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## THESIS

**MISSION INCOMPLETE: THE U.S. ARMY'S UNSUCCESSFUL  
IMPLEMENTATION OF STABILITY OPERATIONS IN IRAQ**

by

Daniel L. Kusters

June 2011

Thesis Advisor:  
Second Reader:

Kenneth R. Dombroski  
James A. Russell

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IMPLEMENTATION OF STABILITY OPERATIONS IN IRAQ**

Daniel L. Kusters  
Captain, United States Army  
B.S., Western Michigan University, 2004

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June 2011**

Author: Daniel L. Kusters

Approved by: Kenneth R. Dombroski, PhD  
Thesis Advisor

James A. Russell, PhD  
Second Reader

Harold A. Trinkunas, PhD  
Chair, Department of National Security Affairs

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## **ABSTRACT**

The United States Army has struggled to implement the stability operations doctrine of its counterinsurgency strategy in Iraq. Despite the emphasis in national strategic guidance documents and written Army field manuals, stability operations continue to evade the Army as a major priority. This thesis seeks to answer: Why has the Army, as an organization, had such a difficult time implementing stability operations? Additionally, this thesis attempts to determine whether the Army made its best attempt to implement stability operations in Iraq between 2003 and 2007. Chapter II reviews the Army's history and its struggle to acknowledge irregular conflicts as important as conventional war. Chapter III then evaluates stability operations implementation in Iraq between 2003 and 2007 in a case study. Finally, Chapter IV concludes with recommendations for the organization in implementing stability operations in the future.

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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

|        |                                                    |
|--------|----------------------------------------------------|
| QDR    | Quadrennial Defense Review                         |
| NMS    | National Military Strategy                         |
| NSS    | National Security Strategy                         |
| NDS    | National Defense Strategy                          |
| DoD    | Department of Defense                              |
| DoS    | Department of State                                |
| PDD 25 | Presidential Decision Directive 25                 |
| USAID  | United States Agency for International Development |
| UN     | United Nations                                     |
| NGO    | Non-Governmental Organization                      |
| GAO    | Government Accountability Office                   |
| DoDI   | Department of Defense Instruction                  |
| DoDD   | Department of Defense Directive                    |
| ROAD   | Reorganization Objective Army Division             |
| IDF    | Israeli Defense Force                              |
| OIF    | Operation Iraqi Freedom                            |
| ASW    | Antisubmarine Warfare                              |
| COIN   | Counterinsurgency                                  |
| CJTF   | Combined Joint Task Force                          |
| FOB    | Forward Operating Base                             |
| IED    | Improvised Explosive Device                        |
| CALL   | Center for Army Lessons Learned                    |
| CGSC   | Command and General Staff College                  |

|      |                                       |
|------|---------------------------------------|
| CERP | Commanders Emergency Response Program |
| FM   | Field Manual                          |
| ACR  | Armored Cavalry Regiment              |
| CAST | Conflict Assessment System Tool       |
| CA   | Civil Affairs                         |
| CMO  | Civil Military Operations             |
| KO   | Contracting Officer                   |
| PPO  | Project Purchasing Officer            |
| PA   | Pay Agent                             |

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# **I. INTRODUCTION**

## **A. MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTION**

The story of the Iraq war is not over...But it is, already, a reminder that the most powerful and competent military the world has ever known can still stumble, and stumble badly...<sup>1</sup>

~ Eliot Cohen and John Gooch, 2006

The United States Army has been engaged in post-war Iraq for eight years and has struggled to transition from the conventional warfare it masters to the counterinsurgency fight it avoids. As the primary ground force in the Department of Defense, the Army has found itself having to place increased emphasis on the stability operations component of its counterinsurgency doctrine—something it seeks to steer clear of. The 2006 *Army Field Manual 3-24 Counterinsurgency* states: “A counterinsurgency campaign is ... a mix of offensive, defensive, and stability operations conducted along multiple lines of operations.”<sup>2</sup> Offense, defense, and stability operations are considered to be equally important throughout the Army organization ranging from the strategic level commanders down to the operational and tactical level soldiers.<sup>3</sup> The Army admits that, “no single element [defense, offense, stability] is more important than the other is; simultaneous combinations of the elements, constantly adapted to the dynamic conditions of the operational environment, are key to successful operations.”<sup>4</sup> Over the past eight years, however, evidence suggests that the Army has not placed enough emphasis on the stability operations component. Two years after Operation Iraqi Freedom was underway,

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<sup>1</sup> Eliot Cohen and John Gooch, *Military Misfortunes: The Anatomy of Failure in War* (New York: The Free Press, 2006), 251.

<sup>2</sup> General David Petraeus and General James Amos state this in the forward of the U.S. Army’s *Field Manual, 3-24 Counterinsurgency* (December 2006).

<sup>3</sup> United States Army Headquarters, *Field Manual 3-07: Stability Operations* (Washington, DC: United States Department of the Army, 2008), 2-2.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 2-2.

strategic-level documents had just started addressing this issue. It was four years into the conflict before the Army truly began to acknowledge a need to change and innovate the way it was operating in Iraq.

In May of 2003, President George Bush declared the end of major combat operations in Iraq. However, the president would likely have increased the prospects for a successful mission if he had declared the end of conventional war and the beginning of stability operations. It would not be until 2005 when a directive from the Pentagon would push the Army organization in the right direction. That year, the Department of Defense issued Directive 3000.05 stressing, “Stability operations are a core U.S. military mission that the Department of Defense shall be prepared to conduct and support. They shall be given priority comparable to combat operations...”<sup>5</sup> Several directive documents—The 2006 *Army Field Manual 3-24 Counterinsurgency*, followed by the 2008 *Army Field Manual 3-07 Stability Operations*, and another Department of Defense Instruction in 2009—repeatedly stressed the importance of the Army’s need to implement stability operations throughout the organization.<sup>6</sup> Other, more recent, strategic-level documents, such as the 2008 *National Defense Strategy*, 2010 *National Security Strategy*, and the 2010 *Quadrennial Defense Review*, have also stressed the growing importance of the military’s implementation of stability operations.<sup>7</sup>

Despite the emphasis placed on stability operations in the strategic guidance and written Army field manuals, stability operations seem to evade the Army organization as a major priority. Why then has the Army, as an organization, had such a difficult time implementing stability operations? Further, when looking at Operation Iraqi Freedom,

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<sup>5</sup> United States Department of Defense, *Department of Defense Directive 3000.05: Stability Operations* (Washington, DC, November 2005).

<sup>6</sup> United States Army Headquarters, *Field Manual 3-24 Counterinsurgency* (2006), *Field Manual 3-07 Stability Operations* (2008) and *Department of Defense Instruction 3000.05* (2005) each explain the importance of stability operations for the United States Army.

<sup>7</sup> Barack Obama, *National Security Strategy* (Washington, DC, 2010); U.S. Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review* (Washington, DC, Feb. 2010); U.S. Department of Defense, *National Defense Strategy* (Washington, DC, Jun. 2008).

there is a question about whether the Army actually made its best attempt to implement stability operations, and if not, are there current practices and attitudes preventing their best possible implementation?

## **B. IMPORTANCE**

The importance of the question posed in this thesis is threefold. First, without successful stability operations, the balance that is so crucial to counterinsurgency is not achieved. When dealing with an insurgency, winning over the population becomes the goal. Without stability operations doctrine playing its part in counterinsurgency strategy, the Army is simply conducting offensive and defensive operations. Stability operations deal quite closely with the population in that:

Stability operations leverage the coercive and constructive capabilities of the military force to establish a safe and secure environment; facilitate reconciliation among local or regional adversaries; establish political, legal, social, and economic institutions; and facilitate the transition of responsibility to a legitimate civil authority.<sup>8</sup>

Second, most of the countries in the Middle East suffer from similar problems. They have a poor civil service infrastructure, weak governance system, high unemployment, and are lacking in civil services—among others. Stability operations can assist in winning over the population while seeking to “establish security, establish civil control, restore essential services, provide support to governance, and provide support to economic and infrastructure development.”<sup>9</sup> If the United States is to get involved in another one of these countries within the region in the future, stability operations could become very important.

Third, the U.S. government agency most likely to execute stability operations is the Army; however, the organization lacks the current expertise and capability that are required for successful implementation of stability operations. The State Department, on the other hand, does have the capability, but, it has a limited capacity because it has fewer

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<sup>8</sup> United States Army Headquarters, *Field Manual 3-07: Stability Operations* (Washington, DC: United States Department of the Army, 2008), 2-2.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 2-5.

employees, as compared to the military, operating in places like Iraq. As of November 2010, the State Department has roughly 1,000 employees working in Iraq compared to the nearly 50,000 the military has there.<sup>10</sup> The Army has a greater capacity to reach the rural Iraqi population, but without a stability operations focus, it is not best utilizing its assets to win over the population.

If there are reasons for the Army's failure to implement the stability operations doctrine, these reasons need to be uncovered and corrected. Stability operations are irregular and have therefore not been strongly emphasized among general purpose forces, which train to fight conventionally. Lawrence Yates writes that, "As America's military experience readily demonstrates, combat troops are generally required to perform a variety of unorthodox and nonmilitary tasks in stability operations. Doctrine needs to delineate these nontraditional roles so that combat units can better plan and train for them."<sup>11</sup>

### **C. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Scholars and theorists provide numerous reasons for military organizational failure. Many compelling theories point to the inability or unwillingness of military organizations to change and/or innovate. These theories become particularly important when we look at Operation Iraqi Freedom and the failure of the Army to put stability operations into practice. Stability operations were an innovation that the Army organization just could not seem to adjust to.

An initial contributor to discussions on organizational theory is Max Weber. He observed that bureaucracies, or organizations, sustain themselves and are by nature slow to change.<sup>12</sup> He argued that bureaucracies are oriented toward "routine, repetitive,

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<sup>10</sup>Andi Medici, "State Department Ramps Up as Military Winds Down," *Federal Times.com*, October 19, 2010. This source reports that 1,085 Department of State officials were operating in Iraq; A statement from the White House from the Office of the Press Secretary explained on August 2, 2010, that there would be 50,000 troops in Iraq operating after August 31, 2010.

<sup>11</sup> Lawrence A. Yates, "The U.S. Military Experience in Stability Operations, 1789-2005," *Global War on Terror Occasional Paper 15* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2006), 36.

<sup>12</sup> Max Weber as described by Stephen Posen in *Winning the Next War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 4.

orderly action.”<sup>13</sup> Many scholars since Weber, including recent theorists such as Barry Posen, Deborah Avant, Stephen Rosen, and Theo Farrell, all have written about military organizations and change.<sup>14</sup> Several contending theories were organized into four categories in an article in 2006 by Adam Grissom: the civilian intervention school, the inter-service school, the intra-service school, and the cultural school.<sup>15</sup> Each school provides its own explanation for what causes military organizations to innovate or change. In my analysis, I add two additional schools: the “structuralist” and “behaviorist” schools.

The first school of thought, represented by Barry Posen, argues that military organizations change the way they do business when civilian leaders interject. In his book, *The Sources of Military Doctrine*, he argues that the German Blitzkrieg, the French Defensive Posture, and the creation of the British Royal Air Force were all innovations the military was able to adjust to because of civilian intervention.<sup>16</sup> Posen concludes that, no matter what, civilian intervention is what influences change in military doctrine.<sup>17</sup> He writes, “Civilians must carefully audit the doctrines of their military organizations to ensure that they stress the appropriate type of military operations”<sup>18</sup> Essentially, Posen believes that the military organization cannot change by itself, but rather, it requires an outsider to motivate the organization into change.

Deborah Avant, another scholar of the civilian interventionist school, agrees that civilians contribute to helping the military change, but she says both organizational theory and balance of power theory (which Posen argues) are not sufficient explanation for that change.<sup>19</sup> Avant says that institutional theory provides a better explanation. She

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<sup>13</sup> Stephen Rosen, *Winning the Next War*, 4.

<sup>14</sup> Barry Posen, *The Sources of Military Doctrine* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984); Deborah Avant, *Political Institutions and Military Change* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994). Theo Farrell and Terry Terriff, *The Sources of Military Change* (London: Lynne Reinters Publishers, 2002); and Stephen Rosen, *Winning the Next War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991).

<sup>15</sup> Adam Grissom, “The Future of Military Innovation Studies,” *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 905–934.

<sup>16</sup> Posen, *The Sources of Military Doctrine*, 44.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 239.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 241.

<sup>19</sup> Avant, *Political Institutions and Military Change*, 5.

argues that “institutionally conditioned civilian choices as to the setting up and monitoring of military organizations affect the strategic relationship between civilians and military organizations over time.”<sup>20</sup> She compares the British civil-military relations institution to that of the American civil-military relations institution and concludes that the British model responded better to civilian goals because there was incentive for the civilians to work with the military organization.<sup>21</sup> U.S. civilian leaders, on the other hand, had opposing views on supporting the military during the Vietnam War, which made it more difficult for the military organization to change.<sup>22</sup> She writes that “divided civilian institutions in the U.S. caused there to be focus on budgets to control the military.”<sup>23</sup> Although Avant uses institutional theory to explain civil-military relations regarding military innovation, she still agrees with Barry Posen that, ultimately, civilian intervention influences military change, but she contends that institutional relationships are what effect that civilian intervention.

The second school of thought on military doctrine and change focuses on the rivalry relationship between the services. It states that “the core contention ... is that resource scarcity [between the services] is the key catalyst for innovation.”<sup>24</sup> Douglas Campbell argues that the U.S. Air Force sought to develop close air support capability to aid troops on the ground in order to compete with the U.S. Army and its rotary wing capability.<sup>25</sup> Campbell argues that it was the competition with the Army that led to the U.S. Air Force development of the A-10 Warthog which was to be used in close air support of ground troops.<sup>26</sup> The *inter-service* rivalry theory concludes that the services compete against one another and in the process they change.

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<sup>20</sup> Avant, *Political Institutions and Military Change*, 9.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 130–131.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 131.

<sup>24</sup> Adam Grissom, “The Future of Military Innovation Studies,” 910.

<sup>25</sup> Adam Grissom references Douglas Campbell, the author of *Warthog and the Close Air Support Debate* in: “The Future of Military Innovation Studies,” 913.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 913.

The third school of thought dealing with military doctrine and change emphasizes that *intra*-service rivalry pushes members within a military organization to compete with one another and that drives change. Stephen P. Rosen uses this argument to explain that this occurs when senior leadership develops a new way of winning.<sup>27</sup> For example, when a senior leader develops a new tactic or new standard operating procedure that has proven effective (what Rosen describes as the “way of winning”), he or she will use incentives to motivate junior officers to follow him or her. Rosen says that a struggle over ideas ensues within the organization usually between senior officers that attempt to capture mid-level officers, seeking promotion and professional opportunities.<sup>28</sup> He argues that mid-level officers are more likely to follow the senior leader’s innovative way of winning in order to improve chances to be promoted or be offered professional opportunities over others.<sup>29</sup> This competition between senior military leaders within the service organization drives innovation and change to military doctrine.

The fourth school of thought, represented by Theo Farrell and Terry Terriff, argues that “culture is a major causal factor in military innovation,” and that “culture sets the context for military innovation, fundamentally shaping organizations’ reactions.”<sup>30</sup> They argue that “cultural norms, politics and strategy, and new technology” are the sources for change in a military organization.<sup>31</sup> According to their argument, their first source, cultural norms, “produce persistent patterns peculiar to these communities, such as national strategic styles and organizational ways of warfare.”<sup>32</sup> Second, they argue that new technology often plays a part in that “elites may oppose a new technology that they consider to be impractical (even fantastical) or threatening to existing organizational routines and structures.”<sup>33</sup> Third, they argue that “the most obvious source of military

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<sup>27</sup> Stephen Rosen, *Winning the Next War*, 20.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 251.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> Grissom references Theo Farrell in “The Future of Military Innovation Studies,” 916.

<sup>31</sup> Farrell and Terriff, *The Sources of Military Change*, 6.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

change is strategic, that is, a changing threat to national security.”<sup>34</sup> They contend that a change in national strategy influences how military organizations adjust to meet that threat. Ultimately, Farrell and Terriff say that military change is complex and “comes from various sources, all of which must be given consideration.”<sup>35</sup>

Although Adam Grissom clearly identifies four key schools of thought, there are some scholars who tend to argue that change in military organizations is difficult because they aren’t designed correctly to meet threats they face. Two particular authors, Robert Perito and Douglas Macgregor, seem to take this point of view. These authors could be categorized into a fifth school of thought. I refer to them as “structuralists.” These “structuralists” make the argument that one cannot expect a military organization to change the way it fights without first reorganizing it into a force that can best counter the threat. Both Perito and Macgregor offer suggestions on how the military ought to reorganize its structure in order to meet new challenges. Perito argues that the military needs to develop a constabulary force—consisting of both civilian and military components—that can perform law enforcement functions in a post-conflict environment.<sup>36</sup> Perito believes that military police forces are best equipped to deal with stability operations because they would be able to provide judicial and penal experts acting in alignment with law enforcement officers, who would be using military Stryker vehicles.<sup>37</sup> (Although his argument opens up the discussion for what an operational and tactical force might look like, his organization might struggle to meet other various economic requirements that come with stability operations.)<sup>38</sup>

Macgregor argues that, like the Roman Legions designing tactics to defeat the Greek phalanx in 200 B.C., there is a need for structural innovation in the way the U.S. Army fights.<sup>39</sup> He contends that the role of land power doctrine, not airpower or sea

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<sup>34</sup> Farrell and Terriff, *The Sources of Military Change*, 10.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>36</sup> Robert Perito, *Where is the Lone Ranger When We Need Him?: America’s Search for a Post-conflict Constabulary Force* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2004), 328.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 330–335.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 335.

<sup>39</sup> Douglas Macgregor, *Breaking the Phalanx* (Westport: Praeger Publishers, 1997), 1.



power doctrines, will have greater demand on the future and that a new force must be configured to be “a self-contained, mobile armed force that can deploy on a phone call to defend American interests.”<sup>40</sup> He argues that operations like Bosnia and Somalia in the 1990s paved the way for a need to implement new doctrine.<sup>41</sup> He also argues that the Army needs to change from a divisional structure to a brigade structure if it wishes to succeed in taking on missions similar to Bosnia and Somalia in the future. “Organizational change ... will assist with the creation of the capability in the Army’s ground forces to cope with more cunning and dangerous enemies in the strategic environment of the future,” Macgregor writes.<sup>42</sup> Perito and Macgregor make compelling arguments for changing the military structure in order to meet challenges that might require stability operations.

A sixth category of scholars also exists that I deem “behaviorists.” These scholars, including Brian Linn, Eliot Cohen (with John Gooch) and James Russell, argue that it is solely the behavior of the organization that best explains why military organizations do or do not change. Brian Linn argues that throughout history, the Army has had three types of traditions (or organizational personalities), and these have steered the Army into certain directions that have influenced what doctrine should be followed.<sup>43</sup> He argues that these traditions, which he calls Guardians, Heroes, and Managers, have been what influenced how the Army chose to fight its previous wars.<sup>44</sup> The Guardians generally follow a defensive doctrine.<sup>45</sup> Whether it was the design of harbor fortifications following the War of 1812 or the implementation of the Powell Doctrine which required strict preconditions before sending the Army to war, Brian Linn argues that the Guardian tradition is still there.<sup>46</sup> The Heroes tend to follow a more assertive doctrine. They are

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<sup>40</sup> Douglas Macgregor, *Breaking the Phalanx* (Westport: Praeger Publishers, 1997), 227.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 176.

<sup>43</sup> Brian Linn, *The Echo of Battle: The Army’s Way of War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 5.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

much more emotional and “believe that wars are fought with men, not weapons.”<sup>47</sup> Examples of Heroes would be George Patton in World War II or Tommy Franks of Operation Iraqi Freedom.<sup>48</sup> The Managers are focused on effectiveness and efficiency of the organization.<sup>49</sup> Linn gives the example of General Erik Shinseki as a Manager who identified the need for more troops in the pre-invasion planning of Operation Iraqi Freedom, but who was weak at inspiring others to see his prediction as important.<sup>50</sup> Linn’s overarching argument is that these three traditions dominate the force and it is the particular tradition dominant in the organization that determines the type of doctrine that is advocated.

James Russell argues that tactical adaptation and organizational innovation are related. He states that “Tactical adaptation occurs when units change organizational procedures on the battlefield in order to address perceived organizational shortfalls, which are generally revealed by their interaction with the adversary.”<sup>51</sup> Russell argues that lower echelon elements of the military organization at the brigade level and company level were innovating even while new counterinsurgency doctrine was being developed in Iraq. Although he agrees that top-down innovation is important, he believes that the bottom-up approach is equally, if not more, important. His 2011 book, *Innovation, Transformation, and War* argues that in cases such as the Ninewa and Anbar provinces of Iraq between 2005 and 2007 innovation occurred within the organization at lower echelons of command while upper echelons at the strategic level were still developing new written doctrine.<sup>52</sup> Unlike Linn and Cohen, Russell’s approach points out the importance of the lower echelon of command and essentially says that, in Iraq, the military organization adapted to the situation on the ground even while there was

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<sup>47</sup> Brian Linn, *The Echo of Battle: The Army’s Way of War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 6.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 6–7.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 239.

<sup>51</sup> James Russell, *Innovation, Transformation and War* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), 191.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 33–39.

confusing strategic guidance. It was the flexibility of the low-level tactical leadership that helped institute change within the organization. From this perspective, Russell's insight on the lower echelons of the military organization and its adaptation on the battlefield in Iraq is both necessary and relevant to the discussion on organizational change.

Cohen and Gooch argue that the military organization changes after it fails in battle.<sup>53</sup> They argue that military organizations are compelled to change once they fail to learn, fail to anticipate and fail to adapt in war.<sup>54</sup> They argue that between 1940 and 1942 the U.S. Navy failed to learn from previous World War I German U-boat attacks along the U.S. coast, but that after this failure, the Navy adapted by adding the Tenth Fleet in 1943, which focused heavily on Anti-submarine warfare.<sup>55</sup> Their argument is oriented around the behavior of the military organization changing after conflict gets underway. Unlike Linn, who focuses on three types of personalities within the Army, Cohen and Gooch argue that it is the actual actionable (or lack of actionable) behavior that best explains what leads an organization to fail. They explain, "The view that ascribes all fault or praise to a commander is the equivalent of concentrating only on operator error when highly complicated machines malfunction."<sup>56</sup> To Cohen and Gooch, the organization is too complex to pinpoint any one reason for failure, but rather, they contend that all variables must be considered. Leadership matters, but it is not the only factor that contributes to the systemic failure of a military organization.

Each of these six schools of thought brings something to bear in the discussion of organizational failure. However, the "military behaviorist" school of thought makes the most compelling argument in trying to analyze why the Army has struggled to internalize stability operations within the organization. Since the U.S. Army, like many armies in history, has suffered from organizational resistance to change it seems best to determine what behaviors may have contributed to that resistance by looking at what actions the

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<sup>53</sup> Eliot Cohen and John Gooch, *Military Misfortunes: The Anatomy of Failure in War* (New York: The Free Press, 2006), 1.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 90.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 232.

organization did or did not take. Although scholars, like Posen, Rosen, Avant, Farrell, Terriff, Macgregor, Perito, Campbell, Russell, and Linn provide necessary and compelling arguments about organizational change, only Cohen and Gooch provide a solid structural and behavioral framework for testing the Army organization and its implementation of stability operations in Operation Iraqi Freedom between 2003 and 2007—to determine if the Army failed to anticipate, learn, and adapt.

#### **D. HYPOTHESIS**

The United States Army struggled to acknowledge that it was entering into a stability operations phase in Iraq following the end of major combat operations in 2003. Further, it struggled to recognize that stability operations were essential to the Iraq mission until “the surge” was implemented in 2007. A lack of organizational emphasis on stability operations seems to have caused the Army to fumble through its first years of the occupation in Iraq. The struggle to implement stability operations could be due to the organization’s inability to anticipate, learn, and adapt to the irregular mission it has often seen as an aberration throughout its history.<sup>57</sup> Cohen and Gooch describe these three components of an organization’s behavior by arguing, from within the context of their well-supported theory that militaries often fail because they do not anticipate, do not learn, and do not adapt to the situations they enter into.<sup>58</sup>

Throughout history, in an attempt to avoid facing their own shortcomings, military organizations have been known to blame their follies on individuals. Following the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, for example, Admiral Husband Kimmel and Lieutenant General Walter Short, commanders of the U.S. Naval forces and U.S. Army forces in Hawaii were relieved of their commands and took the fall for the military organizations they led. However, as Cohen and Gooch write, “true military ‘misfortunes’—as we define them—can never be justly laid at the door of any one

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<sup>57</sup> Cohen and Gooch use a 3-part framework called the “Taxonomy of Misfortune” identified in their book: *Military Misfortunes: The Anatomy of Failure in War*, 26.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

commander. They are failures of the organization, not the individual.”<sup>59</sup> Cohen and Gooch say Pearl Harbor was a “failure of vulnerabilities and an absence of precautions—an operational failure.”<sup>60</sup> Although individual leaders are important in militaries, according to Cohen and Gooch, it is the organizations’ practices, or lack thereof, that can lead to failures to anticipate, learn, and adapt.

When looking at Operation Iraqi Freedom and the Army’s implementation of stability operations, it was the military organization’s practices, not its leaders, that most contributed to the stalemate in operations between 2003 and 2007. The Army’s failure to anticipate the irregular conflict that took place, its struggle to learn, and its slow operational adaptation—each played a key role in the Army’s fumble with stability operations. In the case of OIF, the Army was inept at using innovation to transition from its traditional way of war to a way of war in the form of stability operations as the battle unfolded—and this led the organization down the path of failure.

## **E. METHOD AND SOURCES**

My methodology for this thesis will be to conduct a qualitative analysis of a single historical case study of the Army in executing stability operations during Operation Iraqi Freedom between 2003 and 2007. This study will attempt to determine what factors contributed to the struggle the Army, as an organization, had in implementing stability operations throughout the force before, during, and even after operations. Cohen and Gooch’s framework will be used to evaluate the Army’s difficulty in implementing stability operations.<sup>61</sup> Their “Taxonomy of Misfortune” framework describes three reasons why military organizations fail—a failure to learn, failure to anticipate, and failure to adapt.<sup>62</sup> They contend that more than one failure leads to an “aggregate failure” and all three types of failure, when combined, equal a

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<sup>59</sup> Cohen and Gooch, *Military Misfortunes: The Anatomy of Failure in War*, 3.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 51.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

“catastrophe.”<sup>63</sup> A test will be done to see if all three of these components contributed to the Army’s failure to implement its stability operations doctrine in Iraq between 2003 and 2007.

Primary sources for this study will come from the strategic, operational and tactical levels of the military and civilian sectors using documents such as Department of Defense reports, U.S. State Department reports, Government Accountability Office reports, current U.S. Army doctrine, and pre-war U.S. Army doctrine. Secondary sources for this study will include journal articles, academic papers, and scholarly books that will help evaluate why or why not change occurs.

## **F. OVERVIEW**

This thesis will be organized into four main chapters: an introductory chapter, a historical background chapter, a case study chapter, and a concluding chapter. The second chapter will review the Army, as an organization, and its history with conventional war and irregular war since World War II. The third chapter, a case study of Operation Iraqi Freedom, will analyze the behaviors of the Army prior to the surge in 2007 to determine if there is any evidence of a failure to anticipate, to learn from and/or adapt to stability operations. The final chapter will conclude with an evaluation of the findings along with recommendations.

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<sup>63</sup> Cohen and Gooch, *Military Misfortunes: The Anatomy of Failure in War*, 26–27.

## **II. THE U.S. ARMY AND A HISTORY OF ABBERATIONS: NEGLECTING IRREGULAR WAR**

### **A. INTRODUCTION**

Throughout its history, the American military has focused the bulk of its attention on fighting, or preparing to fight ... conventional wars, with circumstances dictating whether any given conflict would be total or limited. One trade off for this preoccupation with conventional warfare has been the military's general disinclination to study and prepare for what, in current jargon, is referred to as stability operations.<sup>64</sup>

~ Lawrence A. Yates, 2006

Irregular war is not new to the United States Army, yet the organization has recently failed to recognize the post-invasion conflict in Iraq as irregular—instead the organization has continued to embrace its more successful conventional traditions and brushed aside its unsuccessful irregular war experience. Lawrence Yates argues: “If America’s armed forces have fought fewer than a dozen major conventional wars in over two centuries, they have, during that same period, engaged in several hundred military undertakings that would today be characterized as stability operations.”<sup>65</sup> With so much experience in irregular warfare throughout its history, it is surprising that the Army was unprepared for the Iraq War in 2003 and continued to flounder about as it tried to match its tactics to its strategy. The Army has a history of avoiding irregular war and/or conflicts viewing them as aberrations, which has put the organization on the path of failure when it comes to such conflicts like the Iraq War and its implementation of the most recent type of irregular war—stability operations. Why does this avoidance happen within the organization? Are there characteristics about these aberrations that prevent the Army from wanting to conduct irregular war?

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<sup>64</sup> Lawrence A. Yates, “The United States Military Experience in Stability Operations 1789–2005,” Global War on Terrorism Occasional Paper 15 (Combat Studies Institute Press: Fort Leavenworth, KS, 2006): 1.

<sup>65</sup> Yates, Global War on Terrorism, 2.

This chapter will focus on three of the Army's major conventional campaigns and three of its irregular conflicts in recent history. World War II, the Cold War, and Operation Desert Storm will be reviewed to explain how the Army approved and supported conventional campaigns. The Korean War, Vietnam, and conflict in Somalia, in the 1990s, will be evaluated to demonstrate instances in how the Army disavowed irregular conflicts and ultimately saw them as aberrations.

I will argue that Operation Iraqi Freedom could have been better planned and prepared for if the Army had placed a greater emphasis on its history with aberrations. If stability operations, as a form of irregular warfare, had been considered prior to the invasion of Iraq and/or adapted to earlier on in the war, the Army may have decreased the length of the war, prevented soldier deaths, and even assisted the Iraqi population earlier on, ultimately preventing a large insurgency that ended up growing rapidly in the first two years of the war.

In addition, this chapter will use Eliot Cohen and John Gooch's "Taxonomy of Misfortune" to evaluate how well the organization anticipated, learned from, and adapted to the threat it faced at the time.<sup>66</sup> Further, it will try and determine if there is a correlation between the characteristics of the type of conflict and how the organization anticipated, learned, and adjusted to the conflict.

## **B. CHARACTERISTICS OF "REAL WAR" AND ABBERATIONS**

Conventional campaigns, that I consider "real war," are what the Army sees as its primary mission. In this chapter, we will look at conventional war as having four key characteristics that best define it. First, there is a clearly identified and uniformed enemy. Second, these campaigns are usually a state military versus another state military where there is a physical force on force competition against one another. Third, in conventional campaigns, the Army executes components of its doctrine that it has mastered—offensive

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<sup>66</sup> Cohen and Gooch, *Military Misfortunes: The Anatomy of Failure in War*, 26.



and defensive capabilities. Fourth, conventional campaigns have the goal of defeating the enemy's military. World War II, the Cold War, and Desert Storm all have these characteristics within them.

Irregular conflicts on the other hand follow different lines and have been considered aberrations by the Army throughout its history. First, there typically is not a clearly identified and uniformed enemy in these conflicts. Second, enemies often reside within populations and only attack when it is advantageous to them in the form of guerilla-style warfare. They are usually fought between a state military and a fundamentalist and/or politically-charged organization or organizations within another state. Third, the Army typically has not had a written or standard doctrine for executing these conflicts that typically include some combination of offensive, defensive, and stability operations where a balance of all three doctrines must be put into play simultaneously. Fourth, irregular conflicts have the goal of attempting to win over the population in most cases. The Vietnam War and the peacekeeping mission in Somalia are good examples of irregular conflicts. These are conflicts the Army was unprepared for that required the organization to adapt and adjust to the threat it faced in order to be successful. Below, in Figure 1, is a graph showing the differences between the chosen conflicts and the four characteristics of irregular and conventional war.

| COMPARING CHARACTERISTICS OF CONVENTIONAL AND IRREGULAR WAR |           |                 |                 |                        |                    |                        |                  |                   |                    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| CONFLICT/CAMPAIGN                                           |           | THE ENEMY       |                 | THE DOCTRINE           |                    | THE TYPE OF FIGHT      |                  | THE GOAL          |                    |
|                                                             |           | REAL WAR        | ABERRATION      | REAL WAR               | ABERRATION         | REAL WAR               | ABERRATION       | REAL WAR          | ABERRATION         |
|                                                             | Years     | Uniformed Enemy | Disguised Enemy | Practiced Its Doctrine | Had Wrong Doctrine | Force on Force Warfare | Guerilla Warfare | Beat the Military | Win the Population |
| WORLD WAR II                                                | 1941-1945 | X               |                 | X                      |                    | X                      |                  | X                 |                    |
| KOREAN WAR                                                  | 1950-1953 | X               |                 |                        | X                  | X                      |                  | X                 |                    |
| COLD WAR                                                    | 1947-1989 | X               |                 | X                      |                    | X                      |                  | X                 |                    |
| VIETNAM WAR                                                 | 1965-1973 |                 | X               |                        | X                  |                        | X                |                   | X                  |
| DESERT STORM                                                | 1990-1991 | X               |                 | X                      |                    | X                      |                  | X                 |                    |
| SOMALIA                                                     | 1992-1994 |                 | X               |                        | X                  |                        | X                |                   | X                  |

Figure 1. Characteristics of Conventional and Irregular War.

## **1. Real War: Conventional Campaigns**

The next section will go through three conventional campaigns, or “real wars,” and analyze each one to demonstrate how it was conventional in nature.

### **a. World War II**

World War II was the epitome of a conventional war for the U.S. Army. The enemy was uniformed and clearly defined, the Army executed its conventional doctrine, the type of fight was force on force and the goal was to defeat other states military forces. Brian Linn argues: “World War II proved to be the Army’s finest hour. The defeat of Germany and Japan was a titanic military triumph, calling forth the service’s greatest effort since the preservation of the Union.”<sup>67</sup> Following the end of World War II, the Army did not see a need to reform how it fought the war or even how the organization was structured. The organization instead maintained its divisional structure of ten divisions—keeping four divisions in Japan, five divisions in the U.S. and one division in Germany.<sup>68</sup> Since the organization had won World War II there was no incentive or need to change the way it conducted the war. Leading into the Cold War it seemed as if the only real reason the Army had positioned the divisions in these locations was to help with reconstruction and to “hold valuable real estate” as Robert T. Davis put it.<sup>69</sup> The divisions had no other purpose at the time and, in the post-war, the Army was doing very little to train or prepare for the next war. There was really no new doctrine being written—especially since the advent of the nuclear bomb seemed to make the Army nearly obsolete. The organization seemed to believe it had defined itself in World War II and there was not a need to change how the organization was operating—there was no need to anticipate, need to learn, or need to adapt. The organizational mentality

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<sup>67</sup> Brian M. Linn, *The Echo of Battle: The Army’s Way of War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 151.

<sup>68</sup> Robert T. Davis, “The Challenge of Adaptation: The US Army in the Aftermath of Conflict, 1953-2000.” *The Long War Series Occasional Paper* 27 (Combat Studies Institute Press: Fort Leavenworth, KS, 2008), 4.

<sup>69</sup> Davis, 5.

was if it is not broken, you do not need to fix it. This was the mantra that seemed to come about following the end of the Second World War.

If we apply Cohen and Gooch's model to World War II we can estimate that World War II was generally a success. Obviously the inability of the Armed Forces to anticipate the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor has to be considered a failure, but overall they learned from that experience and adapted to the threat.

### **b.      *The Cold War***

The Cold War, like World War II, had a clearly defined and uniformed enemy: The Soviet Union. There was a clear goal to counter the Soviet military force economically, militarily, and through nuclear means. There was clear force on force standoff for over forty years between the United States Army and the Soviet military. Additionally, the Army had gone back to adhering to its traditional conventional war doctrine as it did in World War II. Although the Army did reorganize its structure to some degree, throughout the forty years of the campaign, it remained primarily conventional. Brian Linn explains how the Army remained focused conventionally:

In the 1950s, modern warfare, in its new incarnation as atomic limited war, restored the army to an important if not central position in the nation's defense [compared to the navy and air force]. But what began as an option short of all-out nuclear general war, whereby conventional military forces might achieve national objectives without escalation into mutual annihilation, soon morphed into a doctrine by which the army, virtually unassisted, could wage a victorious land war.<sup>70</sup>

Two major reorganizations took place between the 1950s and 1960s, but neither was really innovative or changed the Army's way of conducting war. One structural change occurred with the designation of the Pentomic Division under General Maxwell Taylor which was the Army's attempt to adapt to the new nuclear threat.<sup>71</sup> Another was the designation of the Reorganization Objective Army Division (ROAD) in

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<sup>70</sup> Linn, *The Echo of Battle: The Army's Way of War*, 191.

<sup>71</sup> Davis, "Challenge of Adaptation: The US Army in the Aftermath of Conflict, 1953–2000," *The Long War Series Occasional Paper* 27, 11.

the 1960s.<sup>72</sup> Both of these were simply reorganizations of the Army, but no new capabilities were discovered or learned. The Army did not reform its method of doing business—it just changed how the organization looked when conducting operations.

The Pentomic division reorganized the Army from operating in a 17,000 man divisional structure in World War II to a force near 12,000.<sup>73</sup> Essentially, all the same forces were still there, but they were spread out in order to counter a nuclear attack. The 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division was one of the first units to undergo this reorganization and struggled to support the new design logistically. “The division could not function, or even supply itself, except as part of a larger corps organization,” explains Brian Linn.<sup>74</sup>

In the 1960s, the Reorganization Objective Army Division (ROAD) was created. These divisions had three brigade headquarters with two to five maneuver battalions each and they could be task organized based on the mission. It allowed the force to be more flexible, but again, this was just a reorganization of the same conventional force the Army had always known. The U.S. Army during the Cold War prepared to fight the Soviet Union in the same conventional manner it fought World War II.

The Army organization following World War II was consumed with the reorganization of the force. It was as if the organization could only anticipate another World War II and did not seem to look left or right at other potential conflicts it may face in the future. Although the Cold War never transpired into World War III, the Army was continually preparing for the prospect that another conventional war may occur.

### ***c. Desert Storm***

Probably the most well-known confirmation of conventional warfare was that of Desert Storm. Brian Linn explains it best: “the Gulf War was not the first war of

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<sup>72</sup> Davis, “Challenge of Adaptation: The US Army in the Aftermath of Conflict, 1953–2000,” *The Long War Series Occasional Paper* 27, 31.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

<sup>74</sup> Linn, *The Echo of Battle: The Army’s Way of War*, 179.

the new millennium, but the final conflict of the last.”<sup>75</sup> In the 1980s, toward the end of the Cold War, the Army had been putting its AirLand Battle doctrine into action through the revisions made to the 1982 *Army Field Manual 100-5 Operations* which placed greater emphasis on coordination between the Air Force and the Army. AirLand Battle was still a conventional doctrine, but instead of the Army operating independently, it was now coordinating efforts with the U.S. Air Force to achieve similar effects. When the Gulf War took place in January of 1991 and ended with a ground attack phase in 100 hours, this seemed to validate the conventional warfare doctrine that the Army knew so well. In Iraq, there was a uniformed and identifiable enemy, an Iraqi force versus coalition force mission, a goal to defeat the enemy’s military, and a conventional doctrine in place that was executed almost flawlessly. The success of Desert Storm was so grand that the great victory seen around the world would become the basis for planning Operation Iraqi Freedom in the future. The Army in Desert Storm went into battle believing that by adding the Air Force and joint coordination into the fight that it had mastered the wars the organization was supposed to fight. Just like with World War II and the Cold War, the Army had changed the arrangement of the players in the war, but the war it was preparing for was still conventional in nature.

***d. A Taxonomy of Success?***

Since World War II, the Army was consumed with changing the way it was organized and in reinforcing the doctrine it believed it was supposed to fight. Although the Pentomic division, the ROAD division, and the addition of the U.S. Air Force changed the structure of the force, the Army was still enthralled with fighting a war like that of World War II where conventional tactics dominated the organization’s strategy. The three examples in this section demonstrate the Army’s continued desire to seek out and fight using conventional doctrine. There was no need to learn from the previous war because the organization had won the previous war. There was no need to anticipate a different kind of war because the greatest war the world had ever seen had just been won by the U.S. Army. There was no need to adapt to a new kind of war

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<sup>75</sup> Linn, *The Echo of Battle: The Army’s Way of War*, 221.

because conventional wars were what the Army saw as what mattered. In these cases, the Army would likely contend that any other way of war was simply a sideshow that distracted the organization from doing what it considered, was “real war.”

## **2. Aberrations: Irregular Conflicts**

The next section will go through three irregular conflicts, or “aberrations,” and analyze each one to demonstrate how it was irregular in nature. These conflicts were ones the Army was unprepared for and struggled to adjust to as they transpired.

### **a. Korean War**

The first aberration is the Korean conflict in the 1950s. This aberration in the 1950s was much different from Vietnam and Somalia because this conflict had a uniformed enemy, a goal to defeat a military force, and was a force on force fight. However, like Vietnam and Somalia, the organization did not utilize the right doctrine for the conflict and the Army was unprepared. The communist-led campaign forced both South Korea and the United States to get involved in a static defense fight they were unprepared for.

Before getting involved in the Korean conflict, the Army was trying to determine what was next for the organization following World War II while downsizing and conducting postwar reconstruction in Germany and Japan. After World War II, the Army’s budget was cut and manpower decreased from \$8 million dollars in 1945 to only \$700,000 dollars in 1950.<sup>76</sup> Further deepening the difficulty of the Korean War was that the Army was caught off guard by the conflict—it did not expect to be going back to war so soon and it was unprepared for the irregular way of war it would get involved in—a prolonged static defense.

In July 1950, Lieutenant Colonel Charles B. Smith, commander of 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 21<sup>st</sup> Infantry regiment in the 24<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division first fought the North Koreans for two weeks and eventually withdrew after being replaced by the 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry

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<sup>76</sup> Linn, *The Echo of Battle: The Army’s Way of War*, 153.

Division and having taken heavy casualties.<sup>77</sup> Roy Flint argues, “The tactical defeats endured by the officers and men of the 24<sup>th</sup> [Infantry] Division were rooted in the failure of the Army ... to prepare itself during peacetime for battle.”<sup>78</sup> Eventually General Douglas MacArthur, who was conducting postwar reconstruction in Japan would come to the aid of South Korea but he, too, had units that were not at full strength, were not preparing for another war, and were in poor condition.<sup>79</sup> “When the front began to stabilize in 1951, the Korean War became a war of attrition, with each side launching limited attacks to destroy enemy personnel,” and “Many observers compared this phase of the Korean War to the artillery and trench struggles of World War I” explains Jonathon House.<sup>80</sup> Korea became an aberration because the Army was not prepared for a static defense battle in 1951. Eventually, the U.S. did learn and adapt to the fight through its use of air assets and heavy rapid-fire weaponry. “A defending infantry company often had up to a dozen machine guns above its normal authorization,” House explains.<sup>81</sup> After the Korean conflict ended the Army went right back to preparing for war with the Soviet Union—using conventional World War II doctrine and not much was done about integrating air assets. It would not be until Vietnam that the use of air assets would come up again.

#### **b. Vietnam War**

Vietnam was an aberration, too. The Army chose to forget this war in its past because it fumbled through it for many years. The enemy in this war was hard to find and the doctrine at the time did not support the counterinsurgency fight the Army was encountering. The Army had reverted to its conventional tactics learned in World War II and focused on defeating the enemy instead of winning the population, which is what

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<sup>77</sup> Roy K. Flint in Charles Heller’s *America’s First Battles 1776–1965*, (University Press of Kansas: Lawrence, KS, Dec. 1986), 266.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 277.

<sup>80</sup> Jonathon House, “Toward Combined Arms Warfare: A Survey of 20th-Century Tactics, Doctrine, and Organization, Command and General Staff College (Fort Leavenworth, KS). From website: <http://www.cgsc.edu/carl/resources/csi/house/house.asp> (accessed 03 June 2011).

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

counterinsurgency doctrine requires.<sup>82</sup> *Army Field Manual 3-24 Counterinsurgency* states: “Successful conduct of COIN operations depends on thoroughly understanding the society and culture within which they are being conducted. Soldiers and Marines must understand ...the population...” Brian Linn argues: “Vietnam nearly broke the Army. So deep was the bitterness, and so broad the Army’s internal problems, that in the decade after 1972 the institution all but denied responsibility for defeat.”<sup>83</sup> According to Lawrence Yates:

Vietnam was a limited conventional war against regular forces; in other respects it was a guerilla war; and in still other respects, it was an exercise in ... stability operations and nation building. American troops were most effective when fighting conventionally. Counterinsurgency activities fared less well.<sup>84</sup>

The end of the draft, the erosion of discipline, and lots of drug use contributed to the downfall of the Army in the Vietnam conflict. In addition it can be argued that the Army’s unpreparedness for an irregular conflict contributed to the organization’s downfall. The Army would eventually acknowledge its need for change, but it would still end up reverting to the conventionalism it had mastered in World War II despite the losses and struggle the Army faced in Vietnam.

Following the end of Vietnam, leaders like General William Depuy, General Creighton Abrams, and General Donn Starry established the Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) to establish a “doctrinally based Army ... emphasizing realistic training.”<sup>85</sup> In the mid-1970s, General Depuy developed and helped write the 1976 *Army Field Manual 100-5 Operations* in order to get the Army all thinking one way and in a new way following Vietnam, however, that new way was called “active defense” and it was still conventional. Even more troubling was that General Depuy based the

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<sup>82</sup> *Army Field Manual 3-24 Counterinsurgency* states that the goal of counterinsurgency is to focus on winning the population. See page, ?

<sup>83</sup> Linn, *The Echo of Battle: The Army’s Way of War*, 193.

<sup>84</sup> Yates, “The United States Military Experience in Stability Operations 1789–2005,” *Global War on Terrorism Occasional Paper* 15, 17.

<sup>85</sup> Davis, “The Challenge of Adaptation: The US Army in the Aftermath of Conflict, 1953–2000.” *The Long War Series Occasional Paper* 27, 113–114.



manual off his own experience in World War II and that of the 1973 Arab-Israeli conflict instead of the lessons of Vietnam. His method of using an “active defense” focused heavily on attacking from a defensive posture in order to be able to strike first against an enemy. His method was not all that innovative in that he only reinforced the defense aspect of warfare—it was still a conventional doctrine by design.

**c. *Somalia***

The peacekeeping operation in Somalia in the 1990s can also be considered an aberration the Army chose to forget. The Army initially went into Somalia in 1992 in order to attempt to provide humanitarian assistance to a suffering population. Initially, the United States Marines, under Lieutenant General Robert Johnston, successfully went in with overwhelming force while the United Nations moved into the area. After the United Nations took control, a small contingent of U.S. Army Rangers and Special Forces were left behind to assist in securing the area. In October of 1993, two Blackhawk helicopters were shot down over Mogadishu and 18 U.S. servicemen were killed in an irregular urban fight against an enemy that was disguised as civilians. Brian Linn argues: “The Somalia intervention of 1993–1994, a particularly harsh experience, revealed significant flaws in the Army’s post-Cold War world.”<sup>86</sup> Linn eludes to the Army losing the fight in Mogadishu because the organization had trained and prepared for a fight against the Soviet Union—with a uniformed enemy, that was force on force, in a conventional fight with the goal of defeating the military. Somalia was nothing like that. Here the Army faced an enemy within the civilian population, guerilla warfare, in an irregular fight in urban terrain, with no clear objective other than to survive. Somalia, like Vietnam and Korea, was an aberration and the Army just wanted to forget about this failure like it had all the aberrations previous.

**d. *A Taxonomy of Failure?***

The previous three cases highlighted the Army’s avoidance to change. In all of the above cases, using Eliot Cohen and John Gooch’s “Taxonomy of Misfortune”

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<sup>86</sup> Linn, *The Echo of Battle: The Army’s Way of War*, 222.

we can see the organization's failure to anticipate the threat it faced. In Korea, the Army did not anticipate static defense warfare. In Vietnam, the Army did not anticipate facing a guerilla force in a counterinsurgency fight. In Somalia, the Army did not anticipate the irregular fight it encountered in the streets of Mogadishu. All three cases demonstrate the organization's failure to learn since the Korean War. In each of the aforementioned conflicts a new way of fighting battle came about, but none was ever truly integrated into the organizations practice and doctrine. In each case, the Army remained focused on conventional tactics, seeking only to add to the existing doctrine instead of innovating it. Adaptation of new doctrine and operating procedures seemed to elude the Army since the Korean War.

### C. CONCLUSIONS

The Army's desire to turn away from its Korean War and Vietnam War experiences [or aberrations] is symptomatic of this tendency to selectively use the past to look ahead. If past experience is used too exclusively, the Army runs the danger of forgetting that full-spectrum capabilities call for a full appreciation of its own variegated history.<sup>87</sup>

~ Robert T. Davis II, 2000

The Army's history of viewing irregular war as aberrations has set the Army up for failure. It should be no surprise that this was the case leading into Operation Iraqi Freedom. When looking at the cases of Somalia, Vietnam and Korea, the Army seems to oppose fighting wars that do not adhere to the typical conventional tradition—heavy on the offense and defense and light on the irregular warfare. This stubbornness of the organization to acknowledge the importance of the irregular wars that were not as successful has inhibited the Army in fighting future irregular wars.

In Figure 2, a chart is laid out with the “real wars” on the left column and the “aberrations” on the right column. Using Cohen and Gooch's “Taxonomy of Misfortune” and applying it to each type of conflict, one can see the general issues that come with the aberrations. First, a failure to anticipate the threat is prevalent in each irregular war listed.

Second, in none of the aberrations listed was there a complete success of anticipation, learning, or adapting. On the other hand, in “real war” or conventional war, anticipating the threat is more common because this is the type of war that the Army has chosen to recognize as important to prepare for. Chapter III will delve deeper into this format breaking Cohen and Gooch’s categories down further when discussing Operation Iraqi Freedom.

| EVALUATION OF U.S. ARMY EXPERIENCE WITH CONVENTIONAL WAR VS. IRREGULAR WAR 1941-2003 |                        |                 |         |                  |                 |         |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------|---------|------------------|-----------------|---------|
|                                                                                      | REAL WAR               |                 |         | ABERRATIONS      |                 |         |
|                                                                                      | WORLD WAR II           |                 |         | KOREAN WAR       |                 |         |
|                                                                                      | SUCCESS                | PARTIAL SUCCESS | FAILURE | SUCCESS          | PARTIAL SUCCESS | FAILURE |
| Anticipated the Threat                                                               |                        |                 | X       |                  |                 | X       |
| Learned from the Threat                                                              | X                      |                 |         |                  | X               |         |
| Adapted to the Threat                                                                | X                      |                 |         |                  | X               |         |
|                                                                                      | COLD WAR               |                 |         | VIETNAM CONFLICT |                 |         |
|                                                                                      | SUCCESS                | PARTIAL SUCCESS | FAILURE | SUCCESS          | PARTIAL SUCCESS | FAILURE |
| Anticipated the Threat                                                               |                        | X               |         |                  |                 | X       |
| Learned from the Threat                                                              | X                      |                 |         |                  |                 | X       |
| Adapted to the Threat                                                                | X                      |                 |         |                  |                 | X       |
|                                                                                      | OPERATION DESERT STORM |                 |         | SOMALIA CONFLICT |                 |         |
|                                                                                      | SUCCESS                | PARTIAL SUCCESS | FAILURE | SUCCESS          | PARTIAL SUCCESS | FAILURE |
| Anticipated the Threat                                                               | X                      |                 |         |                  |                 | X       |
| Learned from the Threat                                                              | X                      |                 |         |                  | X               |         |
| Adapted to the Threat                                                                | X                      |                 |         |                  |                 | X       |
| OVERALL ASSESSMENT:                                                                  | 7                      | 1               | 1       | 0                | 3               | 6       |

Figure 2. Evaluation of U.S. Army Experience With Conventional War Vs. Irregular Conflict, 1941–2003.

<sup>87</sup> Davis, “The Challenge of Adaptation: The US Army in the Aftermath of Conflict, 1953–2000.” *The Long War Series Occasional Paper* 27, 111.

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### **III. OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM 2003–2007: THE EVIDENCE OF FAILURE TO IMPLEMENT STABILITY OPERATIONS**

#### **A. INTRODUCTION**

In order to evaluate the Army and its implementation of stability operations in Iraq, looking particularly at the timeframe from the ending of major combat operations in Iraq in 2003 to the Army's execution of "the surge" in 2007, this study will apply Eliot Cohen and John Gooch's "Taxonomy of Misfortune" to see if a failure to anticipate, a failure to learn, and a failure to adapt have caused the Army to fail to implement the stability operations component of its counterinsurgency doctrine. The focus will be the period between 2003 and 2007, because this was the period following the invasion and leads up to the surge. This is the period where the Army organization struggled heavily to find the right way to fight in Iraq.

#### **1. Why Iraq?**

The Middle East and North Africa nations are each unique, however, they all tend to suffer from the similar internal conflicts such as: unemployment of middle aged males, they have weak institutional support of services infrastructure, are lacking in civil services, and generally have poor overall governance. Since these infrastructures are so damaged and are not in place, it is logical to predict that the United States will face similar problems in the region in the years to come. Since stability operations seeks "to establish security, to establish civil control, restore essential services, provide support to governance, and to provide support to economic and infrastructure development," this sort of mission becomes increasingly important in the region. If the United States is to get involved in another country in this region, stability operations could easily become the military's primary mission—especially for land forces. This then requires the Army organization to accept and internalize stability operations throughout from the most

senior commander to the lowest soldier on the ground. Iraq becomes particularly important because it is the most recent testing ground for how the Army did or did not implement stability operations.

## **B. TEST: A FAILURE TO ANTICIPATE?**

Eliot Cohen and John Gooch explain that, “the essence of a failure to anticipate is not ignorance of the future, for that is inherently unknowable. It is rather, the failure to take reasonable precautions against a known hazard.”<sup>88</sup> Using the example of the 1973 Yom Kippur War, they argue that the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) failed to anticipate because of an inability to see the bigger picture. They write that the IDF suffered from a “failure to think through the many dimensions of a changing strategic challenge. By confining their implicit net assessment to only one level of military effectiveness—essentially, the tactical dimension of warfare—and by failing to gauge the cumulative impact of change, the IDF set itself up for a calamity.”<sup>89</sup> Cohen and Gooch explain that it was “reckless overconfidence” and “a brash faith in the capabilities of large all-tank formations” that blinded the IDF’s ability to anticipate Arab maneuvers like the execution of their deception plan that secretly put 20,000 Egyptians in a position to attack the IDF.<sup>90</sup> The IDF did not anticipate the Arab capabilities correctly in the Yom Kippur War which was a major setback at the onset of the conflict, but in the end the IDF was able to adapt which helped it overcome its failure to anticipate.

In Iraq, evidence suggests that the Army failed to anticipate the requirements the organization would be faced with. A failure to anticipate the right conditions on the ground, the correct number of troops necessary, prison requirements and a common way of war seem to demonstrate that the Army did not anticipate a stability operations fight.

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<sup>88</sup> Eliot Cohen and John Gooch, *Military Misfortunes: The Anatomy of Failure in War* (New York: The Free Press, 2006), 121.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 130.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 117 and 128.

## 1. Anticipating the Correct Ground Conditions

The Army failed to anticipate the correct conditions on the ground prior to the invasion. Following the successful invasion of Iraq, the Army found itself unprepared for the fight that would follow the end of major combat operations declared by President Bush on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2003. General Tommy Franks, the Commander of U.S. Central Command, established a four phase operational plan that concluded with a post-combat operations phase, however, Franks didn't see the post-combat operation phase as a military responsibility—he saw it as a State Department responsibility.<sup>91</sup> He felt that the final phase should be led by civilians and, therefore, did not spend much time focusing his efforts on post-combat missions. Franks hastily anticipated Desert Storm II and seemed to take little interest in focusing his efforts beyond the combat portion of the invasion.

Three poor assumptions were made by the Army organization that affected the poor preparation of post-conflict Iraq. First, the military campaign was expected to be able to produce a stable security environment where troop numbers would be reduced from 145,000 to around 30,000 or 40,000 troops by fall of 2003.<sup>92</sup> Second, it was assumed that the U.S. would be welcomed by the Iraqi people with open arms.<sup>93</sup> Third, it was assumed that the extent of assistance the population would need would reside in providing humanitarian aid, but this also was not the case.<sup>94</sup> As was discovered following major combat operations in Iraq, there was large anti-U.S. sentiment among the population that the Army did not anticipate. Vice President Dick Cheney wrongfully predicted three days before the invasion into Iraq that the U.S. “will be greeted as

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<sup>91</sup> Nora Bensahel, Olga Oliker, Keith Crane, Richard R. Brennan, Jr., Heather S. Gregg, Thomas Sullivan, Andrew Rathmell, *After Saddam: Prewar Planning and the Occupation of Iraq*, (n.p.: Rand Corporation, 2008), 6–7.

<sup>92</sup> The invasion force consisted of 145,000 troops according to Thomas E. Ricks in *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq* (New York: Penguin Group), 117 and the reduction estimate of 30,000 to 40,000 was according to Nora Bensahel, Olga Oliker, Keith Crane, Richard R. Brennan, Jr., Heather S. Gregg, Thomas Sullivan, Andrew Rathmell, in *After Saddam: Prewar Planning and the Occupation of Iraq*, (n.p.: Rand Corporation, 2008), 234.

<sup>93</sup> *After Saddam*, 14.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.

liberators.”<sup>95</sup> Additionally, the population was not dispersed with refugees running about as the U.S expected. Since combat operations lasted only three weeks, people never had a chance to flee their homes. These three wrongful assumptions about post-conflict Iraq demonstrate a failure of the Army to anticipate conditions on the ground following the invasion.

## **2. Anticipating Troop Requirements**

The Army was only partially successful at anticipating the correct number of troops required for Operation Iraqi Freedom. Army Chief of Staff, General Erik Shinseki anticipated that the ground force for Operation Iraqi Freedom would require “several hundred thousand” troops.<sup>96</sup> This was based on a ratio of one soldier for every 50 Iraqis. Shinseki had learned that this would be the best number based on his experience in Bosnia in the 1990s. Thomas Ricks writes, “[Shinseki] knew from experience that you needed to dominate and control the environment.”<sup>97</sup> Additionally, the Army’s Center for Military History recommended a force of 260,000 troops would be necessary for post war Iraq if it was to try and attempt a post-World War II Germany scenario.<sup>98</sup> Shinseki’s recommendation was unpopular with civilian leaders and was not accepted by the Office of the Secretary of Defense under Donald Rumsfeld who was seeking to send in only as many troops as would be necessary to defeat Iraqi forces.

Retired General Colin Powell, the Secretary of State in 2003, emphasized that the military should only get involved when there is a definite national security threat and only as an absolute last resort and when it goes in it should go in full force with everything it has.<sup>99</sup> According to Powell, there also had to be a defined exit strategy.

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<sup>95</sup> *After Saddam*, 234.

<sup>96</sup> General Eric Shinseki said this in his testimony to the U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee, February 25, 2003 reported in an article “ Army Chief: Force to occupy Iraq massive,” *USA Today*, February 25, 2003.

<sup>97</sup> Thomas E. Ricks, *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq* (New York: Penguin Group), 96.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 97.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 102–103.



Richard Armitage, the deputy Secretary of State said that it seemed as if the Office of the Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, was trying to disavow Powell's Doctrine.<sup>100</sup>

Some leaders in the Army, like Erik Shinseki, did anticipate a more appropriate number of troops that would be required to take on a long term mission. The estimations were based on the irregular mission NATO had faced in Bosnia where multiple factions of the population were at odds with one another. In the end, the invasion force into Iraq consisted of only 145,000 troops (65,000 of which came from the Army) from the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division, 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division, 173<sup>rd</sup> Airborne Brigade and 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Divisions.<sup>101</sup> Even though leaders like Shinseki and Powell were questioning senior leaders planning the invasion, their fight did not put forth a strong enough effort because in the end, the troop numbers were not enough as the Army eventually learned.

### **3. Anticipating Prison Requirements**

The Army failed at anticipating the requirements necessary to manage detainees and prisons in Iraq. Following the invasion mass numbers of prisoners were being detained by the Army and other forces on the ground. Abu Ghraib Prison quickly went over capacity within the first six months of post-combat operations. By September 2003, the Abu Ghraib held 3,500 prisoners.<sup>102</sup> There also was no plan for reintegrating prisoners into society since there was no judicial system in place. So as Army divisions rounded up military aged males, they were being sent to a prison that could hardly handle the load they were receiving. Thomas Ricks writes in his book *Fiasco*, "There was never supposed to be a problem with detainees, because there weren't supposed to be any, at least in U.S. hands. The war plan had called for the Iraqi population to cheerfully greet the American liberators."<sup>103</sup> The Army failed to anticipate just how severe the prisoner round up would be. This eventually led to detainee abuses in January 2004 which both

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<sup>100</sup> Ricks, *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq*, 102.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 117.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 199.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 290.

hurt the Army's image, but also demonstrated to the United States that the Army was not as prepared as it was thought to have been.

#### **4. Anticipating a Common Way of War**

The Army failed to identify a strategy and method for executing that strategy. Two Army divisions in 2003 to 2004 under two different commanders each ran their divisions and their stability operations with the absence of specific doctrinal guidance. General Raymond Odierno of the 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division and General David Petraeus of the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division each attempted to deal with post-invasion Iraq in their own ways. Petraeus took on northern Iraq by working with the local population. He coordinated with local sheiks and leaders and there seemed to be no gap starting from the end of the invasion to post-conflict operations as was felt in many parts of Iraq. Petraeus wrote a list of fourteen observations including: "help build institutions, not just units; ultimate success depends on local leaders; and act quickly because every Army of liberation has a half-life."<sup>104</sup> Petraeus incorporated the Iraqi leadership in Mosul by establishing a civic council that served as an interim ad hoc government.

General Raymond Odierno was a different style of leader. Petraeus was the sort of officer who vetted twenty-five captured military age males and sent three to prison while Odierno's unit would send all twenty-five.<sup>105</sup> The 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division was more aggressive than the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division. They were responsible for the Sunni Triangle in 2003 and 2004, which had a history of being a difficult spot. "Odierno's brigades and battalions earned a reputation for being overly aggressive," writes Ricks.<sup>106</sup>

The lack of a consistent way of operating in Iraq in 2003 and 2004 was directly due to Lieutenant General Ricardo Sanchez, the theater commander, and his poor leadership. General Sanchez's laissez-faire leadership contributed to the two units operating independently. Ricks writes, "The American offensive was undone by a

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<sup>104</sup> David Petraeus, "Learning Counterinsurgency: Observations From Soldiering in Iraq." *Military Review*. (Jan.-Feb. 2006): 46.

<sup>105</sup> Ricks, *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq*, 233.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 232.

combination of overwhelmed soldiers and indiscriminate generals—especially the 4th Infantry Division’s Odierno, who sent too many detainees south, and his immediate superior, Sanchez, who should have seen this and stopped it.”<sup>107</sup> The 101st Airborne Division and 4th Infantry Division going their own way is another example that demonstrates that the Army, as an organization, did not anticipate what kind of fight the divisions and lower components would be taking on. This is probably the most significant failure of all of the four failures to anticipate in Operation Iraqi Freedom. The Army did not have a stability operations doctrine to guide it after the invasion ended. General Petraeus said it best: “The insurgencies in Iraq and Afghanistan were not, in truth, the wars for which we were best prepared in 2001; however, they are the wars we are fighting and they clearly are the kind of wars we must master.”<sup>108</sup>

## **5. Results**

Based on the four tests above, it is apparent that the Army did not anticipate what it encountered in Iraq. Had the Army placed a greater emphasis on stability operations prior to 2003, the organization could have been better prepared for the conditions, prison requirements, troop requirements, and would have had a more standardized way of operating in Iraq. Although stability operations were not identified as important until 2005 in DoD Directive 3000.05, the Army should have expected a longer, drawn out, peace operations-style conflict similar to that of Bosnia.<sup>109</sup>

### **C. TEST: A FAILURE TO LEARN?**

The next section asks the question, was there an organizational failure to learn in Iraq? Eliot Cohen and John Gooch explain, “like people and businesses, armed forces suffer misfortune when they fail to learn obvious lessons.”<sup>110</sup> They further state:

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<sup>107</sup> Ricks, *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq*, 261.

<sup>108</sup> David Petraeus, “Learning Counterinsurgency: Observations From Soldiering in Iraq.” *Military Review*. (Jan.-Feb. 2006): 45.

<sup>109</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, *Department of Defense Direction 3000.05: Stability Operations*, November 2005.

<sup>110</sup> Cohen and Gooch, *Military Misfortunes: The Anatomy of Failure in War*, 25.

“Although we expect individuals to fall ready victims to this syndrome, whether because of mental inadequacy or blind carelessness, we do not expect sophisticated organizations to do the same.”<sup>111</sup> Cohen and Gooch use the American antisubmarine warfare (ASW) in 1942 to explain how the U.S. Navy organization failed to learn from the Royal Navy experience despite having had access before the war about antisubmarine warfare.<sup>112</sup>

In Iraq, the Army seems to have failed to learn how important the stability operations aspect of counterinsurgency was. Failures to learn to focus on population, to include non-lethal tactics in between deployments and to learn from junior leaders on the ground who had experiences with the local population seem to have evaded the Army organization.

### **1. Learning to Focus on the Population**

The Army failed to learn from its dealings with the local population. In counterinsurgency, the primary goal is the population and the Army organization did not understand that from the very beginning. High casualty rates forced the Army to look within and reassess how it was conducting the war. Under the leadership of General Ricardo Sanchez, the Combined Joint Task Force Seven (CJTF-7) Commander, counterinsurgency was not really a consideration. The Army was still trying to fight a conventional war in 2003 and into 2004. It was not until General George Casey came in to replace Sanchez in August 2004 that the Army began to change how it fought the war on the ground. Casey did two key things to try and implement a refocus of Army strategy in Iraq. First, he developed the Counterinsurgency (COIN) Academy at Camp Taji, just north of Baghdad. Second, he established a universal campaign plan that was classified as a way to provide direction to military commanders on the ground. The COIN Academy was a way to try to get leaders to understand what COIN was and how it should be fought. Although Casey was able to get a hold of the steering wheel of a runaway car going down the road, he was still driving in the wrong direction.

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<sup>111</sup> Cohen and Gooch, *Military Misfortunes: The Anatomy of Failure in War*, 25.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 71.

In counterinsurgency, the target is the population so in order to reach out and understand that population one would assume you must be among it. Casey's strategy was slightly different. He decided to get the soldiers out of the cities and took a defensive posture by having troops move into large Forward Operating Bases (FOBs) to conduct patrols from large protected fortresses. His theory was to leave the population to their own devices while rebuilding the Iraqi Army from the ground up. By doing this, he only alienated the population both physically and psychologically. Casey's defensive counterinsurgency strategy did not get after the true goal of COIN which is the population. Despite having a campaign plan and a new training school in Taji, the Army still suffered from increasing attacks. In 2004, the Army took approximately 24,000 casualties and by the end of 2005, had taken on around 34,000 casualties.<sup>113</sup>

## **2. Learning New Tactics Between Deployments**

The Army failed to learn new tactics between deployments in Iraq. The Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL) did start analyzing after action reports from combat leaders in Iraq and began publishing pamphlets with key lessons and takeaways from Iraq. Additionally, the Army sent General David Petraeus in 2005 to Fort Leavenworth to the Command and General Staff College (CGSC) where he made studying counterinsurgency mandatory for all students there.<sup>114</sup> General Petraeus also wrote an article in *Military Review* in 2005 where he used his experience with the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division in Mosul to explain how COIN should be done.<sup>115</sup> Lessons were beginning to be addressed at these senior and scholarly levels of the Army, but the main force was still spending only twelve months in between deployments.

Because units would only return for twelve months at a time, there was very little opportunity to introduce new doctrine or to change tactics. Not until 2006 would Army *Field Manual 3-24 Counterinsurgency* be published explaining how the regular Army

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<sup>113</sup> Ricks, *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq*, 414.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 419.

<sup>115</sup> David Petraeus, "Learning Counterinsurgency: Observations From Soldiering in Iraq." *Military Review*. (Jan.-Feb. 2006).

should fight in Iraq. Until that manual was published, Army general purpose force units continued to train and prepare the best ways they knew how by focusing on offense and defensive strategies. Units in between deployments would prepare for Improvised Explosive Device (IED) attacks, small arms fire, mortar attacks, and small raids—all missions focused on the offensive and defensive capabilities of the Army. The organization was still very conventionally focused through 2006. Once *Field Manual 3-24 Counterinsurgency* came out, it would still take time for the new doctrine to make its way down to the soldier holding the rifle engaging the civilian population on his or her next tour.

All in all, the Army leadership was learning that it needed to relook its tactical employment of counterinsurgency between 2003 and 2006, however, the general purpose force was still preparing for the conventional war it wanted. The Center for Army Lessons Learned made great strides to reform the tactical Army, but these strides remained focused on offensive and defensive tactics—stability operations was still not being discussed.

### **3. Learning To Use Money as a Weapon System**

In 2004, the Department of Defense created the Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP), which gave Army unit commanders authority to manage financial capital to improve economic stability in Iraq. Since 2004, the Army had been the lead agent in not only combating the insurgency, but also contributing to the rehabilitation of a broken essential service infrastructure using CERP. The program was managed by Army junior officers and was randomly audited and evaluated by the Department of Defense and Government Accountability Office. The program put financial capital directly into the Iraqi economy through the hands of local Iraqi civilian contractors via written contracts with the Army for the purpose of rehabilitating broken state infrastructures. The Army managed these numerous reconstruction projects over the tenure of their deployments, using dedicated officers such as a Contracting Officer (KO) at a regional level and a Project Purchasing Officer (PPO) at the lower levels of Army structure. As the Army conducted relief in place procedures in Iraq, PPOs handed off

oversight of these contracted projects to the incoming unit PPO in an attempt to provide contract continuity with the Iraqi contractor.

The CERP program was designed to satisfy immediate needs and help the Army earn a positive rapport with the civilian population by giving the Army the capability to directly input funds into the local economy. The notion of “winning the hearts and minds” became a common understanding among Army personnel when using CERP funds in Iraq.<sup>116</sup> Since the enemy threat typically resided within the population, there was an ever growing need to know the population and learn from them. The CERP program was generally seen by the Army as another weapon system that could help locate and find the enemy within a population by earning the trust of that population. This is why it became known as “money as a weapon system.”<sup>117</sup>

Projects executed between 2004 and 2007 were typically not coordinated or integrated. Although the population benefited from these projects, many went uncompleted or were redone in many instances because the Army failed to coordinate internally with other agencies such as the U.S. Agency for International Development, U.S. State Department or U.S. Army Corps of Engineers who were also conducting independent projects in Iraq. Further compounding reconstruction efforts was the fact that the Army did not understand the Iraqi infrastructure. Junior officers were putting in new water pumps, building roads, and starting trash collection programs which provided immediate benefit to the population. Once these projects were completed, however, many were never integrated into the existing budgets and institutions within Iraq. As a result, many projects failed or were forgotten because once they were completed no money existed to keep them operating. The failure to learn to coordinate between U.S. agencies in Iraq and the failure to learn to integrate projects into the existing Iraqi institutions only complicated the counterinsurgency fight. For example, when a water pump project would build a pump for a local village, that pump would require gas to run the generator which

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<sup>116</sup> Based on author's experience as a Squadron Civil Military Operations Officer during Operation Iraqi Freedom 2007–2009.

<sup>117</sup> The term “money as a weapon system” was developed by General David Petraeus. He discusses it in “Learning Counterinsurgency: Observations From Soldiering in Iraq.” *Military Review* (Jan.-Feb. 2006): 46.

ran the pump. Since Army contracts, through the Commander's Emergency Response Program, had finite funds once the money ran out, the locals could not pay for the additional gas to run the pump. Since that pump was built with U.S. Taxpayer dollars through the Army, the Provincial Iraqi Government or even local Iraqi Director General would not be obligated to provide fuel for that pump. This only complicated the infrastructure the coalition was trying to rehabilitate.

Although the Army was conducting projects as a way to build trust with the population, it was doing so ineffectively. Had it more closely considered stability operations from the very beginning, the learning curve would have been less conspicuous.

#### **4. Results**

In conclusion, the Army had both failed to learn some lessons and had been successful in learning others between 2003 and 2007. The Army began to see that it needed to change its tactics for going after counterinsurgency. The Army did start to build trust with the Iraqi population through the CERP program in 2004, but struggled to coordinate and integrate projects for long-term success. Overall, the Army learned between 2003 and 2007 that stability operations missions were becoming the way forward in Iraq.

#### **D. TEST: A FAILURE TO ADAPT?**

According to Cohen and Gooch, adapting is defined as “identifying and taking full advantage of the opportunities offered by enemy actions or by chance combinations of circumstances to win success or to stave off failure.”<sup>118</sup> They use the Battle of Gallipoli in August 1915 to describe an example of a failure to adapt. In the battle, the British expeditionary commander, Ian Hamilton, failed to adjust his forces to the fight against Turkish forces. British ships ended up losing their way and landed troops in the wrong place and did not have enough supporting firepower to take on Turkish forts in an

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<sup>118</sup> Cohen and Gooch, *Military Misfortunes: The Anatomy of Failure in War*, 161.



amphibious assault. At Sulva Bay, one of the landing points for the British, the Turks were not within range of the British troops. Despite having landed early, the British troops were short of water, were short of artillery assets, and had poor maps of the terrain which all led confusion on the ground. A lack of direct leadership contributed to the inability of the British forces to gain ground. In the end, Turkish forces were able to surround the British and reinforce at Sulva Bay before they ever advanced. A major opportunity was lost in this battle because the British Army was unable to adapt on the ground and to adapt quickly to the enemy and conditions.

In counterinsurgency, the force that adapts the fastest to the enemy usually has the upper hand. Iraq was a true testing ground for the Army to see if it had what it took to adapt to a changing enemy. In stability operations, non-lethal tactics and non-lethal experts such as civil affairs and civil military operations are necessary. Additionally, in order to gauge the success of stability operations, which is less tangible than defense and offense operations, having concrete standard measures of effectiveness are important for accessing progress.

### **1. Adapting to New Nonlethal Tactics**

The Army was successful eventually at adapting to new non-lethal tactics in Iraq. In late 2005, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Armored Cavalry Regiment (ACR) experienced counterinsurgency success in Tall Afar. Colonel H.R. McMaster took command of his unit before going into Iraq in 2005 and stressed to his people that winning the population is winning the counterinsurgency fight.<sup>119</sup> He also trained his unit to not use the derogatory term “*haji*” with the Iraqis and had many of his soldiers go through a three-week training session on Arabic language.<sup>120</sup> Rather than go in full force in Tall Afar, McMaster took his time learning the population, identifying enemy strongholds, and working with the Iraqi police and army to help coordinate security and to keep the population calm. He only attacked after months of preparation and learning. McMaster’s implementation of stability

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<sup>119</sup> Ricks, *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq*, 420.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*

operations aspects of counterinsurgency in Tall Afar was noticed briefly in 2005 by some, but most of the Army continued to press forward with the offensive and defensive tactics they knew.

The example of the Colonel McMaster of the 3<sup>rd</sup> ACR in Tall Afar and the example of General David Petraeus when he commanded the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division in Mosul are two examples of the Army adapting to an unknown situation on the ground and being successful at it. To date, Colonel McMaster's success is revered by many officers in the Army. Colonel McMaster eventually went on to work with General David Petraeus in 2007 and 2008 during "the surge" in Iraq primarily due to his success in Tall Afar.

## **2. Adapting New Standard Measures of Effectiveness**

The Army did fail to adapt new measures of effectiveness. Measures of effectiveness have evaded the Army with regards to understanding the population. Between 2003 and 2007, most of the measures of effectiveness that units were using were ad hoc and made up because no Army manual existed to give them guidance on just how to measure success in Iraq. Dr. Pauline Baker pointed out the deficiency her 2007 Conflict Assessment System Tool (CAST) Manual stating: "Military forces also have their own measures of effectiveness, but they focus on military benchmarks or operational outputs, not societal outcomes."<sup>121</sup> Her manual written in 2007 clearly demonstrates the difficulty the military had addressing "societal outcomes." Again, if the purpose of counterinsurgency is to target the people, the military has to measure how effective its tactics are in achieving that goal. One way to do that is by setting benchmarks that evaluate the society, but this had not been the case in Iraq. In 2006, Craig Cohen discussed this problem:

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<sup>121</sup> Pauline Baker, "The Conflict Assessment System Tool (CAST): An Analytical Model for Early Warning and Risk Assessment of Weak and Failing States." *The Fund for Peace*. (Washington, DC, 2006): v.

Within the U.S. government, efforts to measure progress have not yet been sufficiently integrated into overall mission planning... While the U.S. military, Department of Defense, State Department, and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) are actively engaged in measuring aspects of reconstruction progress in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere, they typically focus on measuring programmatic performance rather than offering an integrated assessment of a country's overall progress toward stabilization and reconstruction.<sup>122</sup>

The United States Army has the capability to reach more people quicker compared to other agencies within the Department of Defense. If the Army cannot successfully assess the country's progress which includes the population, then how can we expect it to truly be able to achieve counterinsurgency success? In this instance, the Army failed to adapt to Iraq between 2003 and 2007. Although CERP projects and reconstruction efforts were taking place, there had been no standardized measure of effectiveness put in place that assessed the population within Iraq.

### **3. Adapting Personnel to Stability Operations**

The Army did adapt its personnel effectively to conduct stability operations missions. Thomas Ricks wrote in *Fiasco*: "Civil Affairs officers, whose job it is to work with local populations, clashed frequently with commanders of units they were supposed to support because of the different imperatives they faced, with little direction from higher levels of command."<sup>123</sup> Civil Affairs personnel are few and far between within the active Army. To date, there is only one active duty Army brigade that does civil affairs and its ownership belongs to the United States Special Operations Command out of Fort Bragg, North Carolina. The unit has 1,200 personnel.<sup>124</sup> The remaining 12,000 Civil Affairs personnel come from the reserve components of the Army and were attached only in times of war to general purpose forces.<sup>125</sup> No prior training or coordination between

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<sup>122</sup> Cohen, Craig. "Measuring Progress and Stabilization and Reconstruction," *Stabilization and Reconstruction Series*, USIP Press. (Washington, DC, Mar. 2006): 3-4.

<sup>123</sup> Ricks, *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq*, 225.

<sup>124</sup> United States Army Special Operations Command. 95<sup>th</sup> Civil Affairs Brigade. Fact sheet. <http://www.soc.mil/Assorted%20pages/95th%20CAB.html> (accessed 15 MAR 11).

<sup>125</sup> United States Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command (USACAPOC), Fact sheet. <http://www.usacapoc.army.mil/facts-capoc.html> (accessed 15 MAR 11).

these reservist Civil Affairs personnel ever took place before units deployed to Iraq. Some units may have trained with a Civil Affairs Team during their unit certification at Fort Polk, Louisiana or Fort Irwin, California, but that was not always the case.

Between 2003 and 2007, most general purpose force divisions were given a Civil Affairs (CA) battalion and most brigades were given a Civil Affairs company. These experts were then sliced out into 4-person teams for general purpose force battalions.<sup>126</sup> If the average size of a battalion is about 600 soldiers and there is only one 4-person Civil Affairs team for those 600 soldiers, there is not enough expertise on the ground. If the population was the priority, the Army needed more “population experts” on the ground.

Despite the lack of personnel, however, the Army did begin to adapt. Junior officers were eventually tagged within units to serve as ad hoc Information Operations officers as well as Civil Military Operations (CMO) Officers. Battalions, like 1-32 Cavalry Squadron in the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division in 2005 and 2006 in Diyala Province, established ad hoc Civil Military Operations Officers who began to take on larger roles as the need for stability operations expertise became increasingly important to the counterinsurgency strategy in Iraq.<sup>127</sup> Typically these CMO Officers would take on the role of Project Purchasing Officer for the CERP program as previously was discussed and would be responsible for dealing with claims made against the U.S., helping employ local workers for FOBs, and more. The difficulty with creating ad hoc staff positions is that not every unit had the same caliber of officer and of these officers many often lacked formal training in Civil Military Operations.

Even though the Army adapted to its counterinsurgency fight by creating CMO Officers it lacked a permanent and established cadre of stability operations officers who were educated, trained, and experienced in dealing with local populations similar to the Army’s existing Civil Affairs officers.

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<sup>126</sup> United States Army Headquarters, *Field Manual 3-05.40: Civil Affairs Operations*. September 2006.

<sup>127</sup> Based on author's experience in Operation Iraqi Freedom between 2005–2006.

#### 4. Results

To conclude, the Army organization did a solid job adapting between 2003 and 2007. In 2005, Colonel McMasters successfully executed a counterinsurgency operation with little experience and having no written doctrine to guide his actions. The Army also established ad hoc positions to take on roles such as Civil Military Operations Officer and Information Operations officer to help in dealing with the population. One aspect the Army did not expand upon was its establishment of measures of effectiveness to help assess the population.

#### E. FINDINGS

Based on the above results, Figure 3 is a chart that breaks down the findings of each component to Cohen and Gooch's model into three categories: success, partial success, and failure.

| EVALUATION OF OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM 2003-2007 AND STABILITY OPERATIONS IMPLEMENTATION |         |                 |         |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|-----------------|---------|
|                                                                                         | SUCCESS | PARTIAL SUCCESS | FAILURE |
| <b>Anticipated</b>                                                                      |         |                 |         |
| a. Anticipation of Ground Conditions                                                    |         |                 | X       |
| b. Anticipation of Troop Requirements                                                   |         | X               |         |
| c. Anticipation of Prison and Detainee Requirements                                     |         |                 | X       |
| d. Anticipating a Common Way of War                                                     |         |                 | X       |
| <b>Learned</b>                                                                          |         |                 |         |
| a. Learning to Focus on the Population                                                  |         | X               |         |
| b. Learning New Tactics Between Deployments                                             |         | X               |         |
| c. Learning to Use Money as a Weapon System                                             |         | X               |         |
| <b>Adapted</b>                                                                          |         |                 |         |
| a. Adapting to New Non-Lethal Tactics                                                   | X       |                 |         |
| b. Adapting New Standard Measures of Effectiveness                                      |         |                 | X       |
| c. Adapting Personnel to Stability Operations                                           | X       |                 |         |
| <b>OVERALL ASSESSMENT:</b>                                                              |         | X               |         |

Figure 3. Evaluation of Operation Iraqi Freedom from 2003–2007 and Stability Operations Implementation.

Overall, the Army was partially successful as an organization between 2003 and 2007 in Iraq in implementing stability operations. In particular, the organization failed to anticipate the ground conditions, prison requirements, and a common way of war.

Further, the organization was unable to adapt a standard measure of effectiveness to evaluate its performance of stability operations implementation in Iraq.

The Army was partially successful at anticipating troop requirements. Even though the actual invasion force numbered only 145,000, some prewar estimates at the Pentagon anticipated a much larger force.<sup>128</sup> The initial stability operation could have been more effective had the larger estimates been used. It would not be until “the surge” in 2007 that the Army would truly have a significant impact on the security situation with a larger force. Additionally, the Army was only partially successful at learning to focus on the population, implementing new tactics, and learning to use financial capital as a weapon system. Each of these components did have a positive impact on stability operations, but they were shy of being completely effective. For instance, the use of financial capital was a push in the right direction in an attempt to win the “hearts and minds,” however, the lack of integration of projects keeps the use of financial capital in the partial success category.

The greatest successes the Army had was with adapting new non-lethal tactics and the adaptation of untrained personnel into positions where they were able to adjust to the situation and become Civil Military Operations Officers to support the stability operations mission.

In conclusion, the findings identify a failure to anticipate stability operations requirements as the primary issue with the implementation of a counterinsurgency strategy. Additionally, the findings also identify that the Army did learn during conflict, but still seemed resistant to allow itself to incorporate the lessons of implementing stability operations.

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<sup>128</sup> Ricks, *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq*, 117.

## **IV. CONCLUSION: EMBRACING STABILITY OPERATIONS**

This last chapter will focus primarily on providing recommendations for the Army, as an organization, in its attempt to implement stability operations or any new irregular war doctrine in the future. This chapter will be broken into three sections of recommendations: a section reviewing the previous two chapters, a section on recommendations for the Army organization and a section of recommendations for future research.

### **A. REVIEW OF FINDINGS**

This thesis set out to answer: Why has the Army, as an organization, had such a difficult time implementing stability operations? In considering this question, this thesis initially reviewed the Army's history with how it has dealt with irregular conflicts versus conventional war in Chapter II and found that the Army has a history of failing to see irregular war as important as conventional war. The organization's behavior has been to simply "look the other way" when it is unprepared and to continue to pursue conventional war preparations despite the encounter with irregular war. Additionally, in Chapter II, using Cohen and Gooch's "Taxonomy of Misfortune" model, this thesis found that a failure to anticipate was the primary reason the Army was unprepared for irregular war.

In Chapter III, this thesis took the case study of Operation Iraqi Freedom from 2003–2007 and again used Cohen and Gooch's "Taxonomy of Misfortune" model to try and determine what aspect of organizational failure contributed most to the Army's struggle to implement stability operations. Chapter III found that the Army failed to implement stability operations, again, because of its failure to anticipate the irregular war it was entering into. Additionally it found that the Army was only partially successful at learning from its mistakes during the conflict as it took three years before new written doctrine was introduced that supported stability operations. However, on a positive note, Chapter III discovered that the Army was successful at eventually adapting to its environment over time.

## **B. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE ORGANIZATION**

Overall, the Army has some work to do on improving implementation of new doctrine based on its recent experience in Iraq with stability operations. Looking back through its history, the organization should be concerned primarily with its continued struggle to anticipate the next fight. As Chapter II found, the Army has either chosen to collectively ignore irregular conflict or has been unable to see the differences between irregular conflict and conventional war. It also could be a combination of both. The following prescriptions seek to offer the Army some considerations for the future.

### **1. Anticipate More Than Just Conventional War**

First, the Army must improve its ability to anticipate the next fight—this is the organization's greatest threat to success in the future. As we saw in Chapter II and learned in Chapter III, the organization has a history of failing to anticipate anything but conventional war. In the Korean War, the Army was unprepared for the static defense style of warfare that took place. In Vietnam, the Army was unprepared for the guerilla tactics of the Viet Cong and attempted to fight an insurgency with conventional tactics. In Somalia, the Army failed to anticipate the uprising of disingenuous tribes embedded within a highly populated area and ended up losing eighteen soldiers and two Blackhawk helicopters to warlord Mohammed Farah Aidid. In preparing for Operation Iraqi Freedom, the Army failed to anticipate a prolonged irregular war because it was consumed with preparing for a second Desert Storm. The lesson here is that the Army has failed to prepare properly for irregular war. Whether the irregular war was a static defense, a guerilla-based insurgency, or an urban fight among a dense population, the Army has responded with conventional style tactics. The Army must move beyond the traditional role it embraces so easily and force itself to consider its growing non-traditional role in irregular warfare operations in the future.



## **2. Improve Organizational Learning**

The Army must continue to learn from its mistakes and find ways to incorporate change into its doctrine and training.

The Army was partially successful at learning to incorporate the population as a priority in the counterinsurgency fight in Iraq. General Casey was able to steer the Army into a new way of fighting in 2005 with his creation of the COIN Academy training site in Iraq and his reorientation on helping the population through investing in training of the Iraqi police and Iraqi army. However, it really wasn't until "the surge" in 2007, under General David Petraeus, that the Army started getting out among the population because, until then, the Army never had the number of soldiers it needed to be able to do so. It took from 2003 to 2007 for the Army to learn that in order to help the population, you must physically operate among the population—that is too long.

Additionally, the Army must ensure that it attempts to train its people at all levels on how to implement stability operations in ways that are not "on the fly" or ad hoc. A Army term is "METT-T," which stands for: Mission, Enemy, Time, Troops and Terrain and is used among soldiers in tactical mission planning. Since Operation Iraqi Freedom started soldiers have donned a new term: "METT-TC" where the "C" stands for "civilian considerations."<sup>129</sup> Although soldiers at lower echelons of the organization learned to incorporate "civilian considerations" into their training, it is only one small step toward improving the training of and learning within the organization. Upper echelon leaders must incorporate stability operations training into school houses within the Army. Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) must be the one to ensure stability operations is a priority to the force. Formalized training is longer lasting than informal ad hoc training among lower echelon members of the organization. Soldiers should be exposed to classes and courses on how to deal with populations well before ever being asked to deploy to a foreign country. This training also has to occur just as regularly as any offensive or defensive training.

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<sup>129</sup> Based on author's personal experience in Operation Iraqi Freedom 2005–2006 and 2007–2008.

### **3. Continue to Adapt**

The Army in Iraq did adapt better than it learned or anticipated. Through its establishment of ad hoc staff officers at the tactical level and its trial by fire methods by the 3<sup>rd</sup> ACR in Tall Afar, there is proof that the Army can adapt when it must. Between 2003 and 2006, no written doctrine existed for commanders to reference so innovation from the bottom-up took place. Tactical commanders made decisions on the ground that were both inventive and key to changing the way the Army was fighting in Iraq. “Organizational innovation ... manifested itself through the emergence of a series of new standard operating procedures that collectively resulted in fundamental changes to the ways in which units ... fought the insurgents,” argues James Russell.<sup>130</sup> He takes the point of view that soldiers innovate when they lack guidance. The Army’s creation of Civil Military Operations Officers (sometimes referred to as “S-9s”) was one of its responses to the demand to understand and incorporate civilian considerations on the battlefield. Because the Army was so short Civil Affairs personnel, it adapted to the need and was able to eventually meet the requirements of the conflict.

The Army must continue to be able to adapt in the future to whatever mission it faces. As this thesis has demonstrated, the Army is good at adapting, but if the organization is having to adapt it is likely forcing unnecessary stress on the system. Additionally, it may cause confusion in the organization which can be detrimental in the long run. By being prepared for both conventional and irregular wars, through organizational anticipation and learning, the Army can avoid the stresses put on it when it adapts.

### **C. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

This thesis used Eliot Cohen and James Gooch’s “Taxonomy of Misfortune” as the basis for analyzing Operation Iraqi Freedom from an organizational and “behaviorist” perspective. There is one key recommendation I would offer for future researchers and scholars who are interested in pursuing this topic further.

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<sup>130</sup> Russell, *Innovation, Transformation, and War*, 8.

I would recommend a greater emphasis on evaluating military organizations from a bottom-up approach. In much of the literature review done in Chapter I, most scholars tend to take a top-down approach to analyzing organizations and innovation theory. Adam Grissom explained in his article about military organizations and innovation that, “all of the major models of military innovation operate from the top down.”<sup>131</sup> Grissom goes on further to explain how top down approaches take place:

According to the major models, therefore, the senior officers and/or civilians are the agents of innovation. They recognize the need for change, formulate a new way of warfare, position their organization to seize the opportunity of innovation, and bludgeon, politically leverage, or culturally manipulate the organization into compliance.<sup>132</sup>

When discussing some of the key scholars in the field (Deborah Avant, Barry Posen, and Stephen Rosen) James Russell states: “All three assume that authority flows down the governmental hierarchy in a reasonably predictable process...”<sup>133</sup> Like Russell, I agree there is a need to look at organizations and analyze them from a bottom-up approach.

#### **D. FINAL THOUGHTS**

President George W. Bush declared the end of major combat operations in Iraq in May of 2003 as he stood in front of a sign that stated “Mission Accomplished.” President Bush, like the Army, clearly did not know what major combat operations involved. Had President Bush known in 2003 that major combat operations, not just offensive and defensive operations, entailed long term stability operations, then maybe he would have asked to stand in front of a sign that said “Mission Incomplete.” As Operation Iraqi Freedom, now Operation New Dawn, winds down toward the end of 2011, 50,000 soldiers continue to conduct stability operations every day. In the future, the Army may want to consider the advice of Michael Howard:

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<sup>131</sup> Grissom, 920.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> Russell, 35.

I am tempted indeed to declare that dogmatically that whatever doctrine the Armed Forces are working on now, they have got it wrong. I am also tempted to declare that it does not matter that they have got it wrong. What does matter is their capacity to get it right quickly when the moment arrives. . . .Still it is the task of military science in an age of peace to prevent the doctrines from being too badly wrong.<sup>134</sup>

Although military organizations often get doctrine wrong, there is something to be said for their ability to innovate without guidance at the precise moment it is needed. Additionally, the above quote makes sense in that as the Army enters into a period of lesser engagements, there is a new opportunity to pursue getting the doctrine right before the next conflict that arises. It remains to be seen, however, if the Army will be able to eventually anticipate the next irregular conflict.

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<sup>134</sup> Michael Howard, "Military Science in an Age of Peace," *RUSI, Journal of the Royal United Services Institute for Defence Studies* (March 1974), 7.

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