

Strategy Research Project

Pray for Peace. Prepare for War ... and Stability Operations

by

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

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Abstract

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Pray for Peace. Prepare for War ... and Stability Operations

To truly achieve victory as Clausewitz defined it - to attain a political objective - the United States needs a military whose ability to kick down the door is matched by its ability to clean up the mess and even rebuild the house afterwards.

—U.S. Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates ¹

Writing in early 2009, former Defense Secretary Gates made it clear that U.S. military capabilities needed to be “balanced” between those required to win decisively in any conventional fight and those required to successfully conduct “stability operations”.² Though the U.S. military had needed only three weeks to capture Baghdad, Secretary Gates recognized that U.S. forces would likely spend the remainder of the decade trying to stabilize Iraq and solidify the victory.³ While his predecessor, Secretary Rumsfeld, had issued a DOD Directive in 2005 requiring that U.S. forces maintain proficiency in stability operations “equivalent to combat”, most commentators felt that the measure was fairly specific and justifiably limited to the temporary and evolving situations in Iraq and Afghanistan.⁴ However, with publication of the 2008 National Defense Strategy, the enduring nature of Secretary Gate’s balanced approach became readily apparent, prompting spirited discussion from all sides of the debate.⁵

The new defense strategy and the very candid comments from Secretary Gates sounded a lot like “nation building”, a strategy his boss, President Bush, did not favor while campaigning for office prior to the attacks of September 11th.⁶ Though Stability Operations would involve participation by all military services, the balanced approach” would have a more profound impact on U.S. land forces and specifically the largest component of landpower, the U.S. Army.⁷

Is stability a proper role for the U.S. Army? While conducting operations abroad, would the Army actually be expected to maintain the capability to successfully train indigenous law enforcement personnel, conduct legitimate local elections, and support the establishment of neighborhood businesses in economically distressed areas? In a word...absolutely. Recently updated U.S. doctrine now fully embraces the balanced approach for military capabilities, directing that commanders should “combine offensive, defensive, and stability tasks simultaneously to achieve decisive results as part of an interdependent joint force”.⁸

With the publication of this latest doctrine and the pending withdrawal of U.S. forces from Afghanistan, the debate over Secretary Gates’ balanced approach is no longer academic. In light of the national fiscal crisis and the severe cuts expected in the military budget and force structure, what capabilities should the U.S. Army possess going forward? Is the balanced approach the right answer? This study’s thesis holds that Secretary Gates was correct in mandating that U.S. military forces maintain a “balanced” array of capabilities for the future. The paper is organized so as to review the latest policy and doctrine regarding stability and assess whether these guidelines and directives are fully supported by history and various theories of war. The Army’s key risk associated with achievement of the “balanced approach” is discussed, as well as recommendations for gaining and maintaining a true “balance” of capabilities in the future.

Policy and Doctrine

“Stability Operations”, as currently defined by Joint Publication 3-0, is an “overarching term encompassing various military missions, tasks, and activities conducted outside the United States in coordination with other instruments of national

power to maintain or reestablish a safe and secure environment, provide essential governmental services, emergency infrastructure reconstruction, and humanitarian relief.”⁹ The term “stability operations” is the latest term used to describe military operations not involving major combat and evolved from earlier terms, such as “Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW), “Low Intensity Conflict (LIC)“, or “Stability and Support Operations (SASO)”.¹⁰ However, “stability operations”, as described above, represents a substantial departure from previous definitions and will require changes in military thinking that have been lauded as the “most fundamental adjustment since the establishment of the Department of Defense in 1947” and “more foundational” than the Goldwater-Nichols Act.¹¹

With stability operations now considered a “core U.S. military mission” that has priority comparable to that of combat operations, these missions are no longer defined by what they are not, i.e. Operations Other Than War.¹² Instead, they are now considered part of the “larger strategic objective”; no longer “distractions from war, they are now considered part of war itself.”¹³ The policy directives which drove this fundamental change and informed the resulting doctrinal revisions, emerged primarily as the U.S. prepared to invade Iraq in 2003 and evolved over time, as did the struggle to stabilize that country.¹⁴

Policy Evolution

Presidential Decision Directive (PDD) 56, *Managing Complex Contingency Operations*, was an early attempt at leveraging the synergies of the “whole of government” approach.¹⁵ Issued under President Clinton, this PDD called for greater interagency collaboration when preparing for and conducting “complex contingency operations”.¹⁶ In support of the directive and its goal of familiarizing government

agencies with the “integrated planning process”, the Department of Defense (DOD) published the “Handbook for Interagency Management of Complex Contingency Operations”.¹⁷ In a possible move to deliver on his campaign promise to limit “nation building” by the military, President Bush rescinded PDD 56 shortly after arriving in office in 2001.¹⁸

President Bush’s dislike for “nation building” faded following the attacks of September 11th and the subsequent removal of the Taliban government in Afghanistan.¹⁹ In January of 2003, with the invasion of Iraq less than 2 months away, President Bush issued National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD) 24, *Post-War Iraq Reconstruction*, the first of several directives aimed at Iraq.²⁰ With this directive, President Bush surprisingly designated the DOD, and not the Department of State (DOS), as lead agency for managing post-conflict reconstruction in Iraq.²¹ Within this arrangement, reconstruction was briefly lead by the DOD’s Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA) and later by the DOD’s Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA).²²

By May 2004, NSPD 36, *United States Government Operations in Iraq*, was issued, returning responsibility for post-conflict reconstruction to the DOS following the Chief of Mission’s arrival at the new U.S. Embassy in Baghdad.²³ To address and correct lingering ambiguities related to the responsibilities and authorities of DOD and DOS within PDSS 36, President Bush issued PDSS 44, *Management of Interagency Efforts Concerning Reconstruction and Stabilization*, in 2005.²⁴ Though PDSS 44 left no doubt that DOS would be the U.S. lead agency for all “Reconstruction and Stabilization” (R & S) operations, the agency lacked expeditionary capabilities, personnel, and

funding to fully assume that role.²⁵ Concurrent DOD policies reflected the President's guidance and highlighted DOS capability gaps at the operational and tactical level.²⁶

Department of Defense Directive (DODD) 3000.05, *Military Support for Stability, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction (SSTR) Operations*, was considered radical and revolutionary when issued by Secretary Rumsfeld in 2005.²⁷

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 and be explicitly addressed and integrated across all DOD activities including doctrine, organizations, training, education, exercises, materiel, leadership, personnel, facilities, and planning.²⁸

While acknowledging that military forces were acting in support of other U.S. Government (USG) agencies and that "civilian professionals" were best suited to perform these tasks, the Directive nonetheless required that DOD personnel be fully prepared to properly execute stability tasks as required or when civilians were unable to do so.²⁹ "Successfully performing such tasks can help secure a lasting peace and facilitate the timely withdrawal of U.S. and foreign forces."³⁰

Recognizing the evolving nature of the stabilization mission in Iraq and the continuing gaps in DOS capabilities, DODD 3000.5 was reissued by Secretary Gates as a DOD Instruction (DODI) in 2009.³¹ The DODI reaffirmed the military's requirement to support civilian personnel involved in stability tasks, and then went a step further.³² By requiring that military forces also be prepared in some cases "to lead stability operations", the DODI acknowledged what many had known as ground truth in Iraq for years.³³ The significance of this point was not lost on our military leaders, as evidenced by the most recent publication of a series of very professional and comprehensive doctrinal manuals relating to stability operations and tasks.³⁴

Doctrinal Evolution

Considered a “milestone” in Army doctrine, Field Manual (FM) 3-07, *Stability Operations*, was published in 2008.³⁵ Drawing on nearly five years of experience in Iraq and seven years in Afghanistan, this manual sought to institutionalize those “hard won lessons” while posturing the force to meet the challenges expected during the “era of persistent conflict”.³⁶ Joint Publication 3-07, *Stability Operations*, would follow in late 2011, as U.S. forces were exiting Iraq and reaching surge levels in Afghanistan.³⁷ Finally, in August 2012, the Army published its latest doctrinal publications regarding stability, including ADP 3-07, *Stability*, Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 3-07, *Stability*, and Army Techniques Publication (ATP) 3-07.5, *Stability Techniques*.³⁸ Unlike joint and sister service doctrine, these most recent Army publications no longer refer to “stability operations”, but instead describe “stability” or “stability tasks”.³⁹ Nevertheless, these publications continue to integrate the Army’s “stability tasks” with the Joint stability functions found in JP 3-07, as well as other recognized interagency stability sectors.⁴⁰

As fully addressed in ADRP 3-07, stability tasks are now viewed as occurring across the full “range of military operations”, from building partner nation capabilities during peacetime military engagement to major combat operations and post-conflict reconstruction.⁴¹ As such, various missions take place “under the umbrella” of stability, to include security force assistance, peace operations, humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, counterinsurgency, and foreign internal defense.⁴² In order to achieve the desired end state conditions within a variety of operational environments, five “primary Army stability tasks” have been identified:

- Establish Civil Security

- Establish Civil Control
- Restore Essential Services
- Support to Governance
- Support to Economic and Infrastructure Development⁴³

While introduced in the ADP and further explained within the ADRP, each of these tasks receive a full chapter within ATP 3-07.5, along with detailed descriptions related to corresponding sub-tasks by phase.⁴⁴

To have achieved this level of doctrinal sophistication is certainly commendable, especially when one considers the uncertain and ever evolving nature of stability. This level of effort serves to underscore the Army leadership's apparent commitment to achieving the "balanced" array of capabilities that recent DOD policy directives and instructions have required. As the nation's premier landpower and the service primarily charged with conducting these types of missions, it would seem that Army acceptance of this broader definition of stability operations would be imperative. With the recent release of Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 1, *The Army*, it would appear that the Army has fully embraced stability.⁴⁵

In describing Unified Land Operations, ADP-1 asserts that Army forces now perform three types of tasks: offensive tasks; defensive tasks; and stability tasks while deployed abroad or while serving at home as part of Defense Support to Civil Authorities (DSCA)) missions.⁴⁶ It acknowledges the necessity of integrating fully with civilian agencies, characterizing these organizations as "indispensable partners" in the successful employment of landpower.⁴⁷ Noting that "any mission can rapidly become a combination of combat, governance, and civil security", ADP-1 further admonishes that

“tactical victories achieved by firepower” may not be enough to secure the required strategic victory.⁴⁸ As such, the Army must remain proficient in its identified stability tasks.⁴⁹ While doctrine now appears aligned with the Secretary Gates’ “balanced approach”, history and well recognized theories of war also support its full implementation.

History and Theory

Though Clausewitz recognized and described the difficulties associated with using history to develop one’s argument, he also felt that the proper use of “historical examples” could help to “clarify everything” and provide the theorist with “the best kind of proof”.⁵⁰ As such, a review of the historical employment of U.S. land forces over the last two centuries will offer insight as to the types of missions and activities undertaken and whether a “balance” of capabilities was available or needed. Likewise, the “balanced approach” should also be assessed for merit and validity, when viewed through the prism of well accepted theories of war.

Historical Perspective

There are numerous books and articles that closely detail the historical involvement of U.S. forces in missions that would now be considered “stability operations”.⁵¹ However, the account provided in the Army’s own Field Manual, FM 3-07, *Stability Operations*, offers a powerful and concise review of the Army’s enduring role in this crucial mission. Of the hundreds of military operations conducted by the U.S. Army since its inception in the late 1700s, the FM advises that only eleven of these operations would have been considered “conventional” fights.⁵² The FM further concludes that, “contrary to popular belief, the military history of the United States is one characterized by stability operations, interrupted by distinct episodes of major combat.”⁵³

Indeed, a careful review of the military history of the United States, and especially that of the U.S. Army, absolutely confirms the conclusions offered by FM 3-07.⁵⁴ Whether heavily involved in what would now be called “Phase 0” operations, or shifting between offense/defense/stability tasks during conventional battle, or serving as an occupation force during the post-conflict period, the enduring story of the Army is that of a force reluctantly conducting stability operations while it waits for a conventional fight.⁵⁵ In fact, the Army’s first nation building endeavor took place in the homeland, as the Army was critical to our nation’s expansion westward following the Revolutionary War.⁵⁶ From the very start, U.S. Army units conducted the full range of today’s “stability tasks”, by providing security for settler populations, establishing law and order, providing for essential services, and supporting of governance of the area.⁵⁷

The Army performed these stability tasks outside the borders of the U.S. in 1846 during the Mexican War, when the Army quickly defeated Mexican forces, secured the Mexican capitol, and then occupied the country for the next two years.⁵⁸ With General-in-Chief of the Army, Winfield Scott, serving as the military governor, this American effort at large scale stabilization on foreign soil was considered a success.⁵⁹ Though his occupation force remained small in number and his lines of communication were always vulnerable, GEN Scott was able to quickly improve the living conditions for the Mexican people and win their widespread support.⁶⁰ This allowed him to solidify the earlier battlefield victories and ultimately achieve the national political objectives of the war.⁶¹ The Army’s experiences in Mexico were not an aberration, as the U.S. military would continue to be called upon to solidify the political gains achieved by battlefield victory with large scale stability operations during and after the Civil War, the Spanish-

American War, and a host of “Small Wars” throughout Central America and the Caribbean.⁶²

Though GEN Grant would leave Appomattox in 1865 with his military objectives largely achieved, the national political objectives required to achieve victory in the Civil War were far from secure.⁶³ In fact, the U.S. Army would spend the next twelve years engaged in the challenging and violent occupation of the Southern States, only departing in 1877 after a settlement had been hammered out between the political parties.⁶⁴ The Army would then once again return to the conduct of stability tasks on the frontier, as it fought an irregular war against native Indian peoples in the American West to secure the ultimate political objectives associated with the country’s “manifest destiny”.⁶⁵

With the continent secured just before the turn of the century, the Army would once again be called upon to conduct large scale stability operations overseas following the Spanish-American War in 1898, with Army occupation forces governing Cuba (1899-1902, 1906-1909), the Philippines (1899-1913), and even a brief occupation of China (1900-1901) following the Boxer Rebellion.⁶⁶ The U.S. Marines were active during this time as well, involved in what were described as “Small Wars” throughout Central America and the Caribbean.⁶⁷ While these operations today would be considered long-term “shaping” or “Phase O” operations, the Marines performed stability tasks in support of national political objectives in Haiti (1915-1934), the Dominican Republic (1916-1924), and Nicaragua (1927-1933).⁶⁸ Though the U.S. military was not overly concerned with “lessons learned” from stability operations, the Marine Corps’ “Small Wars Manual” from the period became an invaluable resource for

future involvement in irregular or stability operations.⁶⁹ This need to capture and internalize the “lessons learned” from stability operations would become more apparent and more critical, as the U.S. became involved in larger conventional World Wars and the more complex occupation scenarios that followed.⁷⁰

Following the first two years of military occupation in the Rhineland after World War I, Army COL Irwin Hunt issued a scathing report (hereafter the “Hunt Report”) to his superiors that detailed the Army’s inadequate preparation for and subsequent conduct of stability operations in postwar Germany.⁷¹ Noting that the Army had spent no time studying the “civil problems involved in an occupation of Germany”, he confirmed that the Third Army had begun its duty with only “the scantiest information” concerning the “particular situation confronting it” and with a “crying need for personnel trained in civil administration and possessing knowledge of the German nation.”⁷² The Hunt Report assessed that, even with the Army’s extensive experience with stability operations in “Mexico, California, the Southern States, Cuba, ...the Philippines and elsewhere”, that the “lesson [had] seemingly not been learned.”⁷³ The Hunt Report’s conclusions were accurate and blunt, advising that “the American army of occupation lacked both training and organization to guide the destinies of the nearly 1,000,000 civilians whom the fortunes of war had placed under its temporary sovereignty.”⁷⁴ Indeed, the failure of the Allies to properly conclude the first World War and the mismanagement of the subsequent peace contributed significantly to the world’s return to war just over two decades later.⁷⁵

Determined not to allow the “germs of the next war” to grow within the peace that would follow World War II, GEN Marshall and the Department of War began discussions

regarding plans for postwar Germany and Japan in 1942.⁷⁶ As a young Army Lieutenant in 1901, GEN Marshall had served as the military governor for the Philippine Island of Mindoro following the Spanish-American War.⁷⁷ He knew, first hand, the challenges associated with stabilizing and governing occupied territories.⁷⁸ Likewise, and with additional urgency, GEN Eisenhower also expressed his grave concern that combat operations were being negatively affected by the unpreparedness of his forces to conduct stability operations as they moved into North Africa and Italy.⁷⁹

Accordingly, the Army established the School of Military Government, first at the University of Virginia and later at other civilian universities, to train highly select officers to perform civil administration duties in newly liberated territories and to serve as military governors in Germany and Japan following their unconditional surrender.⁸⁰ These “Civil Affairs” (CA) officers and units were organized under the Civil Affairs Division and eventually deployed to the European and the Pacific theaters.⁸¹

As allied forces landed in France in 1944, CA units moved forward with maneuver units until reaching liberated cities and towns which they were to temporarily administer.⁸² As these French towns were able to eventually govern and care for themselves, the CA Teams moved on to larger towns and eventually moved forward with maneuver forces into Germany.⁸³ Once in Germany, they would establish themselves in each captured town and prepare for the long term military government and full occupation.⁸⁴

In Germany, GEN Lucius Clay served as the Military Governor of the U.S. Zone of Occupation from 1945 through 1949, when he was replaced by a civilian administrator as the occupation came to a close.⁸⁵ In Japan, GEN MacArthur remained

as Military Governor of Japan from 1945 until he was relieved of duty by President Truman in 1951.⁸⁶ The military occupation of Japan, however, would not formally end until 1952.⁸⁷ Key to securing the hard fought battlefield victories of World War II, the stability operations that followed ultimately achieved the strategic and national objectives of the war.⁸⁸ Two very powerful enemies had been defeated and following successful long-term stability operations to “win the peace”, these two former enemies became two critical U.S. allies.⁸⁹

Following World War II, U.S. forces were involved in a variety of operations requiring stability expertise.⁹⁰ However, the urgent need to address the enormous threat posed by the Soviet Union rightfully moved U.S. military planning and preparation toward capabilities that were more conventional.⁹¹ Following the stalemate in Korea, President Eisenhower favored policies that limited U.S. involvement in smaller “brush fire” military engagements while seeking greater reliance on nuclear deterrence.⁹² Special Operations Forces (SOF) would also grow and mature during this time, eventually inheriting tasks and units that had earlier been associated with stability.⁹³ Civil Affairs units, for example, were moved from Active to Reserve status, with the unconventional or “special” nature of their tasks warranting their eventual inclusion within the Army SOF community.⁹⁴

By the early 1990s, proof that U.S. Army had again achieved conventional dominance was demonstrated against the Iraqi Army during Desert Storm. However, the nearly exclusive focus on conventional skills created challenges for the Army, as it was also required during this time to undertake stability operations in locations like Somalia (1992-1994) and Haiti (1994-1995).⁹⁵ In these cases, U.S. forces eventually

departed without having secured the longer-term national political objectives for the operations.⁹⁶

The Army faced challenges with post-conflict stability operations during this time, as well. After-action reviews (AARs) from Panama (1989-1990) revealed that the Army had achieved its military objectives quickly and decisively, but flawed planning and poor execution largely characterized its post-conflict stability efforts.⁹⁷ Since the conflict was limited in duration, the consequences for muddling through went mostly unnoticed.⁹⁸ That has not, however, been the case with recent operations in Iraq or Afghanistan.

Baghdad fell in three weeks, but U.S. forces would remain for the remainder of the decade trying to stabilize Iraq and achieve our national political objectives.⁹⁹ Once again, U.S. forces adapted over time.¹⁰⁰ LTG Sanchez, CJTF-7 Commander, in describing the exceptional flexibility of U.S. troops, remarked that they “were what kept the Iraq mission from being a catastrophic failure.”¹⁰¹ The price paid in blood and treasure for this extended period of adaptation, however, was extremely high.¹⁰² Reflecting on the initial challenges faced at all levels, LTG Metz, the first to command the Multi-National Corps-Iraq (MNC-I), acknowledged that his career had not prepared him for the missions he initially faced in Iraq.¹⁰³

Theories of War

In *On War*, Clausewitz advises that “the aim of war should be what its very concept implies – to defeat the enemy.”¹⁰⁴ He maintains that war and victory cannot be obtained without bloodshed and horrific brutality.¹⁰⁵ This would seem to favor the Army that is best prepared for the conventional fight against a menacing enemy force, as opposed to one that is prepared for stability tasks. However, this assessment would

ignore other key aspects Clausewitz's theory that suggests the need for a "balanced" array of forces.¹⁰⁶

As Clausewitz further explains, defeat of the enemy force may not necessarily lead to "a final decision or settlement", so long as the enemy population has not been "made to submit" and the enemy government and its allies "driven to ask for peace".¹⁰⁷ A variety of objectives must be met to achieve the political ends associated with the war, and simply defeating the enemy's Army or occupying his capitol may not prove decisive.¹⁰⁸ To truly win the war and gain the politically advantageous aspects of the resulting peace, Clausewitz theorizes that the "natural sequence" would be to defeat the enemy army and then "subdue the country"¹⁰⁹. He does not indicate that the mission of the Army is complete when the enemy force is defeated, but details how the Army must then occupy the enemy country to bring the will of enemy population in line with the political objectives of the war.¹¹⁰ To achieve this today, the Army would shift from offensive tasks to stability tasks, as outlined in current doctrine.¹¹¹ U.S. military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan during the last decade serve as vivid examples of the validity of this aspect of Clausewitz's theory.

The theories of war developed by Sir Basil H. Liddell Hart would seem to further underscore the validity of stability operations and the need to have military forces with a "balanced" array of capabilities. Though opposed in large measure to Clausewitzian theory in general, Liddell Hart does agree with the Prussian in that "the object of war is to attain a better peace".¹¹² For "victory in the true sense implies that the state of peace, and of one's people, is better after the war than before."¹¹³ He further cautions that if

you concentrate on the military victory “with no thought to the after-effect, you may be too exhausted to profit by the peace”, which may contain “the germs of another war.”¹¹⁴

To further sanitize against these “germs of another war”, Liddell Hart’s indirect theory of war would also support the necessity for viable Stability Operations during Phase 0, as a way to shape the environment so as to avoid confrontation all together.¹¹⁵ Liddell Hart theorized, “ [the strategist’s] true aim is not so much to seek battle as to seek a strategic situation so advantageous that if it does not of itself produce the decision, its continuation by a battle is sure to achieve this.” ¹¹⁶ As this quote confirms, the nature of warfare for Liddell Hart would necessarily involve the achievement of strategic aims without substantial or sustained combat engagements, achieving Sun Tzu’s “true victory” by “compelling one’s opponent to abandon his purpose, with the least possible loss to oneself.”¹¹⁷ Furthermore, “if such a result was obtained, there was no real advantage to be gained by winning a battle...while the attempt would incur a needless risk of defeat...”¹¹⁸ By focusing on the “mind of the ruler” and the “will” of his people, Liddell Hart felt that one could engage in actions to disrupt or frustrate his “plans and alliances” which would ultimately compel him to “abandon his purpose”.¹¹⁹ Additionally, as one could engage an opponent’s “plans and alliances” with both military and non-military means, the employment of the “indirect approach” could provide advantages during both times of war and peace.¹²⁰

Risks to Achieving the Balanced Approach

Policy directives require that the Army maintain a balanced force, prepared to conduct stability tasks with the same proficiency as offensive and defensive tasks.¹²¹

Doctrine has been developed and fielded by the Army which complies with these policy directives, recognizes the importance of stability, and postures the force to seamlessly

shift between offense, defense, and stability tasks.¹²² History and theory, discussed above, both seem to support the validity of the directives and the subsequent doctrine. Nevertheless, the Army's ability to achieve the "balanced approach" remains at risk, as the force still struggles to view stability as a true Army mission.¹²³

Stability is not an Army Mission

The refrain, stability is not an Army mission, is as old as the Army and reflects the honest and long-held opinion of generations that have served.¹²⁴ As one commentator recently noted, "war is neither a social science project nor armed politics."¹²⁵ Instead, he continues, "war is about fighting".¹²⁶ This idea held particular prominence during the cold war, and especially following Vietnam, when the Army's focus was combined arms maneuver as it sought to reestablish its ability to win the conventional fight against the Soviets. AirLand Battle Operations were codified in doctrine and perfected at the National Training Center (NTC), to ensure decisive conventional victory. After all, winning the conventional fight is the mission essential task for the Army, which it must be always be prepared to accomplish.¹²⁷ There is no other "whole-of-government" solution that can be formulated to provide decisive battlefield victories. However, while winning on the battlefield is a necessary prerequisite, it alone does not guarantee victory in war.¹²⁸ The Army will continue to be required to successfully conduct stability tasks before, during, and after war, so as to achieve the war's national political objectives. The Army can choose to accept stability as a valid mission and maintain proficiency in its tasks, or it can continue to pay the high price for muddling through.

To say that stability is not an Army mission is to ignore the full weight of history, the dispositive nature of national policies, directives, and legal mandates, and the

ultimate relevance of accepted military theory. Though it may continue to be “contrary to popular belief”, the Army’s most recent Field Manual for Stability Operations has confirmed yet again that, “the military history of the United States is one characterized by stability operations, interrupted by distinct episodes of major combat.”¹²⁹ Likewise, Presidential Policy Directives and Department of Defense Directives/Instructions have unambiguously affirmed that stability is indeed an Army mission, noting in fact, that it is a “core U.S. military mission” that “shall be given priority comparable to combat operations”.¹³⁰ Further, The Law of War and other accepted mandates of international law, not only require that occupying forces immediately undertake and “maintain” key stability tasks, but that the results of these forces must be “effective”.¹³¹ Finally, well executed stability efforts during the shape and deter phases could likely achieve that which Sun Tzu prized most, victory won without having to fight.¹³² However, when fighting is required, Clausewitz affirmed that defeat of the enemy army may not ultimately achieve the national political objectives required to win the larger war.¹³³

The Army’s Identity Crisis

The deep and enduring nature of this belief is perhaps best explained by Carl Builder, in his seminal work *The Masks of War*.¹³⁴ After comparing and contrasting the particular cultures within each of the U.S. military services, Builder concluded his book with a separate chapter entitled “The Army’s Identity Crisis”.¹³⁵ In this chapter, Builder advised that the Army’s “sense of identity” had been “skewed by its experiences during World War II”.¹³⁶ In particular, the Army’s experience “in its final and finest year of World War II, from the invasion of France to the collapse of Nazi Germany, made an impression that has persisted with remarkable tenacity and effect right down to the present.”¹³⁷ However, and in agreement with Samuel P. Huntington’s assessment from

his earlier work, *The Soldier and the State*, this vision of the Army racing across Europe in 1945 did not represent the true and historically accurate identity of the Army.¹³⁸ Instead, the Army's identity was shaped much more by its stability experiences during the last two centuries, and as such, its identity was truly that which Huntington had described as the nation's "obedient handyman".¹³⁹

Certainly, the role of "good servant" or "handyman" is not "as inspiring as that of defender and liberator of Europe", and even if the truth were to be recognized, it is still "painful to let go of the dream in order to serve the reality."¹⁴⁰ Builder further asserts that the Army's failure to embrace its true identity had somewhat handicapped its performance following World War II, in that decisions regarding training and equipment that had favored a fight on the plains of Europe were not fully appropriate for the more limited and longer-term "handyman" missions that it was required to undertake for the nation.¹⁴¹

The serious implications related to this "identity crisis" have, at times, raised concern within the Army, as the power of these false beliefs could negatively impact the force, its readiness, and its ability to successfully complete the nation's "handyman" assignments.¹⁴² In fact, while extolling the virtues of civic action programs in Vietnam in 1967, the Army's Combat Development Command published *The United States Soldier in a Nonviolent Role: An Historical Overview*.¹⁴³ A truly remarkable document, this publication provided a rich survey of the Army's experiences in stability operations to that time, so that the troopers in Vietnam could reconcile their participation in "Search and Destroy" missions with their corresponding duties to support local governance, establishment of essential services, and economic development.¹⁴⁴

The Marine Corps may have actually found the solution to this enduring problem. They address stability operations in Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication (MCDP) 1-0, *Marine Corps Operations*, as well as in a recently released the *Maritime Stability Operations* publication with the Navy and Coast Guard.¹⁴⁵ However, messages from senior Marine leaders of late seem to refer to involvement in stability operations simply as participation in “small wars”.¹⁴⁶ The use of the term “small wars” invokes the memory of LTG Chesty Puller, a legend in Marine lore, who perfected counterinsurgency and stability operations in the jungles of Central America and was instrumental in publication of the Corps’ “Small Wars Manual”.¹⁴⁷ By referring to stability operations as “small wars”, the Corps has linked the warrior ethos to these missions and made them much more palatable for Marines so engaged.

Recommendations for Gaining and Maintaining a Balanced Force

The Army’s conventional capabilities have “atrophied” during the past decade and it has begun training to reverse this condition.¹⁴⁸ It trains now in order to regain its advantage in combined arms maneuver, not necessarily to achieve a balance between conventional and stability tasks. Senior leaders should understand that there is a real danger now that, as in the past, stability lessons will be forgotten or shelved as the Army returns to its comfort zone with conventional training. Instead of achieving a balanced array of capabilities, the Army will allow stability skills to atrophy and the resulting out-of-balance condition will once again favor conventional capabilities only. The current fiscal challenges facing the U.S. military will further detract from efforts to achieve a “balanced” force.

To ensure that the force achieves and maintains a balance of conventional and stability capabilities, the Army should seek change in two broad areas. First, the Army

should work to bring its service culture in line with its doctrine by addressing perceptions regarding the appropriateness of stability operations for military forces. Next, it should fully embrace stability within its “campaign of learning”, as it seeks to clarify and enhance its understanding of stability tasks throughout the full range of military operations.¹⁴⁹ Finally, it should seek to address several critical and enduring gaps that exist within its current capability to conduct stability tasks.

Army Culture and Perception

Now is the time for the Army to remedy its “identity crisis”, once and for all.¹⁵⁰ As history confirms and Builder illustrates in *The Masks of War*, our Army is indeed the nation’s “obedient handyman”.¹⁵¹ As such, it is always ready and always available to accomplish the tasks assigned, whether it be liberating Europe from the Nazis in 1945, establishing governance in the Philippines in 1901, or running the Civilian Conservation Corps during the Depression.¹⁵²

Today, the Army must be proficient in all phases of conflict, from building partner nation capability in Phase 0 to post-conflict governance in Phase IV. It is simply not enough to announce that we will catalog the lessons learned in these areas; we must train to accomplish these tasks. As theory and recent memory underscore, winning the battle decisively will likely not be enough to secure the national objectives required to actually win the war. The Army must not view training in stability tasks as an opportunity cost, but instead view it as an investment that will ultimately ensure that the force remains dominant in conventional conflicts. As a balanced force, the Army can win decisively in both areas not losing proficiency in one while completely focused on the other. This ability to easily shift between offense, defense, and stability has and will continue to be a key factor in overall strategic success in land conflict. Mastering these

capabilities should be a source of pride for Soldiers, as this ability to win both the war and peace is what truly makes the U.S. Army the finest military force in the world.

Stability and the “Campaign of Learning”

Within GEN Dempsey’s “Campaign of Learning”, the Army must now embrace stability.¹⁵³ Since the early 2000s, there has been a wealth of serious dialog and academic publication on the topic.¹⁵⁴ In fact, former Ambassador James Dobbins published *The Beginner’s Guide to Nation-Building*, in part, to ensure that officials could never again testify before Congress on the issue and not be fully aware of the associated requirements and costs.¹⁵⁵ While recently published stability doctrine seems superb, it is in large measure, a reflection of U.S. incremental adaptation in Iraq and Afghanistan. As these conflicts are concluding, it is appropriate that the Army scrutinize its efforts in these theaters to confirm that the most appropriate solution sets have been found.

For instance, as we closely study the last decade, will we eventually conclude that Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) are the best answer for Phase IV and V operations? As the Army now has the opportunity to examine its stability efforts with some degree of hindsight, will the methods employed during the last decade become the standard, or will further examination provide improved methods and procedures? By approaching stability within the “campaign of learning”, the Army can fully examine and answer these types of questions.¹⁵⁶

Conclusion

After more than a decade of sustained combat operations in the Middle East, our nation and our military now face “a moment of transition”.¹⁵⁷ With tremendous uncertainty abroad and the threat of fiscal calamity at home, senior civilian and military

leaders must now decide how to reset, re-focus, and array our returning forces to best meet the security challenges that are anticipated during the next few decades and beyond.¹⁵⁸

As history has demonstrated, the Army does conduct both combined arms maneuver and stability, with the latter constituting the majority of the tasks traditionally performed.¹⁵⁹ As the Army has traditionally not trained or prepared for stability tasks, opting instead to adapt to the circumstances, the results obtained in most cases have been mixed.¹⁶⁰ World War II stands as the notable exception, as results achieved in that instance by trained Army forces were exceedingly successful.¹⁶¹ As Secretary Gates has reminded, "...the kinds of capabilities needed to deal with these scenarios cannot be considered exotic distractions or temporary diversions. The United States does not have the luxury of opting out because these scenarios do not conform to preferred notions of the American way of war."¹⁶² Again, a "balanced" force that accepts stability as a valid mission and that is proficient in stability tasks will have a greater chance at success in stabilization efforts and will, in the end, allow the U.S. to better maintain and enduring and decisive conventional capability.

Army leaders today must ensure that the rank and file fully embrace current doctrine and, once and for all, accept stability as a valid task for the force. Leaders must examine and question the stability lessons learned in Iraq and Afghanistan, to ensure that those ideas codified in doctrine are appropriate. Finally, while the Army embarks upon training to regain its expertise in combined arms maneuver, leaders must remain cognizant of the risk that the Army will once again fail to incorporate stability adequately to maintain a "balanced" array of capabilities. The enemy will always have

vote in the matter, and as such, he will surely elect to engage the U.S. with methods that successfully counter the weaker capability.

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