

SOLLIMS SAMPLER

Targeting Peace & Stability Operations Lessons & Best Practices

Reconstruction and Development

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FOREWORD

Welcome to the November 2014 edition of the Stability Operations Lessons Learned and Information Management System (SOLLIMS) Lessons Learned “Sampler” – **Reconstruction and Development**.

The general structure of the “Sampler” includes (1) an [Introduction](#) that provides an operational or doctrinal perspective for the content, (2) the Sampler “[Quick Look](#)” that provides a short description of the topics included within the Sampler and a link to the full text, (3) the primary, topic-focused Stability Operations (SO)-related [Lessons Learned Report](#), and (4) links to [additional reports and other references](#) that are either related to the “focus” topic or that address current, real-world, SO-related challenges.

This lessons-learned compendium contains just a sample – thus the title of “Sampler” – of the observations, insights, and lessons related to **Reconstruction and Development** available in the SOLLIMS data repository. These lessons are worth sharing with military commanders and their staffs, as well as with civilian practitioners having a Stability Operations-related mission / function – those currently deployed on stability operations, those planning to deploy, the institutional Army, the Joint community, policy-makers, and other international civilian and military leaders at the national and theater level.

Lesson Format. Each lesson is provided in the following standard format:

- Title/Topic
- Observation
- Discussion
- Recommendation
- Implications (optional)
- Event Description

The “Event Description” section provides context in that it identifies the source or event from which the lesson was developed. Occasionally you may also see a “Comments” section within a lesson. This is used by the author to provide related information or additional personal perspective.

You will also note that a number is displayed in parentheses next to the title of each lesson. This number is hyper-linked to the actual lesson within the SOLLIMS database; click on the highlighted number to display the SOLLIMS data and to access any attachments (references, images, files) that are included with this lesson. Note, you must have an account and be logged into SOLLIMS in order to display the SOLLIMS data entry and access / download attachments.

If you have not registered in SOLLIMS, the links in the reports will take you to the login or the registration page. Take a brief moment to register for an account

in order to take advantage of the many features of SOLLIMS and to access the stability operations related products referenced in the report.

We encourage you to take the time to provide us with your perspective on any given lesson in this report or on the overall value of the “Sampler” as a reference for you and your unit/organization. By using the “Perspectives” text entry box that is found at the end of each lesson – seen when you open the lesson in your browser – you can enter your own personal comments on the lesson. We welcome your input, and we encourage you to become a regular contributor.

At PKSOI we continually strive to improve the services and products we provide the global stability operations community. We invite you to use our website at [<http://pksoi.army.mil>] and the many functions of the SOLLIMS online environment [<https://sollims.pksoi.org>] to help us identify issues and resolve problems. We welcome your comments and insights!



HELMAND PROVINCE, Afghanistan (6 July 2012). Afghan utility technicians and their U.S. Army counterpart, Staff Sergeant Scott Michael, assemble the air disconnect switch as part of the Sangin Substation upgrade project. This project, involving the substation and transmissions lines, is designed to provide reliable electric power from the Kajaki Dam powerhouse on the Helmand River throughout Helmand province in southwestern Afghanistan. [ISAF News]

INTRODUCTION

This SOLLIMS Sampler explores the complexities of **Reconstruction and Development**. Along with a selection of lessons from recent operations, this Sampler also provides an extensive list of [related documents, references, and links](#). One key document in this list is the final report from the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction (SIGIR), “[Learning from Iraq](#).” Based upon an in-depth analysis of **Iraq** reconstruction programs, SIGIR offers the following:

Seven Final Lessons from Iraq

1. Create an integrated civilian-military office to plan, execute, and be accountable for contingency rebuilding activities during stabilization and reconstruction operations.
2. Begin rebuilding only after establishing sufficient security, and focus first on small programs and projects.
3. Ensure full host-country engagement in program and project selection, securing commitments to share costs (possibly through loans) and agreements to sustain completed projects after their transfer.
4. Establish uniform contracting, personnel, and information management systems that all SRO participants use.
5. Require robust oversight of SRO activities from the operation’s inception.
6. Preserve and refine programs developed in Iraq, like the Commander’s Emergency Response Program and the Provincial Reconstruction Team program, that produced successes when used judiciously.
7. Plan in advance, plan comprehensively and in an integrated fashion, and have backup plans ready to go.

Another key document is “[Report on an International Symposium on Monitoring and Management in Insecure Environments: Applying Best Practices to Afghanistan](#),” from the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) and the United States Institute of Peace (USIP). That report offers the following recommendations for **Afghanistan** and elsewhere:

Recommendations for Going Forward

- Avoid duplication of effort.
- Capture and share lessons learned.
- Assessments should incorporate context and mitigating factors.
- Form professional partnerships and collaborate.
- Undertake holistic and systemic evaluations.
- Report on successful programs.

The SOLLIMS database has likewise captured numerous insights, lessons, and recommendations from peace and stability practitioners on the topic of **Reconstruction and Development** – a selection of which are presented in this Sampler. Key take-aways are captured in the [Conclusion](#) paragraph.

Reconstruction and Development

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"QUICK LOOK"

Click on [\[Read More ...\]](#) to go to full lesson.

- Interagency reconstruction operations in the Rusafa Political District of Iraq during the 2003-2010 time period produced many tangible benefits for the district's residents; however these operations suffered from various planning, management, and information-sharing problems . . . [\[Read More ...\]](#)
- Recent personal experience in Iraq and Afghanistan has reinforced the importance of developing, implementing, and maintaining a collaborative Joint, Interagency, Intergovernmental, and Multinational (JIIM) strategy when considering post-conflict development and reconstruction assistance. [\[Read More ...\]](#)
- "Place-based" solutions have proven to be an effective approach in infrastructure development. [\[Read More ...\]](#)
- In post-conflict environments, getting children back into schools can be an important component of reconstruction and community assistance – to help restore a degree of normalcy to conflict-affected communities. [\[Read More ...\]](#)
- During post-conflict stability operations, it is imperative to rapidly restore the population's access to basic water and sanitation services. Although donors are often forthcoming with generous reconstruction packages for such basic services, local institutions are usually ill equipped to receive, handle, and manage those efforts. [\[Read More ...\]](#)
- Economic and infrastructure development is a key factor of stability operations. Future trends indicate that food security, in terms of availability, has the potential to be a major economic drain in the future for many developing countries. [\[Read More ...\]](#)
- "Labor based/labor intensive" Public Works Programs (PWPs) can be an effective means for rebuilding infrastructure and for providing jobs for the unemployed/underemployed in a post-conflict environment. [\[Read More ...\]](#)
- Actors involved in economic reconstruction activities in countries emerging from conflict are affected by organizational and environmental constraints and incentives – and these constraints/incentives become even more complex and disruptive in cases where there is on-going conflict . . . [\[Read More ...\]](#)

20 November 2014

SUBJECT: Reconstruction and Development

1. GENERAL

The complexities of **Reconstruction and Development** – finding ways to immediately engage local groups in reconstruction efforts; establishing priorities for infrastructure development (power, roads, ports, telecommunications, schools, hospitals/clinics, etc.); generating employment / providing jobs for the unemployed and the underemployed; determining feasibility of public works programs; rehabilitating the agricultural sector; developing an effective civil service; partnering with host nation organizations/officials; conducting economic assessments; identifying and prioritizing projects, businesses, and economic activities along with associated resourcing; soliciting participation from the private sector and multinational corporations; and so on – have challenged civilian and military leaders, planners, and practitioners over the course of recent operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, and many other countries and regions.

This report provides eight lessons from the SOLLIMS database that highlight the importance of discussing, dissecting, and analyzing these difficult issues of **Reconstruction and Development** – and the greater need for crafting solutions/improvements/frameworks for the benefit of future missions.

2. LESSONS

a. TOPIC. Interagency Rebuilding Efforts in Rusafa, Iraq ([1049](#))

Observation

Interagency reconstruction operations in the Rusafa Political District of Iraq during the 2003-2010 time period produced many tangible benefits for the district's residents; however these operations suffered from various planning, management, and information-sharing problems – impeding the effective and efficient use of U.S. Government resources.

Discussion

The Rusafa Political District is one of 11 urban political districts of Baghdad. This district contains 10 Government of Iraq ministries, including the Ministry of Defense, and two major universities. With a population of 435,000, Rusafa is

about the size of Atlanta, Georgia. Rusafa has several large markets, including the sprawling Shorja Market (Baghdad's largest market), as well as numerous parks and monuments, areas of light industry, warehouses, slums, ethnic ghettos, dozens of Sunni and Shia mosques, and several Christian churches. Shia Muslims comprise the majority in 40 of the 44 neighborhoods of Rusafa, while Sunni Muslims comprise the majority in the other four neighborhoods.

Four different U.S. Government agencies funded or managed reconstruction projects in Rusafa during the 2003-2010 timeframe: the U.S. Army, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and Department of State (DoS). The types of projects they conducted and their size, scope, and duration all varied across agencies, across time, and across programs. Also, many of the projects were substantially modified as U.S. priorities evolved.

According to USACE officials, the Iraq Reconstruction Management System (IRMS) was supposed to be the database of record for Iraq reconstruction activities. However, the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction (SIGIR) found this system to be severely incomplete. SIGIR's research identified 1,303 reconstruction projects in Rusafa, valued at about \$148 million (\$115 million in construction projects, and \$33 million in non-construction projects). The total number of projects (1,303) was judged by SIGIR to be lower than reality, as many other projects were reported by U.S. personnel, but were never entered into IRMS. Furthermore, several project details in the IRMS database were found to be suspect, particularly project completion dates.

Reconstruction projects in Rusafa covered the following sectors:

- Security and Law Enforcement
- Justice, Public Safety, Infrastructure, and Civil Society
- Electricity
- Roads, Bridges, and Construction
- Education, Refugees, Human Rights, and Governance
- Healthcare
- Private Sector Development
- Water Resources and Sanitation
- Oil Infrastructure

Although certain projects were never completed and certain other projects were not sustained following their transfer to Iraqi authorities, the \$115 million in construction projects did result in a number of significant benefits for the citizens of Rusafa and for the Government of Iraq. Those benefits included: a police and fire infrastructure system; the renovation of four government ministries; improvements to the Baghdad Post Office; a new water treatment plant; and, the repair of sports fields, a major city park, municipal gardens, and dozens of schools. The \$33 million in non-construction projects also yielded notable

benefits for Rusafa's residents, such as: grants that helped start or expand businesses, projects that enabled market areas to be maintained/cleaned, and security measures (such as guard forces and fortifications) that improved the level of security/safety at numerous shopping areas. The Government of Iraq and local/district government offices additionally benefited from the receipt of computers, equipment, and furniture.

Perceptions of ineffective projects varied. By and large, the following types of projects were viewed as not having produced significant effects/benefits:

- School construction – Numerous schools were built, but teachers were unavailable to staff them.
- School refurbishments – Many of these projects failed to gain Iraqi buy-in; they were often rejected by the Iraqi Ministry of Education for poor quality of work or due to political reasons.
- Trash pick-up – These projects and contracts frequently resulted in corruption and wasted resources.

Overall, the Rusafa reconstruction effort suffered from the same "stove-piping" that U.S. officials faced while implementing reconstruction activities across the rest of the country – i.e., a lack of coordination / information-sharing between U.S. Government agencies. Poor coordination between agencies – especially during the early years of Operation Iraqi Freedom – led to the duplication of effort and a waste of resources. USAID was repeatedly noted as starting projects that mirrored ones already implemented by the Army. The Army's use of micro-grants, in turn, often conflicted with USAID's micro-loan programs. On a positive note, one effort that proved to be exceptional for improving coordination and reducing duplication of effort was the Embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team (ePRT) initiative.

Besides "stove-piping," other significant impediments to successful reconstruction activities in Rusafa were the following: the failure to establish quantifiable metrics to evaluate success, lack of continuity caused by personnel rotations, lack of capacity within agencies/units to monitor multiple projects, pressures to spend as much as possible as fast as possible on reconstruction projects, heavy administrative requirements with regard to use of the Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP), poor security conditions that impeded oversight, and lack of coordination with Iraqi officials on project selection and sustainment planning.

Recommendation.

1. Agencies performing reconstruction and stabilization missions should properly identify local needs, secure local government support, ensure continuity of execution, and administer meaningful oversight.

2. Agencies should establish effective information management systems in support of reconstruction and stabilization operations – capturing data on all reconstruction projects and facilitating information-sharing.
3. The U.S. Government should continue use of the Embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team (ePRT) initiative during future reconstruction and stabilization operations.
4. Avoid using the "speed of spending" as a metric for progress during future reconstruction and stabilization operations.
5. The Department of Defense should judiciously relax the regulations governing the use of the Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP) for small-scale, rapid-response projects.
6. Ensure that the host nation/local community is involved in project selection and sustainment planning.
7. Stabilization and reconstruction projects should only be undertaken if a unit or agency has the capacity to monitor and measure them.

Implications.

If the host nation is not fully involved in project selection and sustainment planning, and if the U.S. Government agencies/organizations involved do not have the capacity to monitor and measure projects and the capacity to share information on projects, then initiated projects may lose momentum and the U.S. Government will see resources wasted.

Event Description.

This lesson is based on "[Interagency Rebuilding Efforts in Iraq: A Case Study of the Rusafa Political District](#)," SIGIR Special Report Number 3, Office of the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, 26 February 2013.

Comments.

1. Related lesson is SOLLIMS Lesson 1036, "[Final Report from the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction](#)," which provides an overall assessment of the reconstruction program in Iraq, along with seven overarching recommendations.
2. Another related lesson is SOLLIMS Lesson 685, "[The Balancing Act of Post-Conflict Reconstruction and the Need to Involve Local Groups](#)," which discusses cases of involving local communities in reconstruction efforts in Kosovo and Afghanistan.



b. TOPIC. Maximizing JIIM Collaboration – Lessons Learned from OEF/OIF (1451)

Observation.

Recent personal experience in Iraq and Afghanistan has reinforced the importance of developing, implementing, and maintaining a collaborative Joint, Interagency, Intergovernmental, and Multinational (JIIM) strategy when considering post-conflict development and reconstruction assistance. While it may be difficult to envision the endstate of the mission early on, planners must continuously work towards the formulation, evaluation, and re-evaluation of mission objectives and requirements. Where they routinely fall short is in establishing systems and criteria which serve to measure the progress of the operation. Without this concerted “whole-of-government/nation” effort towards clearly defined objectives, organizations expend unneeded and costly resources (means) towards unnecessary requirements and projects.

Discussion.

Throughout implementation of post-conflict development and reconstruction operations, stakeholders must constantly monitor, assess, and adjust the plan, ensuring that they are capable of making timely and accurate adjustments based on mission or environmental changes. Without this, we have all seen missed opportunities or experienced significant misdirection of resources, focused on solving the “wrong” problems. Based on sheer capacity, other governmental organizations view the United States military as the best positioned to begin this effort, post-conflict. In Iraq and Afghanistan, our military assumed the brunt of the responsibility for economic and infrastructure development, with the other governmental and non-governmental agencies adding capacity and capability as they were able, much later in the process. While versatile and dynamic, the military is not optimized to handle the complexities of this mission, especially for long duration requirements. In both theaters, the military directed the efforts and expended valuable resources based on un-synchronized JIIM objectives.

After over 13 years of continuous conflict, we have grown in our understanding of how to manage post-conflict operations. Out of necessity, we have developed impressive JIIM relationships and become more synchronized in our efforts to manage these operations more effectively. The issue that we now face is how to capitalize on these lessons learned and ensure we do not relearn them. In order to prevent relearning these lessons, we must rethink the way we operate within the JIIM environment. We must resist the tendency to go back into our stove-

piped and resource-constrained organizations and instead work to establish systems that force JIIM coordination and collaboration.

Recommendation.

1. Increase the planning capacity and capabilities within all JIIM organizations. Include training that reinforces operational planning and lessons learned from previous operations.
2. Provide liaison officers (LNOs) and JIIM representatives for all training exercises to ensure we train as we will operate. This serves to reinforce previous lessons learned and develop new capabilities for future real world operations.
3. Include planning capacity and appropriate JIIM leadership prior to any future conflict or post-conflict operation. It is vital that we establish clear objectives and responsibilities prior to committing U.S. armed forces in the future.
4. Establish Global Combatant Command (GCC) level JIIM planning cells as a permanent fixture within each region. While this capability exists to a certain degree now, it must be standardized and reinforced.

Implications.

We cannot afford to relearn the lessons of the past decade. We must build upon these lessons and not allow the challenges of constrained fiscal resources and reduced operational budgets to force us to go back to the way we operated prior to OEF/EIF. The current will naturally try to take us in that direction, reinforcing the need for our JIIM leadership to dedicate the resources required, building upon lessons learned and creating new opportunities for sustained collaboration.

Event Description.

These comments are based on personal experiences serving in Afghanistan as a Battalion S3 in N2KL (an area in Regional Command East comprising four provinces: Nangarhar, Nuristan, Kunar, and Laghman), working with four Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) and other JIIM partners. Also served as the G3, Chief of Operations (CHOPS) for four months in theater, assisting in the synchronization of JIIM efforts throughout the region. Lastly, served as a Squadron Commander in Iraq during the closing stages of Operation New Dawn, closing out U.S. operations in the country. In this capacity, again worked with JIIM partners in setting the conditions for the responsible handover of several provinces back to Iraqi security forces, working with regional PRTs to develop local government capacity.



c. TOPIC. Improved Successes for Infrastructure Development in Developing Countries ([1424](#))

Observation.

“Place-based” solutions have proven to be an effective approach in infrastructure development. Considerations of smaller, local strategies are more accepted and sustainable by developing countries.

Discussion.

Historically, infrastructure development strategies in developing or post-conflict countries are designed using a sector-based approach. This type of strategy typically emphasizes large-scale infrastructure, the attraction of foreign investors, and the disbursement of payments mainly to compensate for efforts. It focuses on broad regional efforts and goals. The newly adopted place-based strategy approach focuses more on the ability of places to grow – drawing on their own resources. Although designing workable place-based strategies is more labor- and time-intensive than developing national or regional strategies, the results are much more likely to be accepted and implemented by the local government and to be sustained over the long run.

While reforms at both national and local levels are required in countries receiving development assistance, there is a growing focus on place-based solutions as the foundation. This topic was introduced to the U.S. Army War College International Development class during a visit to the International City/County Management Association (ICMA). ICMA demonstrated that in our own country, for example, the evolution of successful water and sewer systems have more often emerged from local success than by downward programs from national mandates. “More specifically, geology, hydrology, soils, and water sources vary locally, and most U.S. cities began their water and sewer services by using whatever worked, in light of those constraints.” As the cities grew, over time these local systems were refined and expanded.

Good quality infrastructure is the cornerstone of development, but alone it is not enough for sustainable development. Infrastructure investments only have a positive impact on growth and development if they are accompanied by improvements in other sectors, such as employment and education. That is another advantage to place-based solutions. They consider the characteristics of the people in the region in order help train unemployed citizens to enhance their skills for entry into the local job market. The focus on human capital and local

innovation are the hallmarks of this approach in infrastructure development. Place-based strategies have been in play in other sectors, such as education and agriculture, but have not been traditionally adopted in the infrastructure sector until now.

Place-based solutions require strong local governments. Only local governments can bridge the gaps between the disparate players in water and sewer delivery, ensure that those services are part of a broader strategy, and have the ability to document the opportunities necessary to attract additional financing. For example, when it comes to water delivery, ICMA found that there were Formal Sewer and Water Providers (FSWP) and informal Small Sewer Water Providers (SSWP). In general, SSWPs and FSWPs find it hard to cooperate with each other. There are also microfinance institutions (MFIs) and banks, which are often unaware of viable business opportunities in lending for the expansion of water and sewer systems and connections, especially in slum areas. Local governments relate to all these actors – residents, FSWPs, SSWPs, and MFIs – and only local governments have the incentives to make them come together to provide better services on a sustainable basis.

Programs that attempt to move a developing country from the far left to the far right end of the development spectrum too quickly often fail, because there are simply too many unanswered questions and divergent interests between those two points. Providing sustainable infrastructure, such as reliable and healthy water and sewer services, does not depend on reaching the far right end of the spectrum, but it does provide the building blocks for moving closer to that goal.

Recommendation.

The United States assistance in terms of physical infrastructure construction for capacity-building should first focus only on those minimum requirements for essential infrastructure that enable a country's government to establish a basic level of services. Infrastructure development strategies should be modest in scope, functional, feasible, sustainable, and above all place-based.

Immediate humanitarian assistance aside, infrastructure development efforts should focus on place-based strategies that are enabled by local governance efforts. While the idiosyncrasies of local terrain and politics can be overlooked at the national level, they play a critical role in success at the local level. A place-based strategy:

- incorporates community-based assets and understands how they can be leveraged for improved services
- includes the backing of respected local leaders
- promotes community-based planning and implementation through engagement with citizens

- is open to external partnerships to secure additional human and financial resources to provide better services on a sustainable basis

Finally, while working to create tailored place-based solutions, it is still important to promote national policies and frameworks to expand and sustain reforms. The national policies will be effective only if they support programs and solutions that work at the local level, so they must be informed by the results of local initiatives.

Event Description.

This lesson is based on required readings, classroom discussion, and a class visit to the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) during U.S. Army War College elective course PS2206 – Introduction to International Development.



d. TOPIC. Rebuilding Schools and Communities in Post-Conflict Kenya (772)

Observation.

In post-conflict environments, getting children back into schools can be an important component of reconstruction and community assistance – to help restore a degree of normalcy to conflict-affected communities. When civil-military operations (CMO) are conducted for this purpose, establishing close relations upfront with provincial and community leaders, as well as with other U.S. Government and non-governmental organizations operating in the area, is imperative to CMO success.

Discussion.

In the aftermath of Kenya's December 2007 to January 2008 post-election violence, Combined Joint Task Force - Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) deployed U.S. Army Reserve Civil Affairs (CA) teams to Kenya's Rift Valley to engage in a series of school rehabilitation projects. Kenya had experienced wide-scale ethnic clashes following its national elections, resulting in over 1,000 casualties and 300,000 displaced personnel. Most of the residents of the Rift Valley had been displaced, countless markets and public places had been destroyed, and numerous schools burned to the ground or severely damaged.

Over the April 2008 - July 2010 timeframe, four different U.S. Army Reserve CA teams supported the rehabilitation/reconstruction of 14 schools in the Rift Valley.

During the early part of this timeframe, community/ethnic relations in the Rift Valley were still tense, and most people lacked confidence in their government's ability to provide security and restore services. The U.S. military, however, was warmly welcomed by Rift Valley residents. They were generally receptive to all who came to help, and they especially viewed the U.S. military as a trusted presence in this insecure situation. The fact that the U.S. military had come to rebuild highly visible structures for communities – namely, school buildings – meant a great deal to a society in disarray. Interviews of Kenyans in the Rift Valley revealed that they viewed new schools as an opportunity for peace-building among their communities (where multiple ethnic groups had formerly attended the same schools), an important step toward stability, an overall public good, and a means to positively impact the future.

The first U.S. Army Reserve CA team to arrive was instrumental in rebuilding/repairing schools in the most heavily devastated areas of the Rift Valley. Key to the team's success was its deliberate effort to establish relations upfront with key stakeholders in the area: provincial administrators, village leaders, church leaders, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) – which was providing education for children within the internally displaced persons (IDP) camps – and several other non-governmental organizations (NGOs). With so many families living in IDP camps, the stakeholders agreed that returning children to schools would take precedence over various other reconstruction projects. The CA team was then able to smoothly facilitate the provision of resources for, and engage in the process of, building new classrooms, school administration buildings, teachers' quarters, and school storage areas. Throughout this process, synergy was maintained from those initial contacts and the early prioritization of efforts.

Over the course of the CA teams' 2-year tenure in the Rift Valley, maintaining clear lines of communication with key host nation (HN)/local stakeholders proved imperative for maintaining community support/assistance. When CA teams had to conduct multiple assessment visits at a certain site before beginning work, it was important to convey to community leaders the necessity of these visits and when work could actually begin. On any given school project, if there were a lag in construction due to resource delays, as long as the community leaders were given timely explanations, they remained supportive. The same went for delays or diversions of funds. Being open and transparent with local leaders precluded disappointment or discontent, and they then willingly provided support/assistance for the work when it could resume. Upon completion of project, upon the team's departure from the area, a closure discussion with local village leaders allowed them to realize that the team was departing and to understand the status of the project – completed or pending additional work from another team.

Interviews with Kenyans in the Rift Valley did reveal a degree of disappointment with their own military. Although the Kenyan military was actively engaged in certain post-conflict work within the Rift Valley – such as securing major

roadways and providing support for local police activities – there was only brief collaboration with the U.S. CA personnel during the initial phase of school reconstruction. Afterwards, the Kenyan military was largely absent. This was a lost opportunity for the Kenyan military to do something visible and meaningful for the community, as well as a lost opportunity for citizens to gain some trust and confidence in their military – which a great number of Kenyans had mistrusted, or even feared. If "partnering" with the Kenyan military would have been an objective for the CA teams, local civilian views of the Kenyan military and government could have been positively impacted. Kenyan military units could have profited professionally from the experience of working with the U.S. military teams. Also, greater Kenyan "ownership" of the projects could have been promulgated – from start to finish.

Recommendation.

1. U.S. military teams engaged in civil-military operations / community assistance should establish contacts and relationships upfront with key stakeholders throughout their area of operations – to set a tone of cooperation and promote synergy of efforts where possible.
2. U.S. military teams engaged in civil-military operations / community assistance should endeavor to maintain direct communication with the HN/local stakeholders throughout operations, with an emphasis on transparency – to preclude false expectations, misunderstandings, or dissatisfaction. Upon completion of work, or upon departure from the area, teams should provide a status on all projects to local stakeholders.
3. U.S. military teams engaged in civil-military operations / community assistance should endeavor to partner with HN security forces where feasible – to promote HN participation and ownership in projects, as well as to build civilian trust in their military. Furthermore, partnering with HN security forces on projects may allow them to gain/improve knowledge on certain tasks or skills.
4. School reconstruction/rehabilitation projects should be considered during U.S. military planning of civil-military operations / community assistance missions – as a course of action (or component thereof) to help restore normalcy to conflict-affected communities.

Implications.

If direct, transparent communication with local stakeholders is not emphasized during civil-military operations from start to finish, then local communities may develop false expectations or conclusions regarding the status of projects in their areas. They may lose interest in supporting or taking ownership of those projects.

Event Description.

This lesson is based on the article "[Civil-Military Operations in Kenya's Rift Valley: Sociocultural Impacts at the Local Level](#)," by Jessica Lee and Maureen Farrell, Prism, Vol. 2, No. 2, March 2011.



e. TOPIC. Providing Water in Post-Conflict Kosovo ([696](#))

Observation.

During post-conflict stability operations, it is imperative to rapidly restore the population's access to basic water and sanitation services. Although donors are often forthcoming with generous reconstruction packages for such basic services, local institutions are usually ill equipped to receive, handle, and manage those efforts. The traditional course of action involving monetary and technical assistance for restoring water services has generally proven to be a marginal fix. However, In post-conflict Kosovo, the tremendous success that was achieved through a 3-year management contract in the Gjakove-Rahovec area suggests that contracting a professional company to do the work can be a very promising approach for meeting post-conflict water service requirements and sustainability.

Discussion.

The conflict in Kosovo in the late 1990s left municipal water services in a critical situation. One of the most severely damaged areas included the towns of Gjakove and Rahovec, along with their 56 surrounding villages – a total population of about 200,000. The water infrastructure for this area was in bad shape, and most employees who had managed/maintained the various water facilities had departed. At the end of the year 2000, water supply interruptions were continuous, water leakages were countless, and water quality was poor. Water losses were twice as high in 2000 compared to pre-conflict. Most water meters had been broken or stolen.

Rather than use the traditional course of action for post-conflict water reconstruction, involving money and technical assistance/experts, to restore basic services through emergency repairs, the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) took a different approach. The primary logic was that short-term, outside technical experts have no stake in the ultimate success or failure of the Host Nation's water reconstruction program. Additionally, UNMIK recognized that something much greater had to be done in

the problematic context of Kosovo. Here a whole new water utility had to be built, including organizing a new public utility company staff, implementing proper operating procedures, and establishing a customer database. Also, the political environment in Kosovo was uncertain, and governance was weak. In light of these conditions, UNMIK decided that contracting a professional company to restore water services, for a significant duration, was the optimum way ahead.

UNMIK therefore developed a performance-based contract, in which the hired professional company would take full control of water operations, maintenance, billing, and collections for the Gjakove-Rahovec area. The contract had two primary objectives: (1) improve services for the customers, and (2) establish a viable Kosovar public utility capable of operating on its own by the end of the contract period. The Kosovar public utility company, in this case, was Hidrodrini Radoniqi (HSR).

In December 2001, UNMIK awarded the contract to a German utility company – Gelsenwasser AG. The contract was for three years, with a total cost of \$2.1 Million. Besides the awarded contract amount, the hired professional company would also manage/control a supplementary emergency repair investment fund, which had been established through a World Bank grant. With this fund, the professional company could select, contract, and supervise emergent civil works projects.

In three years' time, tremendous improvements were made in the provision of water for the Gjakove-Rahovec area, as well as in the operational and financial performance of the HSR/public utility company. Full chlorination of distributed water was achieved in the first few months, and a reliable supply of potable water was also re-established. The customer database was fully re-built in two years. Metered water coverage increased from 10 to 90 percent by the end of the third year. The water utility progressed from an operating loss of about \$250,000 in 2001 to an operating profit of more than \$100,000 in 2004. The staff of the HSR/public utility company received extensive training and gained competency. Management/use of the emergency work fund by the professional company proved to be a good move by UNMIK, as emergent repair and improvement projects were able to be accomplished by Gelsenwasser AG with speed and flexibility.

At the end of the contract, in December 2004, transition from Gelsenwasser AG to HSR was flawless. Since that time, HSR has been successfully operating as a purely public utility. HSR has sustained all of the infrastructure, operational, and financial improvements achieved by Gelsenwasser AG. Metered water coverage has further improved to 94 percent. HSR has become the only Kosovar water utility company to achieve a potability compliance rate of more than 99 percent.

Overall, UNMIK's performance-based management contract proved to be a tremendous success. Also, the associated water service program proved to be

sustainable. Of note, the dollar cost of the contract equated to about \$3.50 per inhabitant per year.

Recommendation.

1. Recommend that contracting a professional company to reconstruct and operate the water utility in post-conflict environments be considered as a viable, if not optimal, solution. The contract should be performance-based, with established performance objectives. The contract should be for a significant duration (e.g., three years) in order to make a long-term impact. Further, the contracted company should be responsible for mentoring the existing public utility company, ensuring that a successful transition takes place toward the end of the contract period. Through these measures, the contacted company would have a firm stake in the ultimate success of the program.

2. Recommend that the professional company be given control/responsibility of an emergency work fund, assuming that such a fund can be provided by the World Bank or another donor. Allocating these additional emergency funds upfront to the professional company, Gelsenwasser AG, afforded it the resources, speed, and flexibility needed to conduct necessary emergent major repairs and improvements, above and beyond what had been projected.

3. Recommend that realistic targets and expectations be set for water service restoration. Comprehensive repairs of the damaged water infrastructure and complete re-establishment of the customer database and associated meters may take years to complete. In this regard, a professional company assigned with this complex mission (overseen by contract managers) – as opposed to an ad hoc team of outside experts – would be best postured to survey the situation, establish priorities, set realistic expectations, track progress, and partner with, train, and mentor the Host Nation's utility company to do the same.

Implications.

If a professional company is not used to reconstruct/operate/sustain the water utility for a post-conflict region, and if this task is assigned instead to a team of technical experts for a short duration, then the long-term outcome will probably not be as good as the recommended alternative. In the case of the Gjakove-Rahovec area of Kosovo, the infrastructure, operational, and financial improvements made by the professional company and then sustained by the public utility company proved to be far superior to the other/more traditional efforts in the rest of the country.

Event Description.

This lesson is based on the article "[Improving Water Services in a Postconflict Situation: The Case of the Management Contract in Kosovo](#)," by Philippe Marin,

Josses Mugabi, and Manuel Marino, in GRID LINES, a publication of the Public-Private Infrastructure Advisory Facility, Note No. 52, March 2010.



f. TOPIC. Development of Food Production Systems Essential to Future Economic and Infrastructure Development ([1409](#))

Observation.

Economic and infrastructure development is a key factor of stability operations. Future trends indicate that food security, in terms of availability, has the potential to be a major economic drain in the future for many developing countries. Therefore, stability operations should consider development efforts in sustainable food production systems that are appropriate for the country in question to offset this potential future economic drain.

Discussion.

"[Global Trends 2030 Alternative Worlds](#)," a publication released by the National Intelligence Council in December 2012, predicts that global demand for food is expected to rise at least 35% by 2030. With the proportion of the global population in urban areas growing to 60%, more efficient food production will be required throughout the world's major breadbaskets to provide adequate access to food for these surging urban populations.

If "global warming", "climate change", "climate disruption", or whatever current terminology is used to describe weather occurrences is real, it will create additional impacts (possibly positive and negative) to existing global food production systems. The most significant problem with the climate change agenda, however, is that it has been polluted by incorporation of false data to advance political agendas and is entirely based upon the two suppositions that 1) the computer models that cannot even predict with greater than 50% accuracy tomorrow's weather can somehow accurately predict a complex system of global climate change, and 2) there is actually something that man can do to affect the alleged climate change.

That being said, changes to food availability can be viewed as a bargaining tool by some countries to gain political or economic advantage over others that must import food to sustain their populations. However immoral it may be to target a basic need, it does not take a stretch of imagination to see a food-producing country wield its food exports to needy countries, much as Russia uses its energy exports to Europe, as a heavy bargaining chip.

In developing countries, stability can often come through strategies that develop a sustainable market economy, which, in turn, can provide employment opportunities and income generation for the workforce of a country. However, if food availability, due to scarcity or higher priced imports, becomes a factor in this equation, a higher percentage of income is spent on acquiring the basic need of food.

Recommendation.

Fundamental to any stability operations strategy is the development of sustainable food production systems within the resource constraints of a developing country. Being able to intrinsically produce a marketable and affordable protein source for its population functions as insulation against potential economic drain and strengthens the possibility for long-term stability. Potential examples might include fresh water fish farming, seafood farming, poultry production systems, and various vegetable protein source production strategies, such as soybeans. The key is finding the right approach that meshes with the culture and the available natural resources of the developing country.

Event Description.

This lesson is based on my own research as well as observations and experiences from supporting stability operations in Iraq 2009-2010 and Afghanistan 2012 as an Army Veterinary Corps Officer.



g. TOPIC. Public Works Programs in Post-Conflict Economic Stabilization ([690](#))

Observation.

"Labor based/labor intensive" Public Works Programs (PWPs) can be effective means for rebuilding infrastructure and for providing jobs for the unemployed/ underemployed in a post-conflict environment. In a country emerging from conflict, the rehabilitation/repair of damaged infrastructure is often a basic prerequisite for overall reconstruction of the economy. Human labor is almost always abundant (thousands of people needing jobs). The opportunity presents itself, then, to the post-conflict government to take advantage of the large domestic labor pool for developing/executing PWPs to rebuild infrastructure. The experience of various PWPs in Africa demonstrates their effectiveness in rebuilding infrastructure, generating employment at low costs, and making

additional positive impacts toward stability and prosperity in communities and countries where undertaken – particularly in Liberia and Uganda.

Discussion.

Experiences of Public Works Programs in Africa have shown their effectiveness in generating short-term employment at very low cost, with substantial positive impacts on stability in post-conflict societies. The Brenthurst Foundation's Discussion Paper 5/2008 (referenced in "Event Description" paragraph below) illustrates how the PWP strategy used by Liberia can be a model for post-conflict success, and it also cites similar execution and success in Uganda.

One should note upfront, however, that although PWPs have achieved tremendous success in these two countries and others, there is no one particular model that universally addresses the establishment of PWPs for post-conflict stability operations. PWPs are always to be undertaken on a case-by-case basis, dependent on circumstances, requirements, resources, finances, and governmental capacity in any given country.

In general, most post-conflict countries emerge from conflict with a basic prerequisite for the rehabilitation and repair of damaged infrastructure. In several African countries, a proven course of action has been to tap readily available resources – namely, unemployed and underemployed labor, and locally available materials – for such infrastructure projects essential to reconstruction and recovery. When PWPs were designed as "labor intensive" PWPs and treated as a top priority by the post-conflict government, they not only served the purpose of rebuilding infrastructure, but also raised the socio-economic capabilities of conflict-affected population groups, strengthened vocational skills of workers, and encouraged social cohesion and peace.

These successful "labor intensive" PWPs typically used cheap labor as the dominant resource for executing projects – such that the labor component amounted to 25-60% of the total project cost. According to an International Labor Office (ILO) study which compared various public works programs in Africa, "labor intensive" PWPs proved to be 10-30% less costly than conventional work programs, incurred only half the imports, created 2-3 times more employment, and produced infrastructure of comparable quality and standards. The cost of "labor intensive" PWPs was relatively low, as they incorporated commonly available local resources – primarily unskilled laborers and light equipment/tools – and, they kept other factors such as supervisors, skilled laborers, and heavy machinery to a minimum.

The types of projects that were most suitable to "labor intensive" PWPs have been: road construction, road maintenance, small- and medium-scale irrigation projects, soil conservation and reforestation projects, flood protection and land development schemes, drainage projects, road improvements for rural access

and crop-extraction, inexpensive housing projects, drinking water supply projects, and the construction and/or rehabilitation of school buildings, health centers, and community centers.

In successful "labor intensive" PWPs in Africa, payment plans for laborers usually consisted of paying the (unskilled) laborers at minimum wage rates, sometimes supplemented by food rations. According to the ILO, the use of "labor intensive" methods was most effective to economic development when the cost of the unskilled PWP labor did not exceed comparable costs/earnings in the agricultural sector. This precluded laborers from being diverted from productive, equally important, agricultural activities.

Certain PWPs in Africa, in which workers were paid minimum wage / agricultural wage, were extremely effective in generating short-term employment, contributing to poverty alleviation, rebuilding economic infrastructure, and, in some cases, also serving as a catalyst for further economic development and prosperity.

Liberia has been a prime example of such success. Due in large measure to "labor intensive" PWPs, Liberia has recently experienced four years of peace and prosperity. Benchmark Presidential elections took place in post-conflict Liberia in 2005; they were won by H.L. Sirleaf, who became the first female to be democratically elected to such a position in an African country. The country of Liberia was emerging from a civil war that killed more than 250,000 people, destroyed much of the country's infrastructure and national services (water, electricity, etc.), and ruined many health and educational institutions.

The new government soon developed an Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (I-PRSP), which focused on maintaining security, building peace, revitalizing the economy, and rebuilding infrastructure to restore basic services. From this strategy, it then developed the Liberia Employment Action Program (LEAP) which incorporated "labor intensive" PWPs. These PWPs had the objective of providing work opportunities for 78,000 people for employment in roads/transportation, public buildings, and urban upgrade sectors – including water, sanitation, educational, and health facilities. These PWPs provided on-the-job training for newly employed personnel. They involved the local communities in labor-based public works projects for the rehabilitation and maintenance of feeder roads – to enhance food delivery/food security for the communities and reduce their transportation time & cost. Other infrastructure priorities included improving ports, telecommunications, and electricity generation. Additionally, the LEAP strategy incorporated the support/ involvement of small- and medium-sized enterprises and cooperatives.

This Liberian model/strategy was a resounding success. Liberia registered 7.8% in economic growth in 2006, and it achieved 9.5% economic growth in 2007. Despite the global recession that occurred in the next couple years, Liberia

successfully implemented its poverty reduction strategy and maintained solid economic growth of 5-7% yearly. Along with achieving major infrastructure rehabilitation and upgrades, Liberia also saw continuous expansion in its service sector, housing construction, mining, agriculture, and forestry – owing to good financial discipline in government borrowing and spending, and to formulating policies conducive to small business and private investment.

During her visit to Liberia in August 2009, Secretary of State Clinton praised Liberia as being a model of successful transition – complimenting the country's effective fiscal policies, decreased debt, and economic growth. The next year, in August 2010, Secretary Clinton, at the 2010 African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) Forum, again cited the economic success of Liberia and highlighted the benefits that follow from political reconciliation, democratic reform, and social inclusion. Although PWP's were not specifically mentioned in her address, it should be noted that PWP's notably contributed to such "social inclusion" – by providing employment opportunities for refugees, displaced persons, demobilized soldiers, young adults, and other population groups.

Uganda saw similar success with the use of "labor intensive" PWP's. In post-conflict Uganda in the 1980s, PWP's were utilized to a great extent by the government. These PWP's minimized the use of scarce capital, and maximized the use of local resources – i.e., the unemployed and underemployed, and local materials/tools/equipment. An ILO evaluation comparing "labor based/intensive" PWP's and "equipment based" programs in road construction, improvement, and maintenance projects in Uganda found that "labor based/intensive" PWP's were superior in almost every category. The major results of this study showed the following:

- For every job created in the road programs using "labor based/intensive" PWP's, another 1.6 jobs were created in the wider economy due to multiplier effects.
- Overall, the use of "labor based/intensive" programs created 3 times as many jobs as "equipment based" programs.
- "Labor based/intensive" programs generated about 2 times greater gross domestic product (GDP) (through indirect effects) than the "equipment based" programs.
- Higher net public revenues resulted from using "labor based/intensive" programs than from "equipment based" programs.
- There was a greater savings in foreign exchange (62%) when using "labor based/intensive" programs as opposed to "equipment based" programs.

The study further illustrated that "labor intensive" PWP's in Uganda created productive employment, both directly and indirectly. "Labor intensive" PWP's generated more income to households, increased GDP faster, and were a strong stimulus for local private investment.

PWPs in Africa have achieved their greatest impact in the creation of temporary employment and in the provision of immediate income for those involved. However, PWPs in most cases – aside from Liberia – contributed only limited assistance toward sustainable incomes. Experience showed that PWPs needed to be supplemented by other sorts of programs or interventions. For sustained employment, for longer term economic impact, the following factors were seen to be important per ILO reports and other studies:

- Domestic political support is vital. Longer-term sustainability comes from active involvement by the national government and the inclusion of PWPs in government fiscal planning cycles.
- Sustainable PWPs generally had a strong institutional base – positioned within government structures – and afforded technical support, dedicated management, and administrative capacity.
- Sustainable PWPs incorporated incentives relating to work and to outputs: consistent incentives/incomes for workers over time, and outputs equating to infrastructure improvements/projects that communities really needed, vice make-work projects.
- The involvement of small and micro enterprises (SMEs) (e.g., through sub-contracts, investments, etc.) facilitates infrastructure development, economic growth, and sustained employment for locals.
- Microfinance programs – provided through/by donor agencies, United Nations organizations, and certain non-governmental organizations – have served to provide much-needed financing to SMEs, for engagement in projects and contracts.

Again, no one particular model universally addresses the establishment of PWPs in post-conflict operations, but Liberia and Uganda offer noteworthy examples of success.

Recommendation.

1. Post-conflict governments should consider the establishment of "labor intensive" PWPs for the rehabilitation/repair of damaged infrastructure. "Labor intensive" PWPs are more cost effective than "equipment based" or other conventional programs. "Labor intensive" PWPs can provide employment opportunities, help alleviate poverty, provide second order effects for economic growth, and can also promote peace and prosperity. The inclusion of war-affected population groups should not be overlooked. Also, the incorporation of other programs, especially those that provide training/skills/education, should be considered to complement PWPs.

2. In post-conflict cases where PWPs are decided on as a path forward for infrastructure rehabilitation/repair and employment for unemployed/unskilled workers, the implementing government needs to take ownership of the PWPs –

i.e., developing a strategy for the PWPs, actively promoting PWPs in collaboration with local communities, and including them in fiscal planning cycles.

3. PWPs should aim at providing infrastructure/improvements that local communities genuinely need, as this will create incentives to keep those assets/facilities properly maintained over time. Gaining community buy-in and involvement not only helps to facilitate project success, but also to build governmental legitimacy.

4. Understanding that no one model exists for PWP establishment, and that every post-conflict situation is very distinct (with unique circumstances, requirements, resources, finances, and governmental capacity), Liberia offers an excellent example for PWP development/implementation through the highly successful Liberia Employment Action Program.

5. For longer-term economic development (beyond the purpose of PWPs), the following actions should be encouraged: reviews of government fiscal policies, incentives for sustaining projects initiated through PWPs, local private investments in projects, and externally-provided finances (from donor agencies, United Nations organizations, non-governmental organizations, etc.) to help small and micro-enterprises.

Implications.

If "labor intensive" PWPs are not utilized by post-conflict governments for the rehabilitation/repair of damaged infrastructure, then a good opportunity for accomplishing those repairs, for providing jobs to conflict-affected population groups, and for building cohesion and peace may be lost. Once implemented, if PWPs are not given adequate attention by the government with regard to financing and sustainment opportunities (e.g., small and micro-enterprise involvement), then those programs, along with economic momentum, may falter.

Event Description.

This observation is based on the article "[Employment and Post-Conflict Stabilisation: The Use of Public Works Programmes](#)," by Frank K. Rusagara, Brenthurst Discussion Paper 5/2008. www.thebrenthurstfoundation.org

Comments.

1. A related article, which cites Liberia's achievements in peace, stability, economic recovery, and social reconstruction, is: "[Liberia Independence Day: Revitalization Having Success after Years of Civil War](#)," by David J. Saryee, in the "Japan Times," 26 July 2010.

2. A related study, which evaluates various "labor intensive" PWPs in post-conflict countries in Africa, is "[Employment-intensive Reconstruction Works in Countries Emerging from Armed Conflicts: Guidelines](#)," Geneva: International Labour Office, December 2000. This study is cited in Brenthurst Discussion paper 5/2008 (referenced above).

3. Another related study, which evaluates various labor-based and equipment-based PWPs in Uganda, is "[An Opportunity for Employment Creation: Labour-based Technology in Roadworks: The Macro-Economic Dimension: Uganda](#)," by G. Taylor and M. Bekabye, SETP Report No. 6, Geneva: International Labour Office, 2000. This study is cited in Brenthurst Discussion Paper 5/2008 (referenced above).



h. TOPIC. Reconstruction Traps ([693](#))

Observation.

Actors involved in economic reconstruction activities in countries emerging from conflict are affected by organizational and environmental constraints and incentives – and these constraints/incentives become even more complex and disruptive in cases where there is on-going conflict, such as Iraq and Afghanistan. Four main "reconstruction traps" related to these constraints/incentives can significantly impede rebuilding efforts. These "reconstruction traps" are called, according to this particular study: (1) the "credible commitment trap," (2) the "knowledge trap," (3) the "political economy trap," and (4) the "bureaucracy trap." Understanding and avoiding these "reconstruction traps" are critical to gaining and sustaining success in economic reconstruction activities.

Discussion.

Economic reconstruction is usually, and ideally, undertaken once a given conflict has ended. However, in recent U.S./foreign engagements in Afghanistan and Iraq, economic reconstruction has become a key component of a broader strategy/operation – to "win the hearts and minds" of the people (national/regional/local officials, citizens, and insurgents) – in order to end conflict, achieve stability, and ultimately gain transition to local/Host Nation governance.

Various economic reconstruction projects have indeed been successful in both countries – the rebuilding of countless schools and health centers, as well as roads, bridges, water supply projects, irrigation projects, and a host of other critical infrastructure projects. However, there have been numerous major

setbacks, as well, primarily owing to on-going conflict/insurgent attacks: the targeting of oil pipelines, power facilities, and other major infrastructure projects in Iraq, and attacks against dozens of schools and various transportation networks in Afghanistan.

On-going conflict not only impedes reconstruction efforts, but also works to complicate – and exacerbate – certain pitfalls that typically exist/emerge during reconstruction planning and execution. These pitfalls, or "reconstruction traps", are present even in the most basic reconstruction activities – simply because actors (external and Host Nation) possess certain constraints and incentives (policies, procedures, resources, capacities, expertise, goals, objectives, allegiances, etc.). Persistent conflict (insurgent attacks, ethnic fighting, etc.) compounds those constraints and incentives. It also creates uncertainty, tensions, and security issues that can become a major hindrance to economic reconstruction/progress. Four primary "reconstruction traps" are discussed in the article upon which this observation is based (see "Event Description" paragraph below).

The first "reconstruction trap" is termed the "**credible commitment trap.**" The "credible commitment trap" means that if there is no binding and "credible commitment" to economic reform, then certain reconstruction officials (primarily Host Nation officials, but also external/intervening officials) may then have the ability to change course on planned/envisioned/announced reconstruction reforms. If there is no firm commitment by the implementing officials, or no demonstrated consistency in the reform activities, then indigenous populations may lose faith and interest in the economic reforms, and it may lead to regime uncertainty (lack of legitimacy).

In Iraq, for instance, the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) reneged very early-on with regard to its promise of privatization of state-owned enterprises. This led many Iraqi citizens and local political authorities to question the legitimacy and sincerity of other economic reforms announced by the CPA.

In Afghanistan, another example of inconsistency is cited by Mr. Rory Stewart in an article published in *The New York Review of Books* on 17 December 2009:

We [the U.S. and its allies] armed militias in 2001, disarmed them through a demobilization program in 2003, and rearmed them again in 2006 as community defense forces. We allowed local autonomy in 2001, pushed for a strong central government in 2003, and returned to decentralization in 2006. First we tolerated opium crops; then we proposed to eradicate them through aerial spraying; now we expect to live with opium production for decades.

Another Afghanistan example showing the need for consistency/commitment occurred during a discussion between Abdullah Jan, a governor in Garmsir, and

General Stanley McChrystal, the former commander of U.S. troops and the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan. In this meeting, Governor Abdullah Jan told General McChrystal:

Everyone in Garmsir sees that you are living in tents, and they know that you are going to be leaving soon. You need to build something permanent – a building. Because your job here is going to take years. Only then will people be persuaded that you are going to stay.

It has undoubtedly been a major challenge to establish a credible commitment, consistency, and consensus for the economic "way ahead" at the national level – both in Iraq and Afghanistan – due to major fractionalization/group allegiances in those countries: i.e., disparate ethnic groups, religious sects, and various tribal groups & allegiances. In Iraq, major economic reforms needed to satisfy Iraq's primary ethnic groups – Arabs and Kurds – and its major religious groups – Shi'a and Sunni Muslims – as well as various sub-groups. In Afghanistan, the range of groups (with their own traditions and incentives/desires) was even broader – with Pashtuns, Tajiks, Hazaras, Uzbeks, and many others – not to mention the extremists/insurgent groups.

The "credible commitment trap," or problem, worsens for reconstruction actors when there is an on-going struggle for influence and power on top of the ethnic/religious/tribal fractionalization (as happened in both Iraq and Afghanistan). In this type environment (with pervasive conflict), by and large, economic reconstruction at the local level is much more achievable – where "only" the consensus and commitment of the local community may be needed for reconstruction projects/priorities.

The second "reconstruction trap" is termed the **"knowledge trap."** The "knowledge trap" results from the inability of reconstruction officials and planners to have the requisite information and knowledge to effectively craft context-specific reforms and policies. At the beginning of the economic reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan, for instance, numerous government organizations, UN agencies, lending institutions, universities, and non-governmental organizations were preparing concepts, plans, and proposals on how to reconstruct various aspects of the Afghan economy. However, none really had the capacity or the contracts at the outset to be able to consult Afghans about their basic needs and reconstruction priorities. The many "planners" had to deal with enormous information gaps.

Unless "searchers" are identified, funded, and deployed to first engage the locals – in order to gain key insights on conditions and requirements – the "planners" shall be lacking in what needs to be done, what can be done, what is truly suitable for conditions in this environment, and what the locals may be willing to support.

The "knowledge trap" has been complicated even further in Iraq and Afghanistan because of on-going conflict. Without stability and security, it was not possible to send "searchers" out to many of the dangerous/remote areas to find out exactly what needed to be done there.

Getting past that constraint through military operations, when efforts and assets were later focused on the local communities, that focus/strategy far and away paid the most dividends for reconstruction. For instance, the troop "surge" in Iraq included greater forward basing, greater contact and communication with indigenous communities, and a greater understanding of economic needs of the communities. The use of Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP) funding (funding allocated for small-scale reconstruction projects at the discretion of military commanders) was found to be much more effective during/after the "surge" took place – when more local communities were reached and involved – than in the preceding periods.

In Afghanistan, a World Bank-led national development plan called the National Solidarity Program was likewise successful through focus on local communities. This program allowed communities to assess their own development priorities. It then allocated small grants (\$30-60,000) for the implementation of reconstruction projects, helping villagers to take ownership of their own economic reforms. Another small-scale, successful approach in Afghanistan was the use of Agribusiness Development Teams (ADTs) by the U.S. Army and Air National Guard, whereby small teams with agricultural expertise engaged local farmers/communities in identifying, developing, and executing various agribusiness projects – while at the same bringing organic military security into those agricultural communities during the meetings/projects.

The third "reconstruction trap" is the **"political economy trap."** The "political economy trap" occurs through the errant assumption that political and economic goals are always compatible, i.e., that a certain political achievement/endstate will always contribute positively to a desired economic outcome/endstate, and vice versa. In over-emphasizing the benefits of establishing democratic political systems, planners/practitioners can easily overlook/underestimate the potential impacts of such systems on economic reconstruction efforts.

For example, allowing for self-determination through democracy can lead to reasonable demands by citizens or officials – demands that may run counter to free market plans envisioned by reformers. In Iraq, for instance, when the Grand Ayatollah al-Sistani called for general elections in June 2003, and this democratic course was advocated and pursued, the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) had to postpone and then abandon its plans to construct a national constitution. This had a serious effect on near-term economic outcomes, since the CPA was then unable to oversee the (more rapid, direct) development of a constitution that would have provided a sound basis for economic policy improvements and for the encouragement of greater economic activity.

In both Iraq and Afghanistan, the "political economy trap" has been compounded by violent conflict – conflict that has created periods of uncertainty with regard to the distribution of political power. This uncertainty (caused by violence) of who will be in charge of the country (or areas thereof), in turn contributed to uncertainty with regard to economic development – affecting the acceptance of economic institutions, programs, priorities, reach, and coordination. In numerous cases, Ba'athists and al-Sadr supporters in Iraq, and various tribes in Afghanistan, often would not coalesce around economic reforms/ reconstruction projects, due to their own political demands (security, safety, stability, influence, control, etc.) not being met.

When the foreign/intervening officials made efforts to stabilize the existing political institutions, recognized/appreciated elements of the status quo, and partnered with Host Nation officials, those actions helped to provide a more sound/stable foundation from which to implement policies (economic or otherwise). One possible strategy for moving forward, in these countries and similar environments, is to prioritize the political reconstruction over the economic reconstruction. Cessation of conflict and the promotion of security may very well be the most necessary conditions to allow for successful reconstruction and economic development. However, this condition definitely places limits on the scale and scope of the initial economic reconstruction concept. Large-scale efforts are unlikely to be effective (in the near-term). Instead, "focused efforts" in only those local areas having peace and security may be more apt to succeed.

The fourth "reconstruction trap" is the **"bureaucracy trap."** The "bureaucracy trap" comes about through an overreliance on (large) bureaucracies in the management and implementation of economic reconstruction activities. There have been numerous reports of corruption, waste, nepotism, and inefficiency on the part of many Host Nation (Afghan and Iraqi) national institutions/ministries as well as on the part of several external/intervening organizations involved in managing major reconstruction programs.

For example, the \$644 million "Community Stabilization Program" (CSP) in Iraq was found to be wrought with fraud and waste, and it was suspended. An audit by the USAID's Inspector General in 2008 determined that much of the funds allocated specifically for weakening the insurgency actually went to insurgents – as well as to corrupt community leaders and to those in the bureaucracy of the CSP. An audit by the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction in 2010 found that the U.S. Department of Defense was unable to properly account for 96% of the \$9.1 billion funds it has received since 2004 through the Development Fund for Iraq – funds that moved through layers of bureaucracy that were intended to support Iraq's reconstruction activities.

A central concern in this "bureaucracy trap" is that the centralized planning processes associated with intervening bureaucratic institutions had a "systemic" (though not intentional) disregard for the capacity of ordinary citizens, local civic

groups, and entrepreneurs – leaving them out of the search to find solutions to their problems in their economic reconstruction. An excellent example of the real power of the private sector in economic development is the success of the mobile phone industry in Iraq. This industry accomplished a rapid expansion of cell phone sales/distributions (now totaling 20 million subscribers) across the country, funded almost exclusively by the private sector, and notably absent corruption.

Recommendation.

1. To avoid the "credible commitment trap," those engaged in economic reconstruction efforts should: (1) establish binding constraints on their courses of action and (2) strongly signal to citizens and local political authorities that they are sincere in committing to their announced reforms. For example, if an intended reconstruction step/promise is to reform governmental regulations in order support and encourage private enterprise, the reformers could not only remove the regulations that were restrictive to the opening of a business, but could also permanently close the government agencies/offices that had previously enforced the restrictive regulations.

2. To avoid the "knowledge trap," those engaged in economic reconstruction efforts should: (1) dispatch "searchers" to gain insights on local conditions, needs, and priorities and (2) de-centralize economic reconstruction programs as much as possible – focusing on small-scale reforms and involving indigenous populations in the design, execution, and sustainment of the projects. Good examples are the World Bank's National Solidarity Program in Afghanistan and the National Guard's Agribusiness Development Teams.

3. To avoid the "political economy trap," those engaged in economic reconstruction efforts should: (1) recognize/understand/appreciate the political status quo and its associated constraints, (2) partner with Host Nation officials and help counsel/teach/shape, (3) prioritize political reconstruction efforts over economic reconstruction efforts, and (4) ensure that the conditions of peace and security are first achieved before engaging in "large-scale" reconstruction programs.

4. To avoid the "bureaucracy trap," those engaged in economic reconstruction efforts should: (1) seek transparency and accountability through anti-corruption measures and (2) stress the importance of private initiatives (the private sector) for economic recovery.

Implication.

The overarching implication is that significant constraints affect what economic reconstruction can accomplish, particularly in cases of on-going conflict and insurgency – since that context/environment can create and exacerbate tensions between populations groups and between the organizations involved in reconstruction. With the military at the core of the reconstruction effort in any

conflict/counterinsurgency situation, it is imperative to ensure that the military has continuous access to, and cooperation of, individuals/agencies with environmental, societal, and reconstruction expertise. It is equally important that all parties involved recognize, collaborate on, and take steps to avoid the many "reconstruction traps" that can impede reconstruction operations.

Event Description.

This observation is based on the article "[Economic Reconstruction Amidst Conflict: Insights from Afghanistan and Iraq](#)," by Christopher J. Coyne and Adam Pellillo, 26 October 2010.

Comments.

1. A related document, which cites constant changes to policy in Afghanistan / lack of credible commitment, is "[Afghanistan: What Could Work](#)," by Rory Stewart, published in *The New York Review of Books* on 17 December 2009.
2. A second related document, which cites a discussion between General Stanley McChrystal and Governor Abdullah Jan in Afghanistan, is "[Stanley McChrystal's Long War](#)," by Dexter Filkins, *The New York Times*, 14 October 2009.



3. CONCLUSION

Recent experiences, as highlighted in this Sampler – in Afghanistan, Iraq, Kosovo, Kenya, Liberia, and Uganda – show the importance of comprehensive planning for reconstruction and development programs in post-conflict/fragile countries, and the necessity for continuous teaming with host nation partners. Key lessons in this regard include:

- Agencies/organizations performing reconstruction and stabilization missions should properly identify local needs, secure local government support, ensure continuity of execution, and administer meaningful oversight.
- Agencies/organizations leading reconstruction and stabilization efforts should establish effective information management systems – capturing data on all reconstruction projects and facilitating information-sharing with partners.

- Stabilization and reconstruction projects should only be undertaken if an agency/organization has the capacity to monitor and measure them.
- Avoid using the "speed of spending" as a metric for progress during future reconstruction and stabilization operations.
- Throughout implementation of post-conflict development and reconstruction operations, stakeholders must constantly monitor, assess, and adjust the plan, ensuring that they are capable of making timely and accurate adjustments based on mission or environmental changes.
- Infrastructure development strategies should be modest in scope, functional, feasible, sustainable, and above all “place-based.”
- “Place-based” strategies must be enabled by local governance efforts. While the idiosyncrasies of local terrain, communities, and politics can be overlooked at the national level, they play a critical role in the planning, implementation, and sustainment of infrastructure development programs. A “place-based” strategy:
 - incorporates community-based assets and understands how they can be leveraged for improved services
 - includes the backing of respected local leaders
 - promotes community-based planning and implementation through engagement with citizens
 - is open to external partnerships to secure additional human and financial resources to provide better services on a sustainable basis
- Agencies/organizations engaged in reconstruction projects should establish contacts and relationships upfront with key stakeholders throughout their area of operations – to set a tone of cooperation and promote synergy of efforts where possible.
- Agencies/organizations engaged in reconstruction projects should endeavor to maintain direct communication with the host nation/local stakeholders throughout operations, with an emphasis on transparency – to preclude false expectations, misunderstandings, or dissatisfaction.
- Military organizations engaged in reconstruction projects should consider partnership opportunities with host nation security forces where feasible – to promote host nation participation and ownership in the projects, as well as to build civilian trust in their military.
- It is imperative to rapidly restore the population's access to basic water and sanitation services post-conflict. Contracting a professional company

to do this work can be a very promising approach for meeting water service requirements and sustainability.

- Planners should consider development programs in sustainable food production systems. Examples include fresh water fish farming, seafood farming, poultry production systems, and vegetable protein source production strategies. The key is finding the right approach that meshes with the culture and the available natural resources.
- School reconstruction/rehabilitation projects should also be taken into consideration by planners – as a course of action (or component thereof) to help restore normalcy to conflict-affected communities.
- Post-conflict governments should examine prospects for establishing "labor intensive" PWPs for rehabilitation/repair of damaged infrastructure. "Labor intensive" PWPs have significant potential to provide jobs for the unemployed/underemployed, help alleviate poverty, and produce second order effects for economic growth.
- For longer-term economic development (beyond the purpose of PWPs), the following actions should be encouraged: conduct reviews/updates of government fiscal policies, provide incentives for sustaining reconstruction and development projects, encourage local private investments in those projects, and solicit external financing to help small and micro-enterprises.
- Agencies/organizations/stakeholders engaged in economic reconstruction efforts should:
 - establish binding constraints on their courses of action
 - strongly signal to citizens and local political authorities that they are sincere in committing to their announced reforms.
 - dispatch "searchers" to gain insights on local conditions, needs, and priorities
 - de-centralize economic reconstruction programs as much as possible – focusing on small-scale reforms and involving indigenous populations in the design, execution, and sustainment of the projects
 - recognize/understand/appreciate the political status quo and its associated constraints
 - partner with host nation officials and help counsel/teach/shape
 - prioritize political reconstruction efforts over economic reconstruction efforts
 - ensure that the conditions of peace and security are first achieved before engaging in "large-scale" reconstruction programs

- seek transparency and accountability through anti-corruption measures
- stress the importance of private initiatives (the private sector) for economic recovery and growth

Through wider dissemination of the aforementioned lessons and their inclusion in strategic and operational planning, significant impacts can be made during the course of future reconstruction and development programs.

4. COMMAND POC

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NANGARHAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan (31 January 2012). Philip Muller, civil engineer from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) embedded with the Nangarhar Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT), surveys the Lal'pur bridge with Gul Mohmmand, chief engineer for the contractor. [U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Gul Crockett, Nangarhar PRT Public Affairs]



Related Documents, References, and Links

[Ensure you are logged in to SOLLIMS to access these items.]

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