged societies. The directive urged creation of new training programs that would equip military personnel to perform essential functions such as policing until these could be transferred to civilian authorities.

On December 7, 2005, President Bush signed a companion National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD-44), which assigned responsibility to the secretary of state for planning and coordinating the activities of U.S. government civilian agencies during post-conflict interventions. The State Department assigned the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stability Operations (CRS) to create a Civilian Reserve Corps (CRC) of police, constabulary, and rule-of-law experts to assist the U.S. military in peace and

stability operations, among other duties. The directive sought to provide U.S. forces with the capacity to close the security gap that had appeared in previous peace and stability operations by deploying properly trained and equipped federal police and constabulary alongside U.S. military forces to deal with civil unrest.

In the past year the CRS has developed a plan to provide the United States with a limited capacity to deploy police and other critical civilian elements relatively quickly at the outset of a peace or stability operation. These elements could be deployed unilaterally or as part of a multinational or United Nations force. The plan calls for the creation of a three-tiered capacity that could be activated and deployed in stages. Police and other rule-of-law components would comprise the largest number of participants in all three stages. The first tier, or Active Reserve Corps (ARC), would be composed of 100 to 150 serving government personnel with diplomatic, police, justice, and other critical skills who would deploy on 24-hour notice from their regular jobs with relevant government agencies. These first responders would be assigned to military commands or U.S. embassies to provide special expertise and engage in the assessment and planning of future missions.

The second tier, or Standby Reserve Corps (SRC), would be composed of more than 1,000 newly hired government personnel who would be trained, equipped, and deployable within sixty days of assignment. These individuals would augment the ARC by providing additional expertise and manpower for mobile headquarters or regional teams. The ARC and the SRC could be activated by the State Department.

The third tier, or Civil Response Corps (CRC), would be composed of personnel from state and local government or the private sector who would sign contracts with the federal government; when activated for international service, they would become federal employees. Of the initial 500 participants in the CRC, at least 350 would be involved with rule of law, and 120 would be police. Activation of the CRC would require a presidential decision.

To finance this plan, including the recruitment of the first 500 members of the CRC, Congress has appropriated \$50 million in the Iraq supplemental funding bill, which the president signed on May 25, 2007. The State Department must take this money from the total of \$750 million it was given for Iraq. The funds will not be available, however, unless Congress also passes a companion piece of authorizing legislation, the Civilian Management Reconstruction and Stabilization Act, sponsored by Senators Lugar and Biden. Expectations are that Congress will eventually adopt this legislation. Creation of the CRC should begin by the end of 2007. Over time the CRC, including the police component, is expected to grow to about 4,000 personnel.

The State Department has commissioned a series of studies on the possible organization of the CRC. There is general recognition that creating the police component will present the greatest challenge, especially if it includes a stability police unit (SPU). Perhaps because of the perceived difficulty of the task, there is no agreement within the U.S. government on the location, recruitment, and training of the police component; whether police will conduct operations or serve as advisers; and if they will be armed. Each of these issues will require interagency agreement and probably will generate bureaucratic controversy. Some agencies would like to limit the size of the police force and its mission, while others believe that the police component is critical and should have considerable capability, including an SPU equipped with heavy weapons and armored vehicles.

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Breakdowns in Public Order

A review of the history of U.S. involvement in peace and stability operations strongly argues for creating the strongest police capacity possible, including stability police units. In the following cases of peace and stability operations, U.S. military forces failed to contain the initial breakdown of public order. This created a climate of impunity that imperiled and prolonged the operation. In the case of Iraq, failure to restore order rapidly had consequences that were particularly severe.

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Case 1: Panama

The U.S. handling of *Operation Iraqi Freedom* in 2003 was remarkably similar to the manner in which the U.S. dealt with *Operation Just Cause*, the U.S. intervention in Panama in 1989. In *Operation Just Cause*, the United States acted unilaterally to remove a perceived threat to its national security by deposing a brutal dictator, General Manuel Noriega. Following a quick U.S. military victory, massive looting occurred in Panama City. U.S. troops stood by as government buildings and the city's commercial districts were ransacked. U.S. military forces had no orders to intervene and were unprepared to deal with large-scale civil disorder.

The U.S. plan for post-conflict "restoration" assumed Panamanians would welcome the intervention and the Panamanian police would maintain public order. U.S. forces had routed the Panamanian Defense Force (PDF), the country's only security service, and its surviving personnel were in hiding. After five days of rioting, additional U.S. troops and military police were deployed to restore order. Subsequently, in combating a stubborn, low-level insurgency led by paramilitary "dignity battalions," the United States suffered more casualties than it had during the major combat phase of the operation.

Fearing that disbanding the PDF would fuel the resistance, the Panamanian government opted to use vetted PDF personnel to form a new organization, the Panamanian National Police (PNP). Responsibility for training was assigned to the U.S. military, but this effort ran afoul of U.S. law. After termination of the military phase of operations, Congress adopted the Urgent Assistance to Democracy in Panama Act, which reaffirmed the legal prohibition in Section 660 of the Foreign Assistance Act against the U.S. military training foreign police in peacetime. Responsibility for police training was reassigned to the Department of Justice's International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program (ICITAP). Over the next two years, ICITAP created a police academy and trained the new Panamanian police. During this period U.S. military police continued joint patrols with the fledgling PNP under the guise of "liaison and operational activity," not training. These joint patrols provided essential security and gave the PNP on-the-job-training in police operations.

Case 2: Somalia

On December 3, 1992, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 794, authorizing a humanitarian relief mission to Somalia. The core of Operation Restore Hope was a U.S.-led United Task Force (UNITAF) consisting of 38,000 troops (including 28,000 Americans) from more than twenty countries. UNITAF did not include a police mission, but it did become deeply involved in creating an indigenous police force, using former members of the Somalia National Police (SNP). Before the civil war the SNP had 15,000 officers and a well-earned reputation for professionalism, fairness, and clan neutrality. During the conflict, the SNP ceased to exist, but its members avoided taking sides. As UNITAF deployed, former members of the SNP reappeared in their tattered uniforms and voluntarily assisted UNITAF troops with traffic control and other police functions. When U.S. Marines began suffering casualties patrolling the streets of Mogadishu, the U.S. special envoy, Ambassador Robert Oakley, decided that establishing a Somali police force would improve security in Mogadishu and eliminate the need for UNITAF to perform police functions.

In response to Oakley's recommendation, the U.S. Defense Department authorized UNITAF to help organize an Auxiliary Security Force (ASF) composed of former members of the SNP. The UNITAF provost marshal and twenty-two U.S. military police provided assistance but were not allowed by U.S. law to provide training. UNITAF also wrote an ASF handbook with administrative and operational guidelines. The police were assigned to traffic control, crowd control, neighborhood patrol, security of food distribution sites, and security of airfields and seaports. Police were unarmed but were provided weapons by UNITAF to protect police stations and for use in joint patrols with UNITAF military forces. The ASF performed missions that might have resulted in casualties to the intervention

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force. Unfortunately, the ASF failed to survive UNITAF's departure and termination of its support.

With relief supplies flowing, famine on the wane, and the country at relative peace, UNITAF withdrew, transferring operations to a significantly less capable UN mission, UNOSOM II. Troop strength decreased to 28,000 peacekeepers; only 4,000 U.S. troops remained. The UN Security Council, however, broadened the UNOSOM II mandate to include reestablishing a national government, advancing political reconciliation, disarming Somali factions, and holding accountable Somalis who breached international law. With the U.S. Marines gone, the Somali warlord, General Mohammed Farah Hassan Aideed, ambushed a UN patrol, killing 24 Pakistani peacekeepers. The Security Council condemned the attack, and the head of the UN mission in Somalia issued an arrest warrant for Aideed.

On October 3, 1993, U.S. Army Rangers executed a raid to capture Aideed's supporters. Two Blackhawk helicopters were shot down, eighteen Army Rangers were killed, eighty-four other US soldiers were wounded, and a U.S. helicopter pilot was captured. Americans were stunned by TV images of Somalis dragging the bodies of American soldiers through the streets. In response to a public outcry, President Clinton announced on October 7, 1993, that U.S. military forces would withdraw from Somalia by March 31, 1994. The president said the United States would help the UN create a Somali police force to replace U.S. troops and provide security.

Following the President's announcement the State and Justice Departments began work on a U.S. police assistance program to help the UN create the new SNP. It took six months for the State Department to obtain funding from Congress and the presidential waiver required by Section 660 of the Foreign Assistance Act. ICITAP trainers arrived in March 1994, by which time U.S. troops were already departing. ICITAP established a police academy in the UN compound in Mogadishu and training centers at Baidoa and Calcaio and started rebuilding police stations with the help of the UN military. ICITAP began training Somali police officers, utilizing members of the UN mission's 54-member police contingent as instructors. The Defense Department contributed 353 vehicles, 5,000 M-16 rifles, 5,000 pistols, uniforms, and equipment. There was also U.S. money for police salaries.

It was too little too late. The U.S. effort to train and equip the new SNP was lost to the inability of Somalia's warring factions to form a government and increasing violence in Mogadishu. When UN convoys were attacked exiting the gates of the UN compound and ICITAP instructors began wearing flak jackets and helmets in the classroom, it was clear the police-training program could not exist in a war zone. The U.S. police assistance program was withdrawn in June 1994. The UN police mission remained until March 1995, when the Security Council terminated UNOSOM II's mandate.

Case 3: Haiti

Planning for the U.S.-led intervention in Haiti was influenced by the perceived failure of the UN peace operation in Somalia. The Defense Department was determined to prevent the type of "mission creep" that had occurred in Somalia and to have an "exit strategy" in place that would permit an early U.S. withdrawal. It made clear that U.S. military forces would not perform police functions and an effective indigenous security force must be created to maintain public order. The goal was to recruit and train a Haitian police force that could provide internal security and permit the departure of U.S. forces.

The problem was that Haiti did not have civilian police. Haiti's only security force was the *Forces Armées d'Haiti* (FAd'H), which performed military and police duties. In a September 1991 coup the FAd'H had overthrown Haiti's first democratically elected president, Jean Bertrand Aristide, and established a military dictatorship. The FAd'H was an untrained and ill-equipped force of 7,000 men supported by uncounted numbers of thugs called *Attachés*. During planning for the Haiti intervention, it seemed likely the FAd'H

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would resist and be destroyed. The problem was how to use some of its surviving members as an interim security force while a new civilian police force was trained.

The U.S. solution was to create a force of 920 International Police Monitors (IPM) provided by twenty-six countries in Europe, the Middle East, and Latin America. Under the 1993 Governor's Island Accord signed by Haitian strongman General Raul Cedras and President Aristide, IPMs (and, later, UN police) were authorized to carry sidearms, had arrest powers, and could use deadly force in self-defense or to prevent Haitian-on-Haitian violence. The American IPM commissioner reported directly to the American commander of the Multinational Force (MNF). IPM national contingents were assigned as units to geographic sectors or specific functional responsibilities. IPMs were located in Haitian police stations along with U.S. Military Police. IPMs provided internal security and supervised the Haitian Interim Public Security Force (IPSF) composed of 3,000 vetted and retrained members of the FAd'H. Patrols were conducted by "Four Men in a Jeep," an approach that brought together a MNF vehicle with a Military Police driver, an IPM officer, an IPSF officer, and an interpreter. All police elements were present with full police powers.

Following the MNF's arrival, the Justice Department, with assistance from France and Canada, established Haiti's first National Police Academy and trained Haiti's first civilian police force. At its peak, the Haiti police training effort employed more than 300 trainers and interpreters with 3,000 cadets in training. When the Haitian government increased the number of HNP required from 3,500 to 5,000, a second campus opened at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. By February 1996 some 5,243 Haitian police officers had completed training. As recruits graduated from the academy, they were placed under the supervision of IPM monitors who acted as field training officers, and an equal number of IPSF officers were demobilized. On March 31, 1995, the UN Mission in Haiti (UNMIH) replaced the MNF. The IPM was replaced by a force of 870 UN police who were armed and had executive authority. Their mandate was to provide training and monitor the HNP and to assist in establishing a secure and stable environment.

Haiti marked the first time the United States provided a contingent for both a coalition and a UN police force. This effort exposed the problems created by the extremely decentralized U.S. system of some 18,000 state, county, and municipal police departments. Without a national police force to provide policy guidance and personnel, the responsibility of providing American police was assigned to the State Department, which outsourced the program by using a commercial contractor to recruit, train, uniform, and equip a U.S. police contingent. The United States became the only country to use commercial contractors, as opposed to police in national service, for UN and other international missions. That these officers wore U.S. government uniforms and carried U.S. government-provided weapons only added to the anomaly.

The contractor recruited mostly retired police officers from a wide variety of state and local agencies that were not always prepared for the challenges of international service. Since these police officers were legally independent subcontractors of a commercial firm, the State Department's ability to exercise close supervision was limited. American police serving abroad were beyond the reach of U.S. law (except in cases involving trafficking in women), so punishment for cases of gross misconduct was limited to repatriation. Currently, the U.S. uses civilian police recruited by commercial contractors as police advisors in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Case 4: Bosnia

After three weeks of U.S.-led negotiations at Wright Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio, the Bosnian war ended on November 21, 1995, with the initialing of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Issues relating to the role of police were contained in Annex 11, entitled "International Police Task Force." The Dayton Accords provided that the Bosnian entities would be responsible for creating a safe and secure environment by maintaining civilian law-enforcement agencies that would respect

human rights and fundamental freedoms. The parties to the agreement requested that the UN Security Council establish a UN International Police Task Force (IPTF) to assist Bosnian law enforcement agencies.

The mandate and organization of the IPTF resulted from a compromise between American and European diplomats and was not the product of negotiations with the parties to the conflict. It was also not the work of police experts, as no police officers or law enforcement specialists were at Dayton. The most important negotiations concerning creation of the IPTF took place in Washington the weekend before the negotiators left for Ohio.

In a Saturday meeting at the State Department, representatives of the Contact Group (U.K., France, Russia, Germany, and the United States) met to work out differences on military issues, constitutional questions, and the nature of the international police force. The United States urged the creation of a highly capable police force, including a rapid reaction unit of Western European civilian police and gendarmes, with some participation by the United States and Canada. The entire force would be well trained, fully equipped, highly mobile, armed, and authorized to make arrests and use deadly force. The Rapid Reaction Unit would have helicopters and armored fighting vehicles. There would be no UN participation. The force would be recruited, equipped, and funded by the European countries that contributed members. The United States had primary responsibility for the NATO-led military force, IFOR; policing would be left to the allies.

European members strongly opposed the type of police force advocated by the United States and made clear they would accept nothing more than unarmed UN police monitors. The European preference for a weak IPTF was shared by the Defense Department, which also opposed creating an empowered international police force. Fearing a repeat of the "Black Hawk Down" episode in Somalia, the U.S. military argued that an armed IPTF with an aggressive mandate might get into trouble and have to be rescued. In the closing days of the Dayton talks, U.S. Ambassador Richard Holbrooke made a final effort to create an effective police force with full executive authority by having Washington pay the cost of organizing and arming a strong IPTF. Unfortunately Holbrooke's appeal came at time when the Clinton Administration was locked in a budget fight with Congress that eventually led to a temporary shutdown of the U.S. government. When told there was no hope of obtaining funding, Holbrooke relented. The IPTF was given a weak mandate and assigned to the United Nations.

Under the Dayton Agreement and subsequent UN Security Council resolutions, the unarmed IPTF had no authority to enforce the law, conduct investigations, or make arrests. Its mandate was limited to monitoring, mentoring, and training the Bosnian police. If the IPTF's advice was ignored, its only recourse was to notify the high representative, who could take the complaint to the Bosnian government. The drafters at Dayton failed to understand that after years of bitter war, Bosnian police forces were ethnically biased and more likely to abuse than to protect minorities. IFOR could provide a security presence and deter general lawlessness, but it did not wish, nor was it trained or equipped, to perform police functions. Unarmed and essentially powerless, the IPTF could operate only with the consent, cooperation, and protection of the same Bosnian police it was supposed to monitor.

On December 21, the Security Council adopted Resolution 1035, which created the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNMBIH) and established the IPTF with an authorized strength of 1,721 international police monitors. Several hundred of them were Americans provided by a commercial contractor. Some forty-three countries provided personnel, but the IPTF was extremely slow to deploy and only a few hundred police were present when the IPTF faced its first test in February, 1996.

Under Dayton, the Sarajevo suburbs, located on high ground surrounding the city, were transferred from Serb military to Federation control to make the city less vulnerable to attacks by artillery if the war should resume. Some 100,000 ethnic Serbs inhabited these areas; many were longtime residents. As the deadline for the transfer approached, hard-line Serb leaders ordered Serb residents to evacuate and destroy everything they could not

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carry. They told departing Serbs to loot, burn, booby-trap, and destroy buildings so that incoming Federation authorities would find a wasteland.

The Office of the High Representative (OHR) allowed Serb police to remain in the municipalities on the assumption they would protect Serb residents. Instead Serb police and groups of young Serb thugs engaged in “ethnic self-cleansing,” forcing as many as 30,000 Serb residents who might have stayed to withdraw. From late February to mid-March all Serb residents were either evacuated or forced to leave for the Republika Srpska (RS), taking the wiring, windows, and pipes from their apartments and destroying or booby-trapping what could not be removed. Some families exhumed the bodies of their relatives and carried them to the RS. Television pictures of burning buildings and fleeing refugees showed the world an image of general lawlessness that the international intervention force was unable to control.

During the forced evacuation IFOR, which was present in force, did nothing to intervene. Its troops stood by and watched, refusing requests from Bosnians for protection. An IFOR spokesman stated that although the burning of buildings was “unfortunate,” the Serbs had the right to burn their own houses. IFOR had the capacity to prevent the destruction of property and the violent expulsion of thousands of residents but refused because the IFOR commander, U.S. Admiral Leighton Smith, considered police functions outside his mandate. An IFOR spokesman put it bluntly: “IFOR is not a police force and will not undertake police functions.” Failure to prevent violence was a defining moment for the international presence, setting a negative tone for the initial phase of peace operation.

In Bosnia the United States launched a comprehensive assistance effort to rebuild the local police. This program was conducted by ICITAP, which trained and equipped local police directly or provided curriculum and equipment to the IPTF, which trained the Bosnians. The aim of the police assistance program was to create a community-oriented police force that abided by democratic standards and observed and protected human rights. Over time this U.S.-led effort created police organizations in Bosnia that effectively controlled street crime. The police program was not matched, however, by an equal effort to reconstitute the other parts of the judicial system, courts, and prisons. As a result the police were unable to deal with organized crime, which turned Bosnia into a criminalized state over time.

On August 28, 1997, an incident occurred in the border town of Brcko that had a major impact on the force structure of future UN police missions. At dawn a highly organized, ethnic-Serb “rent-a-mob” hired by hard-line Serb leaders attacked UN police and American soldiers guarding the town police station and a bridge that was part of the principal NATO supply route from Germany. Armed with sticks and rocks, the mob scattered the unarmed UN police officers and nearly overran the U.S. soldiers, who engaged in hand-to-hand fighting but refused to fire because the Serbs were unarmed. Sobered by the experience, the United States pressed its European allies to create a special military unit composed of gendarmes trained and equipped to handle riots and other forms of civil unrest. After a year of intense diplomatic activity the Multinational Specialized Unit (MSU), composed primarily of Italian *Carabinieri*, arrived in Bosnia. The first constabulary unit to serve in an international force, it was the forerunner of civilian “stability police units” whose members now comprise more than half the police serving in UN missions.

Case 5: Kosovo

Lessons learned from the IPTF’s failures in Bosnia were evident in the planning for the UN police force in Kosovo. In July 1999 the UN secretary general informed the Security Council that the UN police force would have 4,700 officers and be spearheaded by ten companies of stability police units. All UN police would be armed and have executive authority to conduct investigations and make arrests. UN police would also mentor a new Kosovo Police Service (KPS). As in Bosnia, however, the UN received little advance warning that it would be responsible for fielding an international police force, particularly one that would have to perform the entire range of police functions. Recruiting lagged; deployments took even

longer. Instead of serving as the leading edge of the force, the first stability police unit did not arrive until April 2000; the last in February 2002.

In the vacuum of authority created by the slow pace of UN police deployment, ethnic violence and crime racked the province. Ethnic Albanians carried out a reprisal campaign of house burning, rape, and murder against ethnic Serbs and other minorities. Meanwhile Albanian organized crime engaged in drug trafficking and smuggling of vehicles, cigarettes, and contraband. U.S. and European military commanders chafed at the need for NATO military forces to perform police functions. General Henry Shelton, chair of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, complained to Congress that U.S. troops were forced to “engage in police-type actions—arresting law breakers and patrolling neighborhoods.”

As in Bosnia, the most important U.S. contribution was the training of the Kosovo Police Service (KPS), provided by a U.S.-led program sponsored by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). Within weeks of the arrival of NATO forces, a new Kosovo Police School opened with a U.S. director and 200 international police instructors from twenty OSCE member states. The school utilized a curriculum developed by ICITAP but modified over time to suit local conditions. Once fully operational, the police school had more than 600 cadets enrolled in four-month training programs followed by field training supervised by the UN police officers. The Kosovo Police School met its initial goal of training 4,110 police officers in September 2001.

It was not until the second year of the Kosovo mission that UN authorities had the requisite number of UN police and the judicial institutions in place to begin a crackdown on politically motivated violence and organized crime. With nearly 5,000 UN police and a sizable complement of KPS, the UN began arresting organized crime leaders and protecting minorities. The United States contributed significantly to this effort, providing some 800 members of the UN police force, including most of the specialized units that dealt with intelligence and organized crime.

Case 6: Iraq

Before the Iraq intervention U.S. officials believed U.S. military forces would capture a fully functioning state with its institutions intact. They believed the Iraqis would welcome U.S. troops as liberators and join coalition forces in quickly neutralizing the Baath Party, Saddam’s security services, and other opponents of the new order. It was assumed that the Iraqi police would remain on duty, assume responsibility for security, and maintain public order.

Under Saddam Hussein the 60,000 members of the Iraqi police force were at the bottom of a multilayered security bureaucracy of military and civilian organizations that created a pervasive police state. The police force was composed of an academy-educated officer corps and a thuggish, uneducated, and largely untrained rank and file. Poorly equipped, badly led, and underpaid, the police were known for their brutality and petty corruption. Police did not patrol but remained in their stations until ordered to make arrests. The public viewed the police as the face of Saddam’s repressive regime. Despite the Iraqi police’s reputation as the country’s least effective security force, U.S. decision makers assumed that post-intervention public security could be left in their hands. Instead the Iraqi police and all government authority vanished when U.S. forces captured Baghdad.

Prewar planning made no provision for an international police force such as those that had participated in operations in Haiti and the Balkans. The U.S. military failed to receive orders or special training to deal with widespread civil disorder. Finally, no American police were recruited for that purpose. During the looting, mobs destroyed police stations, stole police vehicles, and walked away with weapons and equipment. The breakdown in public order enabled organized criminal networks and the tens of thousands of criminals that Saddam had released before the war to exploit the chaos and prey on Iraqi citizens.

In early April 2003, with looters on the streets and fires burning in government buildings, U.S. military authorities made a public appeal for Iraqi police to return to duty. On

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April 14, 2003, joint patrols of U.S. soldiers and Iraqi police made their first tentative appearance on the streets of the capital. Initially Iraqi police were not permitted to carry weapons. The presence of police officers who had committed abuses under Saddam caused outrage among Iraqi citizens. Police who returned to duty lacked leadership, organization, and logistic support. In May 2003 a U.S. Justice Department police assessment team determined that the Iraqi police were incapable of restoring public order and would require substantial international assistance before they could assume responsibility for internal security. The team recommended the deployment of 6,600 international police, including a 2,500-member gendarme force, plus a comprehensive program to reorganize, retrain, and reequip the police.

At first senior U.S. officials in Washington considered these recommendations overly ambitious and unnecessary. Similarly, the Coalition Authority in Baghdad seemed little interested in combating the crime wave that affected nearly every Iraqi. Kidnapping, rape, carjacking, and murder terrorized families. Children were kept home from school. Men and women feared to go out to shop or travel to work. U.S. military authorities saw law enforcement as an Iraqi responsibility despite the inability of the Iraqis to conduct police operations. Only increasing insurgent attacks on U.S. forces compelled action.

A training program for Iraqi police recruits opened in Amman, Jordan, in December 2003 but did not reach capacity until late spring 2004. Of the recommended 6,600 international police advisors, only fifty arrived during the first six months following the intervention. A year later only 375 had arrived. Vital equipment did not reach the Iraqi police until after March 2004, when President Bush signed a National Security Presidential Directive, which formally assigned responsibility for the “train and equip” police program to the Department of Defense.

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The U.S. military’s takeover of indigenous police training was unprecedented. In all previous operations, responsibility for police training was assigned to the State and Justice Departments. In Iraq, however, it appeared that only the U.S. military had the resources required to expedite the police program. In March 2004 the Civilian Police Advisory Training Team (CPATT) was established under the Multi-National Security Transition Command (MNSTC-I). An army general with a civilian (Justice Department) deputy led CPATT, which included both military and civilian personnel. The problem was that the U.S. military and Justice Department police advisers had markedly different goals and no common understanding about the Iraqi police’s mission. As a result, there was a disconnect between the training provided to the new Iraqi Police Service (IPS) and its utilization in the field.

State Department policymakers and Justice Department police trainers were intent on creating a civilian, lightly armed IPS that utilized community policing techniques and operated in conformity with Western democratic standards for professional law enforcement. Justice Department police advisers argued that Iraq’s security problems were best resolved by relying on investigations and arrests to remove criminals and terrorists. Curriculum at the Justice Department-run police training facility established in Amman was based on the training program developed for the police in Kosovo. The Kosovo program had entailed four months’ of classroom instruction and twelve weeks of follow-on field training; the Iraq program was reduced to ten weeks of class work and no field training.

Moreover, the Iraq insurgency meant that the basic assumptions of the Kosovo-based training did not apply. Instead of operating in a benign environment that permitted community policing, Iraqi police played a counterinsurgency role, facing car bombs and gunmen with heavy weapons. The results were predictable and tragic. Thousands of police officers died in the line of duty. Hundreds of young men perished in bomb attacks on police recruiting centers. Only during 2006, with the addition of classes on officer protection and defensive tactics, did the emphasis for recruit training change to policing in a nonpermissive environment.

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For its part the U.S. military wanted to create an Iraqi police force that could deal with insurgents and hostile militias, ultimately permitting a U.S. withdrawal. To confront the

growing insurgency, the U.S. military created “heavy police units” composed of former Iraqi soldiers. The original Public Order Battalion, Mechanized Police Unit, and Emergency Response Unit were composed of Sunnis. Their unvetted personnel were given military weapons and counterinsurgency training. In early 2006 MINSTC-I combined these units into a new organization, the Iraqi National Police (INP). Under the interim government, however, Interior Minister Bayan Jabr, a Shite political leader, permitted Shiite officials to purge Sunnis and create police commando units of fighters from Shiite militia organizations. By summer 2006 it had become clear that these INP units were engaged in sectarian violence and death squad activities.

Conclusion

Between *Operation Just Cause* in Panama and *Operation Iraqi Freedom* more than a decade later, the United States established a pattern of failing to deal with large-scale breakdowns in public order that occurred after international interventions. Failure to control looting and civil disorder created a climate of impunity and encouraged criminal violence and street crime. In the face of widespread civil unrest, U.S. military forces were neither trained nor equipped to control civil disorder or perform police functions. Indigenous police and security forces were unprepared, unwilling, or unable to perform such functions and deal with civilian violence and lawlessness.

Local populations were faced with a breakdown of public order and had no defense against rampant crime. This undermined popular support for the intervention and endangered the success of the mission. Former regime police, even when they were retrained, provided with new uniforms, and escorted by international police monitors, had difficulty adapting to new circumstances and gaining public acceptance. New officers had to be recruited to change the nature of the police force. It was also clear from U.S. experience that developing an effective police organization (under the interior ministry or police department) and training a police force were resource-intensive and would take at least five years under optimal conditions.

This effort required U.S. civilian police experts with specialized skills and extensive foreign experience. In addition to performing operational duties, civil or military police could not do police training successfully. Attempts to rush police training to put “uniforms on the street” inevitably failed to meet either the short-term need for security or the long-term requirement for professional law enforcement and the rule of law. Most important, it was clear from both Somalia and Iraq that police could not operate effectively unless the intervention’s military force created a sufficiently secure environment. Without a reasonable level of public order, police had to provide for their own security, leaving the civilian population defenseless.

Recommendation

To deal with future interventions, the U.S. needs a vigorous capacity to rapidly deploy trained and equipped federal, civilian constabulary and police forces to control civil disorder and prevent crime. Civilian police require the presence and support of conventional military forces and military police to provide force protection, logistics, and other services. Civilian police augment the military, assuming responsibility for dealing with civilians and freeing soldiers to perform their duties, including engaging armed groups. Civilian police ensure that unarmed civilian looters and lawbreakers are dealt with by nonlethal means, arrested, and incarcerated. The presence of U.S. civilian law-enforcement personnel has a positive effect on local police, encouraging their return to duty under proper supervision in the shortest possible time. It also promotes the rapid establishment of training programs for local police and the development of police institutions.

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The State Department's plan to create a CRC is an important first step. The initial numbers will provide only token capacity, but they will also require establishing administrative and logistics organizations and addressing critical legal and bureaucratic issues. It is important that the United States move quickly to augment this capacity and provide the manpower and equipment to execute complex operations successfully. Such a force will help with ongoing missions, but it is critical to have it in place as the United States inevitably confronts future crises.

Of Related Interest

- *Options for Police in a U.S. Civilian Reserve Corps*, by Beth Cole, Michael Dziedzic, and Robert Perito (USIPeace Briefing, May 2007).
- *Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Iraq*, by Robert Perito (Special Report, March 2007).
- *Policing Iraq: Protecting Iraqis from Criminal Violence*, by Robert Perito (USIPeace Briefing, June 2006).
- *Bridging the Public Security Gap: The Role of the Center of Excellence for Stability Policy Units (CoESPU) in Contemporary Peace Operations*, by Michael Dziedzic and Col. Christine Stark (USIPeace Briefing, June 2006).
- *The U.S. Experience with Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan: Lessons Identified*, by Robert Perito (Special Report, October 2005).
- *Provincial Reconstruction Teams: Military Relations with International and Nongovernmental Organizations in Afghanistan*, by Michael Dziedzic and Col. Michael K. Seidl (Special Report, August 2005).
- *Postconflict Stabilization and Reconstruction: What Have We Learned from Iraq and Afghanistan*, by Christina Caan (USIPeace Briefing, April 2005).
- *Building Civilian Capacity for U.S. Stability Operations: The Rule of Law Component*, by Beth Cole, Michael Dziedzic, and Robert Perito (Special Report, April 2004).
- *Where Is the Lone Ranger When We Need Him? America's Search for a Postconflict Stability Force*, by Robert Perito (USIP Press, 2004).



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