Humanity as a Weapon of War

Sustainable Security and the Role of the U.S. Military

By Reuben E. Brigety, II
June 2008

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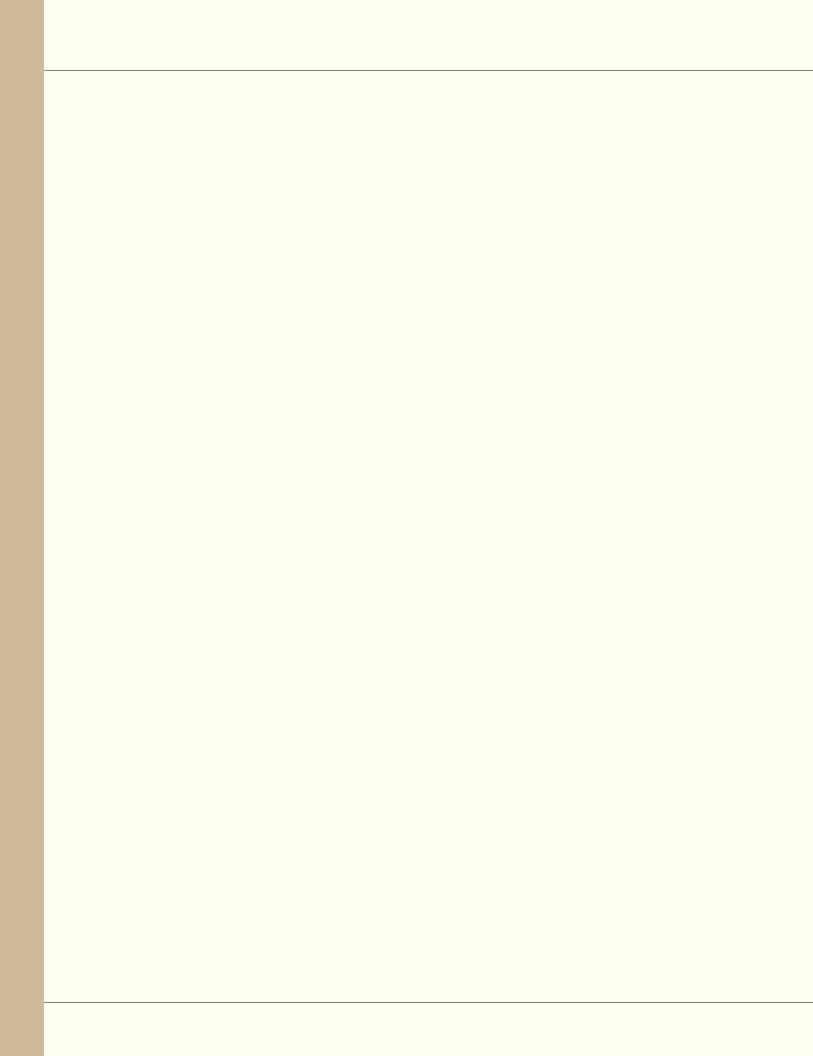**A National Development Strategy for the United States**
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INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

In the heat of the Kenyan summer just a few miles north of the equator, a U.S. Navy Seabee detachment was working around the clock, digging a hole into the parched red clay earth. The place: a speck of a hamlet called Shidley. The mission: to provide deep, freshwater wells for marginalized nomadic communities.

Few humanitarian activities in this remote part of the world are as important as providing clean drinking water for people and their livestock. In Shidley, water is life and American sailors had come ashore to find it. Between February and June 2007, these dedicated Seabees drilled two wells. The first, in a town called Rhea, struck brackish water and was unusable. The second, at Shidley, was still being explored after weeks of futile results.

Engineers from the Kenyan army, dispatched to help the Americans find water for their countrymen, had abandoned hope that the Shidley well would be productive. From the shade of their field tent, they watched as the Seabees kept digging in the baking sun. While the Kenyans were concerned about the expense of drilling a "dry" hole, money was no object for the Americans. As the leader of the Seabee detachment said, "We'll keep drilling 'til we run out of steel."

Indeed, during those five months, American taxpayers spent $250,000 on two wells that did not work. By contrast, an underground well dug by civilian humanitarian agencies typically costs

around $10,000. Even if the Shidley well proved to be operational, it would only provide water for some 20 nomadic families. The rest who had been present when the well-digging operation began had long since moved on, resigned to find their water elsewhere as they had done for generations.

If viewed strictly from a humanitarian perspective, the Seabee well-drilling work in northeastern Kenya would appear to be a noble waste, an exercise in spending more money than necessary to help fewer people than otherwise possible. Yet this humanitarian mission also had a less than obvious, strategic objective. The area where the Seabees were operating is home to hundreds of thousands of ethnic Somalis. Clan ties run deep among them and transcend sovereign borders from Kenya across to Ethiopia, Djibouti, and Somalia.

With chaos inside Somalia threatening the stability of the region and enabling the rise of extremism, using U.S. military assets to perform a humanitarian mission serves a dual purpose. It shows the face of American compassion to a skeptical population while also giving the military an eye on activity in the area. Winning hearts and minds with an ear to the ground is the new American way of war.

Like the Shidley water project, civilian assistance activities led by the U.S. military are proliferating in number, scope, and complexity around the world. They can be found in active warzones such as Iraq and Afghanistan, and in more peaceful environments such as Honduras and Tanzania. The upshot: Significant aspects of U.S. military doctrine, training, organization, and operations are changing in dramatic ways to support this mission.

The increasing involvement of the U.S. armed forces in addressing the basic human needs of civilians abroad represents one of the most profound changes in U.S. strategic thought and practice in at least a generation. The Pentagon is recognizing that conventional "kinetic" military operations, which utilize armed force through direct action to kill or capture the enemy, have limited utility in countering the threats posed by militant extremism. Therefore, they are searching for—and finding—"non-kinetic" options other than the use of force to tackle the non-violent components of pressing security problems, both in and out of warzones.

This may seem like an appropriate approach to America's new security challenges in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, but it is not without controversy. The increasing involvement of the U.S. military in civilian assistance activities has launched a contentious debate about the role of the military in global development, and the relevance of global development to American national security. Non-governmental organizations argue that the "militarization" of development assistance threatens to undermine the moral imperatives of poverty reduction, the neutral provision of emergency relief, and the security of civilian aid workers in the field.

Non-military government agencies, most prominently the U.S. State Department and U.S. Agency for International Development, have demonstrated a complex ambivalence about the subject. Even as their bureaucracies have changed to accommodate the military's growing role in providing assistance, some rank-and-file staff at USAID have argued that the military's programs do not constitute "real development" work, while a vocal minority of foreign service officers in the State Department have protested their deployment to promote political reconciliation in active warzones as hazardous assignments inappropriate for professional diplomats.

Although the Pentagon is not of one mind on this issue, many Defense Department officials argue that these criticisms from NGOs and other parts of the government are overblown, and that these non-kinetic operations have the dual benefit of helping people in need while serving American interests, which is something that both the military, other government agencies, and the NGO community should welcome. The Pentagon has called on the State Department and the USAID to undertake more activities in direct support of American national security objectives, even as these agencies counter that their ability is constrained by years of chronic under-funding and staff reductions.

The Role of the U.S. Military in Development Work

The growing debate about the role of the military in development efforts points to two central questions: Should the United States view aiding civilians abroad as a critical element of its security? And if so, what is the best way for the United States to perform development missions in support of its national security objectives?

The physical threats to the United States in the 21st century are of such complexity that they defy solution by force of arms alone. Neither the struggle to overcome drought triggered by climate change nor the defeat of predatory ideologies can be won by waging conventional wars. Addressing the basic needs of individuals in developing countries, and helping their governments be more responsive and effective, are critical strategic capabilities necessary for the United States to protect itself and its allies around the globe.

Helping civilians abroad to improve their lives strengthens American security in three important ways. First, it supports long-term stability by improving the economic prospects of developing countries, decreasing the likelihood of violent conflict fueled by economic hardship or extremist ideologies that can spread in such an environment. Second, it strengthens America's moral leadership in the world by increasing its reputation as a benevolent power, improving our ability to persuade other nations to support our foreign policy objectives. Finally, it serves immediate security objectives by channeling assistance to groups of people abroad that may harbor threats to the United States—diversifying the approaches available to combat the enemies of the country and its interests.

Each of these assistance missions—promoting stability, serving morality, and enhancing security—is crucially important to the United States in this changing strategic environment. The strategic purpose of assistance is increasingly clear, yet the method of providing it matters as well.

Assistance that is offered by civilians as a means of fighting poverty is viewed differently than is aid provided by uniformed military units fighting against global terrorist networks. To those on the receiving end, traditional development assistance provided by civilian agencies is a manifestation of our collective interests, and of an American commitment to improve the lives of others. But assistance to civilians delivered by the U.S. military may be seen as undertaken in pursuit of America's national interests. The civilian-led method is largely in pursuit of a development objective, while the military-led method seeks a security aim. Though both of these methods serve at least one of the three principal missions of promoting stability, serving morality, and enhancing security, the delivery of assistance must be pursued in a way that supports all three missions rather than privileging one over the other, even inadvertently.

Despite its traditional task of fighting and winning wars, the military has an important role to play as a development actor. Its focus on countering threats to the United States makes it well-suited to performing development activities linked directly to security objectives, both in combat zones and in more permissive environments. Yet the security mission of development cannot be separated from efforts to fight poverty, with ancillary benefits for promoting stability and strengthening America's moral leadership in the world.

Recent developments dramatically expanding the Defense Department's activities in the development sphere without a rigorous strategic framework to guide it, and a robust civilian capacity to complement it, threaten to undermine the effectiveness of the entire development enterprise. Therefore, a successful civil-military approach to the strategic use of development assistance must have at least five critical elements:

- National consensus on the role and importance of development assistance
- Adoption of a National Development Strategy
- Capacity to perform both fundamental and instrumental development assistance tasks in support of both short- and long-term goals
- Dispersal of development expertise in civilian agencies and the military, including at senior levels
- Coherent and effective methodology for measuring the success of strategic development assistance

This paper develops a set of policy recommendations for all five of these critical elements based on a detailed examination of current development assistance programs run by the U.S. military, alongside in-depth analysis of the role of the U.S. military in sustainable security programs that feature

U.S. government and U.S. military development professionals. The key to understanding humanity as a weapon of war, however, starts with an understanding of the concept of sustainable security in our post-9/11 security environment. To this we now turn.

SUSTAINABLE SECURITY: THE OPERATING FRAMEWORK FOR U.S. MILITARY-LED DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, dramatically reshaped U.S national security policy. Focusing on terrorist organizations and their state sponsors required policymakers to forge a new strategic framework that was largely undeveloped in the post-Cold War period. Furthermore, the U.S. military's post-9/11 approach to fighting terrorists abroad suggested a new argument for the importance of both military operations and development assistance in protecting America's national interests, as well as integrating them in unprecedented ways.

In this still-evolving framework, U.S. military forces would be used for "kill or capture" missions, but other means would be needed to address the root causes of extremism as well as to consolidate the tactical gains of conventional combat operations by addressing the basic needs of civilians in these new theaters of unconventional war. Unlike the Cold War (see box, pages 10 and 11), the problem today is not that countries will adopt communism. Rather, it is that states which cannot provide for the welfare of their citizens risk hosting populations dissatisfied by their economic prospects. This increases the propensity for extremism, crime, and violence.

Second, a number of the significant threats we face today—terrorism, climate change, the drug trade, human trafficking, and

The U.S. military's broad definition of humanitarian and civic assistance can include such non-emergency services as constructing schools, performing dental procedures, and even vaccinating the livestock of farmers, shown here in Afghanistan. (Photo: Ben Barber/USAID)

global pandemics, to name but a few—are transnational in nature. These threats move freely across borders, and affect people regardless of their nationality, citizenship, or political affiliation.

These challenges demand more than a conventional approach to "national security," and also require that we focus on both human security and collective security, all in the pursuit of sustainable security over time. Sustainable security is an approach which recognizes the strategic importance of addressing basic human needs across the spectrum of conflict, elevates development assistance as an instrument of national power, applies it through a coherent strategic framework, and links it to a broader national security strategy.

The tools best suited for managing these challenges include development assistance that can be deployed to alleviate poverty, to build the capacity of weak and failing states, and to foster the cooperation and capacity building that is needed to manage transnational threats. To be effective as an instrument of national power, however, development assistance must be governed by a coherent strategy and linked to a clear national security agenda. And the most significant evidence of the strategic importance of development assistance is the increasing role of the U.S. military in this sphere.

MILITARY AND DEVELOPMENT

The military's involvement in activities to improve the lives of civilians around the world has grown dramatically over the last five years. It is attributable not to an increase in humanitarian need, substantial as it may be, but to recognition that such need

From National Security to Sustainable Security

The relationship between national security and international development in post-Cold War U.S. foreign policy has evolved over time. The security consensus that emerged by the late 1950s was that the principal threat to the United States and its allies was from aggressive, expansive communism. In response, successive presidential administrations supported some variant of containment, largely through deterrence. This understanding of the threat and response provided a consistent logic for U.S. defense policy for decades.

Yet it also provided an early justification for U.S. development assistance. The Marshall Plan was not simply a humane gesture undertaken by a benevolent victor from World War II. It was also part of an explicit strategy to help countries recreate and strengthen market economies so that they would not become communist. Similarly, when the U.S. Agency for International Development was created in 1961, Congress specifically stated that a goal of the new agency was to support "friendly countries and international organizations" from any "communist or communist-supported" aggres-sions through programs for internal development, stability, and security.[1]

With the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s, the world became more complex, and the pursuit of a new approach to national security became more challenging. Even as we engaged in a series of limited military actions from Haiti to Bosnia, the United States struggled to develop a unifying framework for identifying and protecting its interests in a world lacking an opposing superpower. Anxious to reap a "peace dividend," U.S. lawmakers whittled away at the U.S. defense budget, cutting it to $319.5 billion by 2000 from $397.9 billion in 1991, and downsizing the active military to 1.3 million from 2 million over the same period.[2]

While the ambiguity of the post-Cold War era was challenging for U.S. defense policy, it was devastating for U.S. development assistance. Decoupled from an anticommunism mission, critics such as Sen. Jesse Helms (R-NC) made two basic arguments. First, they claimed that foreign aid sent to

poses a threat to U.S. interests. This is true in combat zones such as Iraq and Afghanistan, in less hostile environments such as the Gulf of Guinea—where political instability threatens the free flow of oil shipments—and in Mindanao in the Philippines, where a long-active Islamic separatist movement challenged the authority of the central government and supported Al Qaeda.

To understand the extent of this recent military assistance activity and its implications for U.S. foreign policy, it is important to examine five areas of the military's civilian assistance missions: definitions, doctrine, organization, funding, and operations.

Definitions

The civilian development community makes a clear distinction between development and humanitarian assistance, but the military tends to use the terms interchangeably. Civilian development professionals view development assistance as aid dedicated to the long-term socioeconomic growth of a country. In contrast, humanitarian assistance is limited to emergency, life-saving aid typically delivered during or immediately following a natural disaster or complex emergency.

The U.S. military has a much more expansive definition. It regards humanitarian and

developing countries was a waste of taxpayers' money. They challenged the effectiveness of assistance, distrusted the integrity of some aid recipients, and doubted the competence of USAID.[3]

Second, they suggested that the laudable objectives of development assistance were best pursued by private charities and non-governmental organizations, and not by the U.S. government. Each of these arguments reflected a fundamental reality of the times—an enduring and pervasive skepticism of the value of development assistance in support of America's national interest.

In this context, USAID was severely damaged in the 1990s. In 1995, USAID implemented a reduction-in-force, eliminating 14 percent of U.S. direct-hires in one year alone. Between 1992 and 2002, however, the number of U.S direct-hires by the agency decreased by 37 percent. As the number of direct-hires declined, USAID became primarily a contracting agency, with over half of its 2000 fiscal year budget of $7.2 billion funding NGOs and charities.

In 1994 alone, USAID was forced to shut down 20 missions due to its tightening budget. By 2004, the Agency was publicly arguing that due to its decade-long human capital crisis, its restricted budget, and the increasing importance of development assistance as part of the National Security Strategy, "[its] failure to perform its mission will damage substantially the ability of the U.S. Government to pursue vital national interests of security and prosperity."[4]

After the terrorist attacks of 2001, the U.S. military took up where USAID was leaving off, dramatically strengthening its development assistance activities even as it needed USAID's expertise and resources. Detailing how U.S. government agencies and the U.S. military could work together to promote sustainable security—an approach which recognizes the strategic importance of addressing basic human needs across the spectrum of conflict, elevates development assistance as an instrument of national power, applies it through a coherent strategic framework, and links it to a broader national security strategy—is a principal focus of this report.

civic assistance, or HCA in military parlance, as "assistance to the local populace provided by predominantly U.S. forces in conjunction with military operations and exercises."[5] This can include such non-emergency services as constructing schools, performing dental procedures, and even vaccinating the livestock of farmers.[6]

Foreign Disaster Relief/Emergency Response, or FDR/ER, includes activities conducted by Regional Combatant Commanders "to respond to natural and manmade disasters… and to manage the humanitarian considerations of security crises."[7] These can include activities such

as "logistical support, search and rescue, medical evacuation, and refugee assistance," in response to rapid onset natural disasters and complex emergencies.[8]

Beyond mere semantics, the distinctions between civilian and military conceptions of humanitarian assistance have important policy implications. The military has long been involved in disaster relief operations when civilian capacities for response have been overwhelmed. So long as such assistance has been motivated by, and limited to, alleviating human suffering on an emergent basis, civilian humanitarian organizations have largely welcomed it, as

they did during military disaster relief operations in the wake of the Asian Tsunami of late 2004.

Yet controversy has developed as the military has moved more aggressively into HCA activities for security reasons. Such work has traditionally been performed by civilian development agencies without an explicit political objective or an immediate security imperative. Thus, the growth of HCA challenges the principles through which many civilian development professionals and agencies have viewed this work, and generates concern that the development enterprise is being "militarized" to the detriment of beneficiaries and aid workers in the field.

Doctrine

HCA has a long, if subordinate, place in U.S. military doctrine. Early documents on counterinsurgency operations, such as the Marine Corps Small Wars Manual and the U.S. Army Counterinsurgency Forces Field Manual FM 31-22, emphasize the importance of engaging the civilian populace in order to deny local popular support for the enemy. Conventional military operations can also make use of various civilian engagement techniques. The U.S. Joint Doctrine for Civil Affairs, which governs civil-military operations, envisions "the conduct of such activities to enhance the relationship between military forces and civil authorities in areas where military forces are present; and [to] involve the application of… functional specialty skills, in areas normally the responsibility of civil government…."[9]

What is changing in U.S. military doctrine related to humanitarian assistance is the increased prominence it is being given in military strategy, and the expansion of its strategic application beyond active war zones and hot insurgencies. Responding to the changed threat environment after 9/11, the Pentagon rethought the importance of addressing the basic human needs of civilians as a means of winning the nation's wars. Perhaps the most prominent example of this reconsideration is Department of Defense Directive 3000.05. Issued in November 2005, this directive states that 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." It defines stability operations accordingly:

[Activities that are] conducted to help establish order that advances U.S. interests and values. The immediate goal often is to provide the local populace with security, restore essential services, and meet humani-

That the Pentagon has placed traditional development activities at the core of its mission set is a stunning shift in doctrine.

tarian needs. The long-term goal is to help develop indigenous capacity for securing essential services, a viable market economy, rule of law, democratic institutions, and a robust civil society.

That the Pentagon has placed such traditional development activities at the core of its mission set is a stunning shift in doctrine from its Cold War emphasis on major combat operations and its post-Cold War reluctance to engage in humanitarian operations. Yet the strategic importance of humanitarian assistance has been incorporated recently in major doctrinal statements of other commands within the Defense Department.

In 2007, for example, the U.S. European Command released a major rewrite of its Theater Engagement Strategy, which is the document that details how it will address threats to U.S. national interests within the European theater. Dubbed "Active Security," this new approach emphasizes non-military tools to shape the strategic environment through a variety of civilian assistance missions, such as strengthening governance and improving health care infrastructure.

Similarly, the U.S. Navy has added a new component to its traditional focus on maritime combat and security on the high seas and in littoral areas. The Navy Operating Concept, issued in September 2006, gives the Navy an additional focus on maritime humanitarian operations. In part, it states that:

U.S. Naval forces will establish relationships with local, regional and national governments, private organizations, and civilian populaces in friendly, neutral, or hostile areas in order to advance U.S. objectives…. [O]perations may involve humanitarian and civic assistance to the local populace in conjunction with military operations and exercises." Activi-

ties may include the provision of health care, construction of surface transportation systems, well drilling, construction of basic sanitation facilities, and rudimentary construction and repair of public facilities.[10]

These examples, among others, demonstrate that the military's thinking about security issues is increasingly moving into the humanitarian/development arena. Many senior leaders within the Department of Defense recognize the strategic value of humanitarian assistance to achieve the security objectives of the United States, and they are adjusting their understanding of the Pentagon's roles accordingly. Perhaps the most significant aspect of this doctrinal evolution is its uneven growth. This suggests that the institutional resistance the military has had to "nation-building exercises" that include development objectives is abating in places, with the military much more willing (and hence more likely) to involve itself in this space for the foreseeable future.

Organization

As this new thinking has reshaped military doctrine, it has also enabled significant changes in the organizational structure of parts of the Defense Department to perform its humanitarian mission. Certainly the most revolutionary of these is the launch of the U.S. Africa Command, or AFRICOM.

As with other regional combatant commands, AFRICOM will have responsibility for U.S. military operations with a particular area of responsibility—in this case, the continent of Africa. Yet it is distinguished from the other regional commands because its primary mission will be conducting non-military operations. Rather than countering threats to U.S. interests in Africa by preparing for and engaging in combat, AFRICOM will attempt to promote stability

through humanitarian operations and training relationships with African militaries.

AFRICOM will have senior civilians from the State Department and USAID embedded in its command structure to help direct humanitarian operations across the continent, and to coordinate them with the activities of other U.S. government agencies. As such, AFRICOM is the first geographic combatant command to have a non-combat mission as its primary means of advancing American national security objectives.

The U.S. Southern Command, or SOUTHCOM, is also moving in this direction. With a small likelihood of waging a major combat operation in the Americas, SOUTHCOM's commander, Admiral James Stavridis, argues that the United States should focus on promoting stability and prosperity in the region consistent with American interests. In 2007, for example, he stated:

> *Given [our cultural, economic, and regional] linkages, we need to look at the challenges we all face as we work toward what I see as our shared objectives: first, establishing and strengthening a foundation of security, building social, economic and political stability on this foundation; and through this stability enabling an environment conducive to enduring prosperity.[11]*

To support this vision, SOUTHCOM has significantly strengthened the portion of its staff that is focused on outreach to other U.S. government agencies as well as to civil society and the business community in countries throughout the region. Given its long history of providing emergency relief for natural disasters and pre-existing relationships with governments and militaries, SOUTHCOM may be poised to be a much greater force in humanitarian issues than the nascent AFRICOM with its fledgling staff, infrastructure, and institutional relationships.

In addition to these field organizations, there have been significant changes in the Washington bureaucracy as well. The Office of the Secretary of Defense has created a new Directorate for Stability Operations Capabilities, responsible for shaping policies and developing capabilities to engage in a range of civilian assistance tasks across the spectrum of conflict. Similarly, the State Department created the Office for the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization in 2004 to coordinate the civilian agencies of the U.S. government during post-conflict situations in their engagement with the U.S. military, international organizations, international financial institutions, external parties, and interested parties.[12]

Finally, in 2005 USAID established the Office of Military Affairs to strengthen the institutional relationship with the Defense Department, and to synchronize its efforts with the increasing number of governmental agencies participating in what the Bush administration calls the Global War on Terrorism. To do this, USAID's new military affairs office relies upon its staff of former and current military officers, Foreign Service officers, and subject-matter specialists. No other civilian development agency in the world has an office with the breadth of responsibility and clarity of mandate to link military and development professionals in areas of common purpose.

Despite these profound organizational changes, it is important to note what has remained unchanged. Three of the five regional combatant commands, CENTCOM (in the Middle East), EUCOM (Europe), and PACOM (The Asia/Pacific region) have made no major modifications to their organizational structures to support the non-military HCA mission, despite the "mandate" from DOD Directive 3000.05 and the substantial development and extremism challenges in their areas

USAID has established the Office of Military Affairs to strengthen the institutional relationship with the Defense Department. No other civilian development agency in the world has an office with the breadth of responsibility and clarity of mandate to link military and development professionals in areas of common purpose. (Photo: USAID/Colombia)

of operations—particularly in parts of the Pacific theater, Southwest Asia, the Balkans, and the Middle East.

On the civilian side, the pace and breadth of organizational change to work in the development-security nexus have not been as robust as in the military. For example, USAID has not altered the structure of any of its regional bureaus or its field missions to improve its ability to work with the military on development issues. Those functions are largely performed by small offices with niche responsibilities, such as its new Office of Military Affairs, the Office of Conflict Mitigation and Management, or the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance. USAID has not mainstreamed the concept of liaising with the U.S. military throughout the agency.

Similarly, the State Department created S/CRS to manage very specific situations,

namely civil-military responses to the immediate aftermath of armed conflicts. They have not made changes to their powerful regional bureaus to improve coordination with the military in HCA activities, and their existing functional bureaus that work on issues of relevance to the development-security nexus (such as the Bureau for Population, Refugees and Migration, Bureau for Democracy, Rights and Labor, and the Bureau for Political-Military Affairs) have not significantly altered their mandates or their structures to coincide with the Defense Department's efforts to help foreign civilians as a means of advancing security interests.

The uneven organizational changes in both the military and civilian sectors suggest a government which has not fully come to grips with the challenges of finding non-military approaches to non-traditional security threats. While there have been significant

The military's humanitarian projects in peaceful countries are a means of improving support for the United States in general, and for the U.S. military in particular.

organizational changes *within* departments to improve their capacity to operate at the security-development nexus, including the Defense Department, there is no overarching organizational structure to coordinate and direct every agency of the U.S. government involved in providing development assistance during times of peace and times of crisis.

Many of these innovations have been initiated by individual leaders who believed in the importance of operating in the development-security nexus (such as Admiral Stavridis of SOUTHCOM, or former USAID Administrator Andrew Natsios). Thus, these fundamental organizational changes do not yet represent a wholesale bureaucratic embrace of the military's humanitarian mission. Yet they do signal an important shift which if institutionalized could profoundly alter the way in which the government responds to threats to its security.

Operations

In the years following the 9/11 attacks, the military has dramatically increased its involvement in humanitarian operations, both in active conflict zones and in places beyond the battlefield. Among the first and most innovative of these activities are the Provincial Reconstruction Teams, or PRTs. Created for Afghanistan and then replicated in Iraq, PRTs perform various development projects as a means of extending basic governmental services to people living outside of the capital. They are staffed with a mix of about 100 soldiers and civilians with expertise in various aspects of development and diplomacy. To date, they have only been deployed in active war zones as a critical tool in conducting counterinsurgency operations.

Yet the military is also performing humanitarian projects around the world in peaceful countries, far from any battlefield. Dubbed "shaping operations," or "Phase Zero" activities, the projects have multiple purposes. At the broadest level, they are a means of improving support for the United States in general, and for the U.S. military in particular, among local populations. They can also be tools for countering support for extremist ideologies and violent organizations, as well as vectors for gaining friendly access to regions of a host country.

Regardless of the principle mission, the methodology is the same—performing short-

term development projects designed to directly improve the lives of indigenous citizens. Typically the activities include programs or activities such as construction or improvement of schools, digging freshwater wells, and providing direct medical and veterinary services to people and their livestock. In their content, these types of military humanitarian projects are similar to those conducted by civilian aid agencies and NGOs. The difference lies in the strategic rationale with which these projects are selected and chosen by the military, rather than the principal focus on humanitarian need and sustainability that is held by civilian development experts.

The best examples of strategic military humanitarian assistance in peaceful "permissive" environments are the activities conducted by the Combined Joint Task Force–Horn of Africa, or CJTF-HOA. Established in 2002 to intercept potential terrorists fleeing in Afghanistan, the mission of CJTF-HOA gradually evolved to performing humanitarian assistance throughout East Africa. From its base at Camp Lemonier in Djibouti, CJTF-HOA deploys approximately 350 military personnel to dig wells, build schools, provide medical care, and perform other humanitarian activities for indigenous people in a dozen countries throughout the region.

Like the Shidley well digging project in northeastern Kenya, each activity has a strategic purpose beyond achieving immediate humanitarian objectives. Most are coordinated with the USAID missions and embassy country teams where they are performed. In 2007, CJTF-HOA had $16 million available for humanitarian projects.[13]

Funding

Funding for military humanitarian activities has increased dramatically over the last decade. The share of the U.S. government's official development assistance, or ODA, spent by the Defense Department increased to 22 percent in 2005, the last year for which complete data is available, from 3.5 percent in 1998.[14] Over the same time period, USAID's share of ODA fell to less than 40 percent from 65 percent.[15]

Of greater significance than the amount of money dedicated to military humanitarian projects is how these funds are spent relative to other development dollars allocated by the U.S. government. As the Center for Global Development notes, "No other ministry of defense within the donor community approaches the share of national ODA earmarked by the Pentagon."[16]

In addition to the increase in funding, the military generally gives much greater latitude to its officers on the ground to spend money on assistance activities than their civilian counterparts have for their overseas development projects. It is not uncommon for an army captain or major to have wide latitude in directing tens of thousands of dollars in assistance funds to projects of their choosing while a USAID program officer has to navigate a byzantine bureaucracy in the field and in Washington to allocate a similar sum.

In 2005 the State Department created a new process for evaluating all of the funds that it spends on development and humanitarian assistance to ensure that they are supporting strategic objectives of the United States. Called the "F" process (after the State Department bureau where it resides), it has been roundly criticized for restricting the decision-making freedom of aid workers in the field even as it tries to rationalize development spending to a centralized strategic framework designed in Washington.

Military humanitarian spending, however, is not subject to this process, and the Defense Department would prefer to keep it that way.

In addition to the legal difficulties of having the State Department direct the spending of Pentagon funds, military officials involved in this field are deeply skeptical of having the operational flexibility of commanders in the field constrained by the highly bureaucratic requirements of the F process.

Furthermore, neither the State Department nor Congress has demanded that the Pentagon subject its humanitarian spending to the State Department's strategic framework for development spending. Thus, the relative autonomy of the military in spending its humanitarian dollars stands in stark contrast to the constraints placed on development professionals as they commit many more resources across a variety of different sectors in countries around the world. This dichotomy reflects the extent to which the Defense Department enjoys a greater degree of trust by congressional appropriators for performing humanitarian missions in the national interest than do the State Department and USAID, even though the military are not experts in development practice.

THE U.S. MILITARY'S ROLE IN SUSTAINABLE SECURITY— AN ANALYSIS

While traditional security threats have long been at the forefront of U.S. foreign policy, the intricacies of international development have largely been relegated to its periphery. Even though development assistance has always had an element of national interest, it has arguably never been so explicitly tied to America's security agenda as it is today. Therefore, assessing the military's role in development issues, and the development community's support for security interests, is now of the utmost concern.

It seems intuitively clear that as the relative utility of armed force decreases as a means of addressing threats to American security, other approaches must be found. The need to build support abroad for the United States in the near term—one of the objectives of military humanitarian assistance—is a perennial goal of U.S. foreign policy. Similarly, promoting sustainable economic growth and good governance through traditional development programs helps to shape the strategic environment in a way consistent with America's security interests—even as it improves the lives of beneficiaries in developing countries. There should be a natural synergy among these missions, yet that synergy is not inevitable without conscious policymaking.

These activities could conceivably be performed in a way that strengthens security and development imperatives, privileges one at the expense of the other, or even weakens both. It all depends on a combination of strategy, policy, leadership, and implementation.

The movement of the military into the humanitarian/development sphere has proceeded in such a fashion that there are significant reasons to doubt its ultimate success. Unless the role of the military is defined deliberately and in the context of a broader policy framework, there is a risk that the aid dollars they manage will not yield the desired returns, and a danger that our security interests could be harmed rather than helped.

In analyzing the military's involvement in development activities, it is helpful to address four questions:

- What is the unique rationale for the military's engagement?
- How can such activity be effective?
- What is the relationship of military development activities to other forms of development assistance?

- How can military development activities be sustained politically?

Rationale for Military Engagement

The logic for U.S. military forces participating in disaster-relief operations is clear and largely accepted by the civilian development community. The logistical capacities and emergency resources that the armed forces can bring to bear rapidly can prove decisive in addressing a humanitarian crisis. It is in so-called "Phase Zero" non-emergency circumstances, such as well-drilling in northeastern Kenya, where the rationale for military engagement has been less clear and more controversial.

Indeed, as Dr. Stewart Patrick of the Council on Foreign Relations has quipped, what the military calls Phase Zero is what we used to call foreign policy. Since the need for quick reaction or unique logistical capacity is often not an issue in such circumstances, it is unclear what comparative advantage the military brings. Furthermore, civilian development agencies and NGOs can generally perform a variety of functions to improve the lives of local civilians with a higher level of expertise and at a lower cost than can their military counterparts. Why, then, should the military be involved in this sphere?

The most important attribute that the military brings is a focus on security in the broadest sense. Since the *raison d'être* of the Defense Department is to counter threats to the United States, there are two broad questions to consider regarding its involvement in development issues. First, what direct threats to the national interests emerge from the human security needs of civilians in developing countries? And second, how can development activities be used to address traditional security requirements?

Civilian development agencies—both governmental and nongovernmental—tend not to think primarily in terms of security, or do so only tangentially to their broader mission. USAID's 2005 Fragile States Strategy, for example, gives the agency a template for analyzing the development and security challenge of countries that are unable to govern effectively and provide basic services to their people. Yet the extent to which conflict-related development programming has been mainstreamed and prioritized throughout the agency is debatable.

There are only about a dozen people in USAID's office of Conflict Mitigation and Management—all of them are based in Washington, D.C. USAID overseas missions do not generally have officials trained in creating programs to address underlying causes of conflict, much less to do so in a manner that is integrally tied to U.S. security interests. Non-governmental organizations are even less likely to view development assistance in this manner except in the broadest sense that improving development outcomes for beneficiary states improves stability and, coincidentally, supports America's interests.

Thus, the Defense Department is unique among development actors to see the assistance it provides primarily as a security instrument and to plan its activities accordingly. Yet it is precisely this perspective which is so controversial in the development community.

Many NGOs fear the "militarization" of development for two reasons. First, they reject the premise that improving the lives of local beneficiaries should be a means to the security ends of any sovereign state, rather than an end in itself. Even though they may accept that foreign assistance can, ultimately, enhance our national security, they argue that the primary rationale for providing assistance should be to alleviate poverty and

Measuring the success of military humanitarian assistance is a two-tiered problem. The first tier involves humanitarian effectiveness; the second tier addresses strategic effectiveness.

promote development. The difference may appear subtle or even negligible, but the resolution of this debate is critical for the simple reason that it informs how foreign aid is organized, dictates who controls aid resources, and, most importantly, shapes the policies that guide foreign aid.

Secondly, some NGOs fear that such activity will delegitimize their own efforts in the eyes of recipient governments, which may suspect that their programs are actually part of a specific policy agenda of the United States. Interestingly, this prospect may create a "humanitarian paradox" for U.S. military forces as well, in which the strategic efficacy of their humanitarian activities may be decreased as recipients doubt the altruistic motives of the military's efforts to engage with local populations.

Resolving this tension will be an ongoing issue as the military gets more deeply and broadly involved in activities. Therefore, it is essential that it be resolved, both for the immediate security interests sought by the military and for the broad stabilization benefits that the entire U.S. government hopes to reap from effective development assistance.

Effectiveness of Military HCA

Even though there is a compelling rationale for the military's involvement in development activities, the logic is irrelevant if the practice is not effective. That is why it is important to consider whether or not military HCA activities are as useful in reality as they appear to be in concept.

There is not enough publicly available evidence to determine if military humanitarian assistance projects, especially those performed in permissive environments, actually advance the strategic objectives toward which they are applied. It is a particularly difficult question to answer because it is a two-tiered problem. The first tier involves humanitarian effectiveness, while the second tier addresses strategic effectiveness.

Traditional development assistance programs have always had to prove that they are actually improving the lives of the beneficiaries. It is not enough simply to provide assistance. Rather, the assistance must be effective. Put another way, it is vital not simply to measure outputs, but also to evaluate outcomes. To the extent that they are targeted

at indigenous civilians, military-humanitarian assistance operations must also meet this humanitarian effectiveness threshold. The greater challenge, however, involves strategic effectiveness. Even if a particular project demonstrably improves the lives of the beneficiaries, does such improvement actually advance the strategic objectives for which the project was launched?

It is not at all clear that the Defense Department has been able to answer this two-tiered question with any analytical rigor even as military-humanitarian assistance projects proliferate around the world. Nor is this a trivial problem. Assessing the strategic efficacy of humanitarian projects is crucial for determining which activities should be funded and which should be discontinued. Furthermore, it is vital for understanding which humanitarian activities the military has a comparative advantage in performing for strategic effect, and which are best left for civilian agencies to perform. Until the military can answer this question convincingly, its humanitarian efforts will not be effective as instruments of war.

Relationship to Civilian Development Assistance

Even if individual humanitarian projects meet the two-tier effectiveness test, they are unlikely to advance broad U.S. foreign policy objectives unless they are coordinated with other civilian development activities and tied to a comprehensive development strategy. The rationale for the military's increased involvement in humanitarian assistance assumes that improving the lives of citizens around the world can advance America's security interests both on a tactical level in support of discrete military objectives, and on a strategic level to "shape" the political environment.

Yet development is a tricky, complex undertaking. Correctly assessing the mechanisms by which a particular country strengthens its economy, improves its governance, provides health care and ensures access to education in a sustainable manner is a difficult and extended proposition under the best of circumstances. Linking progress in various development sectors with a desired end-state for American security interests adds an additional layer of complexity.

Replicating this process for multiple countries presents an even greater, but necessary, challenge. Therefore, rigorously answering the question of *how* the United States will use its development resources worldwide in support of American security interests is of the utmost importance. It will provide a basis for prioritizing development activities, allocating scarce development resources, assigning specific tasks to particular agencies, and coordinating civilian development objectives and activities with those of the military.

In order to implement a comprehensive development strategy that contributes to American security, it is vital that the country have a robust civilian capacity to balance and complement the military's involvement in humanitarian activities. This means strengthening the cadres of development professionals both in Washington and in the field. Unless advocates for development activities are present at relevant meetings at every level of government, it is unlikely that strategic humanitarian considerations will receive the appropriate attention in the formulation of U.S. foreign policy.

More development experts are also needed in greater numbers in the field, particularly in support of military humanitarian operations. Though capable of many tasks and adapting to a given mission, military personnel are not development experts. The capacity to engage in vital humanitarian

tasks such as emergency logistics or expeditionary medical care is not equivalent to understanding how to support long-term development, or how to make development activities support strategic objectives. Ensuring that development experts are working with military units at appropriate levels in the chain of command will strengthen the link between development policy in Washington and military-humanitarian activities in the field.

Sustaining Development as a Security Instrument

It is unlikely that there will be much-needed change in our approach to development unless there is a national conversation about the strategic importance of development to our national security. The American people must be convinced that fighting poverty, strengthening the governing capacity of other countries, and improving the resilience of communities in the developing world are in our immediate and long-term national interest.

Furthermore, Americans should also recognize that the military's development assistance, which is often targeted to places and people based on specific security concerns, has to be coordinated with traditional (or

fundamental) development priorities if it is to serve our national interests effectively. Thus, the American people need to be persuaded of the value of increased funding for foreign aid.

Public-opinion polling in recent years suggests that most Americans see foreign assistance as charity, and they also believe that the U.S. government spends orders of magnitude more money on foreign aid that it actually does. In response to a recent survey about how much of the federal budget is devoted to foreign aid, the median response among Americans was 25 percent, more than 25 times greater than the less than 1 percent the U.S. government actually spends.[17]

Even more interesting, many Americans think that the appropriate amount to spend on foreign aid is about 10 percent, more than 10 times the amount currently allocated. Only when the public believes that development activities support our interests as well as our values will lawmakers in Congress have the political cover necessary to bolster the civilian architecture of foreign assistance.

Ironically, the military is much further ahead of the American public and Congress generally on these issues. Through their doctrine and their operations, the U.S. armed forces

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AMERICANS' PERCEPTIONS OF U.S. FOREIGN AID

Amount Americans *think* the U.S. spends on foreign aid
25% of federal budget

Actual U.S. foreign aid
<1% of federal budget

Amount Americans think the U.S. *should* spend on foreign aid
10% of federal budget

Total federal budget

Source: Worldviews, "American Public Opinion and Foreign Policy" (2002), p. 44, figure 5-7.

have recognized the value of humanitarian assistance as an instrument of tactical and strategic influence. Yet senior military officials also recognize the importance of having civilian counterparts who are development experts and who are properly empowered to support the national security requirements of the country. As Secretary of Defense Robert Gates noted in his remarkable Kansas State University Speech in 2007:

> *The Department of Defense has taken on many of these [development assistance] burdens that might have been assumed by civilian agencies in the past… But it is no replacement for the real thing—civilian involvement and expertise.[18]*

Though USAID and other civilian agencies are playing a greater role in supporting instrumental development activities conducted by the military, the agency's personnel and financial resources are not sufficient to engage in these activities globally to the extent that the military would like. To fill the void, the Defense Department has moved more squarely into the development arena, and has asked Congress for increased funding to do so. Arguably, Congress is funding military-humanitarian assistance for strategic effect because:

- The military has been making the case for the strategic importance of HCA to U.S. national security
- Congress generally accepts this argument from the Pentagon, trusts it as an institution, and is willing to fund projects in our direct national interest.

Should the public and Congress fail to change their view of the strategic role of development assistance delivered by civilian agencies, then it is reasonable to assume that the Pentagon may ask for new legal authorities for delivering assistance in ad-

dition to increased funding to address the critical strategic threats it believes are best addressed through "non-kinetic" means.

Indeed, the Bush administration's support for the Building Global Partnership Act, which is now under consideration by Congress, would make permanent and global the authorities in the Commanders Emergency Response Program, which gives commanders in Iraq and Afghanistan flexible funds to pay for humanitarian activities in support of military objectives. This proposed legislation is emblematic of the new status that the Pentagon is likely to seek as a robust global provider of development assistance to promote the security interests of the United States.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The U.S. government in general, and the U.S. military in particular, have rediscovered the imperative of development assistance as a means of advancing U.S. security interests in a post-9/11 world. Yet the manner in which these initiatives have been pursued lacks the coherence necessary for them to be most effective. To execute a successful policy of sustainable security in which military humanitarian assistance plays a central role, five elements must be in place:

- A national consensus on development assistance
- Adoption of a National Development Strategy
- Support for both short- and long-term assistance programs
- Dispersal of development personnel in critical positions in government and in the military
- Coherent and effective methodology for measuring the success of strategic humanitarian missions

To sustain support for the level of development activities essential for America's interests, there must be a broad consensus among the American people regarding the importance of international development for America's security as well as its values. Just as the vast majority of Americans broadly accepts the value of defense spending in protecting America—even though they may have differences on specific policies and programs—so must there also be a general agreement on the value of development assistance. While certain aspects of the defense and foreign policy elite accept this proposition, it is not fully accepted in military or congressional circles, nor is it accepted by most Americans.

Building this consensus will require a concerted effort by a variety of advocates to educate both policymakers and the American public. Some of this is already happening. Defense Secretary Gates has made several speeches on this subject, as have other senior military leaders, among them the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, Admiral Michael Mullen. USAID senior leaders have given speeches on particular aspects of civil-military cooperation in the development arena, such as regarding AFRICOM. Congress is beginning to hold hearings. Yet much more can be done.

Changing public perceptions of development's importance to our national security is a task that requires presidential leadership. When the Commander-in-Chief makes an argument that helping others to be secure directly contributes to our own security, the nation will listen. Indeed, it was precisely this argument that helped President Truman push the Marshall Plan through Congress, and President Kennedy to push the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, which created USAID. Raising this issue in the next State of the Union Address or making a presidential foreign policy speech would help introduce the concept of sustainable security to the American people and spark interest in the non-military instruments we need to strengthen this approach.

Presidential leadership must be followed by assertive public engagement on the part of civilian development agencies. No one can tell the story of America's global commitment to sustainable development and its contributions to our security better than the people who do the work every day. Yet their ability to do so is restricted by Section 501 of the U.S. Information and Educational Exchange Act of 1948 (the Smith-Mundt Act), which functionally restricts the ability of USAID to use public dollars to tell its story inside the United States. This legislation should be amended or repealed so that USAID, just like the Department of De-

Changing public perceptions of development's importance to our national security is a task that requires presidential leadership.

fense, can tell the American people about the value of its work and continue to build public support for it.

National Development Strategy

If development assistance is to be a central component of U.S. national security policy, then it must be guided by an overarching strategy linking it to other instruments of national power, and must be applicable to all U.S. government agencies involved in development assistance, including the military. This will provide a framework for setting priorities in development assistance, delineating responsibilities among agencies, linking assistance to other instruments of statecraft, and allocating resources appropriately.

A National Development Strategy should outline how the country's assets for development assistance will support the requirements outlined in the National Security Strategy, which is periodically produced by the White House. Modeled after the National Military Strategy, which provides broad guidance for the employment of the armed forces in support of national security objectives, the NDS should include the following elements:

- Overview of the global environment in which assistance takes place
- Explicit rationale for the role of development assistance in support of American foreign and national security policy
- Principles for effective fundamental and instrumental development assistance
- List of major development goals for the U.S. government
- Blueprint for an optimal development assistance bureaucracy, including responsibilities of relevant government agencies

As important as the final content of an NDS would be for U.S. foreign policy, the process of drafting it would yield useful

benefits as well. The diversity of government agencies involved in delivering some aspect of development assistance means that a broad conversation including all of them would be required to draft a comprehensive strategy. Such a process would be invaluable for identifying and resolving tensions in U.S. development assistance.

The drafting of the NDS should also be led by the country's leading development agency, USAID, but ultimately issued by the White House in order to have the authority necessary to coordinate actions across government agencies.

Support for Short- and Long-Term Development

If the United States hopes to promote its interests in combating extremism and promoting stability through the use of development assistance, then it must take steps to protect and coordinate both the short-term development projects that the military performs and the long-term development programs managed by its civilian agencies.

The first step is for the government to make clear to its own agencies, to other governments, and to partner organizations that both the short- and long-term assistance activities in non-combat environments are important to America's interests. In large measure, this can be accomplished through the drafting and promulgation of a National Development Strategy that explicitly embraces a role for the military and for civilian agencies in providing development assistance.

Secondly, the division of labor between the military and civilian organizations should not simply be based on the duration of the project, but also on the principle of exception. Unless there is an explicit and near-term security objective that is the

primary focus of a development project in a non-combat environment, then such an activity should generally be performed by civilian officials rather than military personnel. This will decrease the extent to which *all* U.S. development assistance—both fundamental and instrumental—could be skeptically viewed by beneficiaries and host nation governments. Furthermore, it is vital that the military's objectives in performing development projects be both explicit and transparent to all parties involved.

Finally, budgets must be protected in such a way that the long-term and civilian- development missions are not harmed in the budget process relative to Defense Department budgeting and legal authorities. Joint select appropriations committees from the foreign affairs and armed services committees of both houses of Congress could have concurrent jurisdiction over development funding, to ensure that both fundamental and instrumental missions are adequately resourced and overseen.

Dispersal of Development Personnel

 Next, all of the development programs performed by U.S. civilian and military personnel must be coordinated at all levels of government—in the field, at regional headquarters and embassies, and in Washington. One of the negative consequences of decreased funding for USAID over most of the last 20 years has been the dramatic downsizing of its cadre of experienced development professionals capable of being deployed all over the world. Not only has this limited the number of people available to develop and direct purely civilian development projects. It has also constrained the availability of development experts for details to the military and to important interagency assignments like service on the National Security Council staff.

As a result, many military development activities in the field (especially those outside of PRTs in Iraq and Afghanistan) have not had the benefit of direct and real-time support from civilian development experts on the ground. Further, the relative absence or under- representation of development experts at important policy and command centers has decreased the extent to which appropriate development concerns have been taken into account on important strategic issues.

There have been movements to rectify this. USAID is now sending Senior Development Advisors to each of the regional combatant command headquarters and more junior advisors to PRTs in Iraq and Afghanistan, and to CJTF-HOA on an ad hoc basis. Yet much more could be done. In Washington, there should be a Senior Director for Development Assistance at the National Security Council responsible for coordinating non-emergency development assistance worldwide.

In addition, USAID should send liaison officers to relevant bureaus in the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Departments of State, Treasury, Agriculture, Commerce, Justice and the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative. In the field, USAID development officers should be assigned on a rotating basis to every deployable combat brigade in the U.S. Army and Marine Corps to accompany them to the field and to instruct and train personnel in development tasks during their routine training cycles.

Methodology for Measuring Success

Of all the challenges involved in military-humanitarian assistance, measuring success is perhaps the most difficult as well as the most vital. Determining whether or not a given assistance activity achieved a tactical or strategic objective, rather than

merely being correlated with its occurrence, can be a very tall order.

Nevertheless, it is essential to have a methodology to link conclusively development outputs with tactical or strategic outcomes. Otherwise it is not possible to determine with much analytical rigor which humanitarian activities that military forces or their civilian counterparts should undertake to support certain security objectives. Furthermore, demonstrating the utility of specific development activities for security interests may prove necessary for continued congressional funding support for those programs as they proliferate in scope and scale.

Despite its importance, there is no publicly available evidence that the Pentagon has a successful methodology for measuring the causal success of its strategic humanitarian activities. It is essential that it create one in partnership with its civilian development counterparts, and that the results be made public in the interest of transparency.

CONCLUSION

The depravations of grinding poverty, environmental degradation, and poor governance are not entirely new dilemmas to the international community. Neither are the challenges posed by hostile nations and violent groups. Yet in an increasingly interconnected world, the depth of human suffering in far away lands can metastasize into concrete threats to the security of American citizens here at home. This 21st-century reality requires a new approach to American foreign policy, accompanied by the will to update outmoded processes and institutions to meet the challenge.

A Sustainable Security approach offers a new way of thinking about the linkages between traditional development problems and conventional security considerations. With its emphasis on protecting the United States from external threats, the military has an important role to play in performing development activities designed principally to enhance American strategic objectives.

As important as such work is, however, it cannot take the place of efforts to fight global poverty, which the United States must redouble in accordance with its values and its interests. To keep our country safe, it is no longer enough for America to destroy its enemies. We must also care for our friends, whether they be powerful states or impoverished people.

Accepting this perspective, which is increasingly shared by military and development professionals alike, is one of the most important things the American public can do to strengthen the country's leadership position abroad and protect our citizens at home. Emboldened by popular support, congressional leaders could make the necessary changes to the budgets, staffs, and legal authorities of relevant government agencies to balance the military's assistance activities with robust civilian efforts. At the same time, congressional leaders and the next president of the United States need to explain to the American people the critical importance of overseas development assistance to our national security.

Only when the American people and their leaders together recognize the fundamental value in this new approach can U.S. government agencies and the U.S. military have confidence that their development programs will have the resources needed to promote our long-term stability objectives and support our immediate security needs. This paper, and the others in the Center's Sustainable Security series scheduled for release this summer, are a first key step to make that happen.

ENDNOTES

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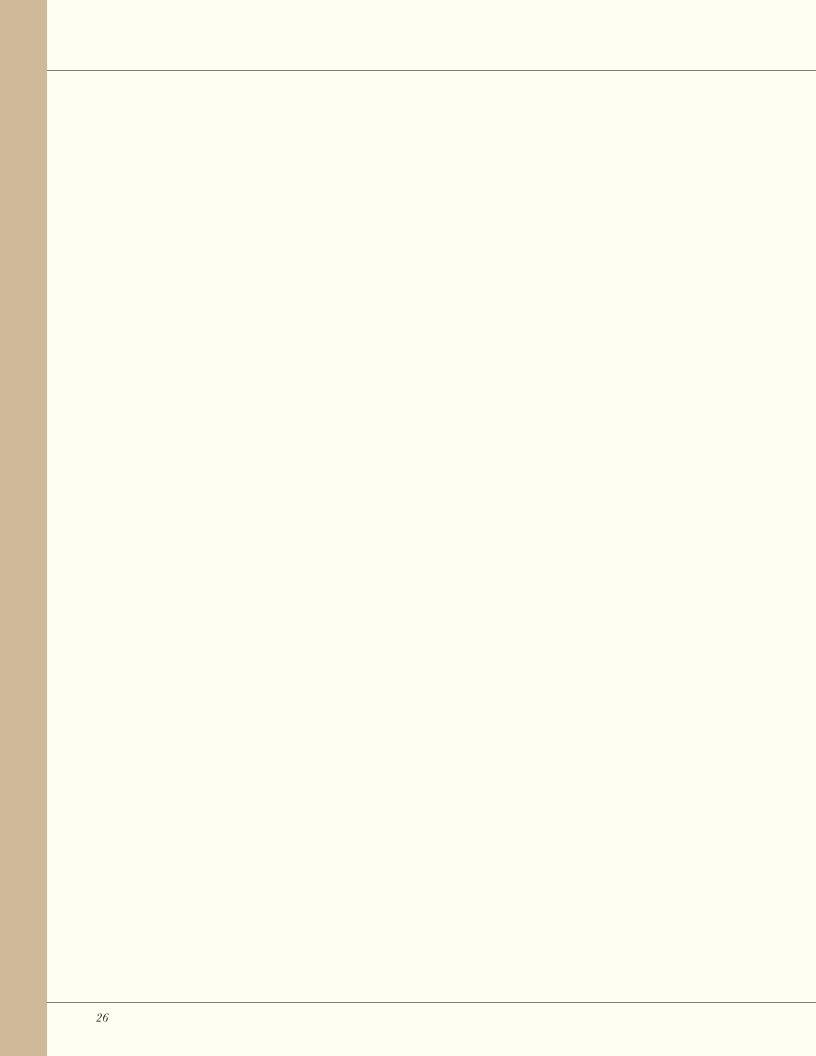
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