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Planning for Conflict Termination and Post-Conflict Success

WILLIAM FLAVIN

“No one starts a war—or rather, no one in his senses ought to do so—without first being clear in his mind what he intends to achieve by that war and how he intends to conduct it.”

— Carl von Clausewitz¹

“If you concentrate exclusively on victory, with no thought for the after effect, you may be too exhausted to profit by the peace, while it is almost certain that the peace will be a bad one, containing the germs of another war.”

— B. H. Liddell Hart²

It is always easier to get into a conflict than to get out of one. In 1956, for example, British Prime Minister Anthony Eden with French Premier Guy Mollet planned to unseat President Nasser of Egypt and reduce his influence in the region by a combined and coordinated British, French, and Israeli military operation. The French and British leadership conducted detailed, thorough planning to ensure that the costs and risks were reduced to an acceptable minimum. In violation of Clausewitz’s guidance above, however, the operation was launched without a good idea about termination and what the post-conflict situation would look like. What if landing on the Suez Canal at Port Said and Port Fuad did not force Nasser to step down? Were France and Britain then willing to march on Cairo? Would they have international support for such a move? If they seized Cairo, what would the new Egyptian government look like? Could it stay in power without keeping British and French troops in Egypt for years to come? Would the British and French have world opinion on their side for such an occupation?

In the event, Israel launched the attack and British and French forces landed on the Suez Canal. But the operation did not turn out as planned. The

United States and Soviets, along with world opinion, forced the British and French to withdraw. President Nasser, rather than being defeated, became the victor and the leader of the Arab cause, while the British and the French lost prestige and influence. How could rational decisionmakers get it so wrong?³

This article examines the doctrinal basis for conflict termination planning and provides suggestions and approaches for greater success.

Fundamentals

Conflict termination is the formal end of fighting, not the end of conflict. US doctrine holds that the goal of military operations is to set conditions that compel belligerents' decisionmakers to end hostilities on terms favorable to the United States and its allies. US joint doctrine and NATO doctrine state: "If the conditions have been properly set and met for ending the conflict, the necessary leverage should exist to prevent the adversary from renewing hostilities. . . . When friendly forces can freely impose their will on the adversary, the opponent may have to accept defeat, terminate active hostilities, or revert to other types of conflict such as geopolitical actions or guerrilla warfare."⁴ The definition focuses on conflict termination, not conflict resolution. The military fight may stop without the causes of the conflict being resolved.

Current joint doctrine thus recognizes that although coercive military operations may end, the conflict may continue under other means such as terrorism, insurgency, cyber war, economic disruptions, political actions, or acts of civil disobedience. Although the military may be engaged in a "post-conflict" peace operation, the belligerents may continue their struggle using these other means. This was definitely the case in Kosovo and is currently the case in Afghanistan, where the military is engaged in stability operations in the midst of conflict. Even in Iraq, where the coalition military victory is unquestioned, the post-conflict situation remains unsettled.

Conflict termination and resolution clearly are not the same thing. Conflict resolution is a long process. It is primarily a civil problem that may require military support. Through advantageous conflict termination, however, the military can set the conditions for successful conflict resolution.

The keys to successful conflict termination include the following fundamentals: conducting early interagency planning; establishing workable objectives, goals, and end states; providing for adequate intelligence and signaling;

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ensuring unity of effort; harmonizing the civil with the military effort; and establishing the appropriate post-conflict organization.⁵

Early Planning

Planning for termination and post-conflict operations should begin as early as possible. It must be an interagency, multinational, integrated effort. The first and primary objective in planning for termination and post-conflict peace operations is to establish an achievable end state based on clear objectives. Planners and commanders must realize that this is an initial object that will begin to change over time. They must retain the flexibility to adjust. As Jeffrey Record writes, “Having an exit strategy on the shelf at the beginning of hostilities and sticking to it until the end assumes away the potent influences of military performance on war aims as well as the law of unintended political consequences that attends any major military intervention.”⁶

The next most important element is achieving unity of effort among the diplomatic, military, economic, and informational aspects of national power. National unity must be harmonized with multinational partners and the community of international organizations and nongovernmental organizations. The commander and planner must visualize the situation from the start of war through termination and into post-conflict peace operations to ensure all of the parts are synchronized. With the concept harmonized, it is then necessary to consider resources. Conflict resolution may not be possible if adequate resources are not available.

With the conceptual plan in place, the information operation can provide the appropriate signaling to the adversaries to provide them an opportunity to terminate the conflict early. The intelligence community will need to identify potential opportunities for termination. The leadership must then have the political courage and will to grasp the opportunity and the perseverance to carry it through and win the peace.

Objectives and End States

US Joint Publication 5-00.1 provides the following guidance: “The National Command Authorities should clearly describe the desired end state before committing the armed forces of the United States. . . . If the NCA do not adequately articulate the termination criteria, the combatant commander should request guidance or clarification, as appropriate.”⁷

The commander thus should seek a clear end state, but this is more the ideal than the reality. The military forces will rarely receive political objectives that contain the clarity they desire. Such is simply not in the nature of the system. General Maxwell Taylor, who had a great deal of experience at the national political level, summarized the most important reasons for this lack of clarity:

For one thing, busy senior officials capable of providing it [political guidance] are usually so engrossed in day-to-day tasks that they have little leisure for serious

thought about the future beyond the next federal budget. Also, it is a risky business for a senior politician to put on public record an estimate of future events which, if wide of the mark, would provide ammunition to his adversaries. Similarly, a President who announces specific policy goals affords the public a measure of his failure if he falls short of his hopes. Hence it is common practice for officials to define foreign policy goals in the broad generalities of peace, prosperity, cooperation, and good will—unimpeachable as ideals but of little use in determining the specific objective we are likely to pursue and the time, place, and intensity of our efforts.⁸

Consequently, political objectives by their nature will be broad, but that is not necessarily bad. Morton Halperin asserts that “unspecified non-rigid objectives increase the chances of arriving at an acceptable compromise and eliminate the domestic costs which would stem from a failure to gain a stated objective.”⁹ Moreover, there are other reasons why broad objectives are not only appropriate but can also facilitate military operations. If political leaders place a time limit on US involvement—as they did for the Unified Task Force (UNITAF) in Somalia and the Implementation Force (IFOR) in Bosnia—that will influence the course of action chosen by the belligerents. In Somalia, for example, General Mohammed Farrah Aideed could just wait until the foreign forces departed and then continue his quest for power.¹⁰

NATO saw this problem and changed its approach when the Stabilization Force (SFOR) assumed the responsibility from IFOR, employing an “end state” rather than an “end date.” The *Joint Task Force Commander’s Handbook for Peace Operations* recognizes that the end state may be a “moving target, one that needs continuous refinement throughout an operation.” The end state for the first elements of IFOR that moved into Bosnia in 1995 was different from that of the SFOR that remains there in 2003. Because the post-conflict period may last for years, an end state that is general rather than specific may facilitate military operations.¹¹

The most difficult task is to take this general political guidance and produce concrete military objectives for the day after the shooting stops. For example, in Operation Just Cause, the removal of Manuel Noriega’s government in Panama, there was little guidance on what to do after the shooting ended. There is “little evidence to suggest that those planning for restoration either realistically understood or adequately addressed . . . historical and contextual issues” when considering post-conflict plans. What did “restoration of Panama” mean? “What kind of democracy was possible in Panama? How long would it take to establish and secure? What were the major obstacles that had to be overcome? Would an operative civil government exist once the PDF [Panamanian Defense Force] was destroyed? What would replace the PDF? What was the stated objective of the economic and social infrastructure?” What was the military role? What would the measures of effectiveness be? What was the end state? All of these questions describe part of the unknown environment that the military faced on the morning after its successful operation against Noriega.¹²

Even the supposedly clear political objectives of the 1991 Gulf War were ambiguous in describing the post-conflict end state. A defense principal later confided, “I do not think we had political objectives. . . . The political objectives were to kick Iraq out of Kuwait—that was it. There was no consideration for conflict termination—Where do you want to be politically in 20 years? What are the strategic decisions for this part of the world? None of that was considered.”¹³

For the 1991 Gulf War, National Security Directive (NSD) 26, NSD 45, and NSD 54 provided clear objectives for the conduct of the operational battle. After Iraq was ejected from Kuwait, however, more clarification was needed on how to apply these objectives. What did the goal of “stability in the region” mean? How did this goal translate into military objectives? Was there a time frame associated with this goal or measures of effectiveness? What was the military expected to do about the resistance operations of the Shiite Marsh Arabs against Iraqi forces being waged in the front of the coalition forces? What about the Kurds and their military operations in the north? How did the goal of stability square with President Bush’s public statements broadcast to the region over a CIA-supported Saudi Arabian radio station urging “the Iraqi people to take matters into their own hands and force Saddam Hussein, the dictator, to step aside.”¹⁴ What did the goal of the “destruction of Iraqi military capability” mean? How did allowing the Hammurabi Division to withdraw with most of its combat equipment intact square with that objective? What about the Iraqi weapons of mass destruction? What did “restore Kuwait” mean? Should the US encourage the Kuwaiti citizens to develop democratic institutions, or was the objective for Kuwait a *status quo ante*? What were the goals of the other countries in the coalition and to what extent should they be considered? All of these questions and countless others led to interagency friction and the lack of a synchronized approach to post-conflict termination in the days following the Gulf War. And this lack of a well-considered termination and post-conflict strategy left the region and the world with unresolved issues that would bedevil the international community for a decade and lead to yet another war.¹⁵

Moving Targets

Another reality is that the objective and end state selected at the start of a conflict most likely will be altered as the conflict proceeds and may not be the same at termination. End state development in one form or another will probably occur.

Early and significant success, for example, can cause the end state to change. The Korean War provides an example. The success of the Inchon landing in September 1950 and the subsequent collapse of the North Korean resistance influenced the United States and UN to alter the end state from *status quo ante* to a reunified peninsula. This end state was readjusted when the Chinese entered the war and drove the UN force back toward the south.¹⁶

In the 1991 Gulf War, the stunning success of the coalition forces also presented an interesting “end state creep” problem. There was tension between

doing more and ending the war early. The Director of Operations for the Joint Staff during the war later stated, “We had trouble [deciding] when to stop. . . . Many people had different opinions, even though we knew what the President wanted. There were some claiming we stopped too soon, others that we did not stop soon enough, which is to be expected in any conflict.”¹⁷ On 27 February 1991, President Bush and his advisors met and decided that the media portrayal of the war—particularly with regard to the “highway of death”—would be detrimental to the coalition’s achievements in the region and that the objective of freeing Kuwait was essentially achieved. However, to end the war at that point meant that the objective of destroying Iraq’s military capability had to be set aside. “The demand for the Iraqis to leave their equipment [in place] was dropped from Mr. Bush’s speech.”¹⁸

Post-conflict objectives and end states may be debated and modified up to and through termination. When this happens, the victor may lose the strategic advantage he possesses at the moment of termination. At the end of the Gulf War, it took a month for the UN Security Council to adopt Resolution 687 to serve as the final settlement. By then the power of the coalition force had departed, and the opportunity for a negotiated settlement in the face of overwhelming military power was lost.¹⁹ The psychological initiative had shifted to Iraq. “The Iraqi foreign minister made it clear that they considered this resolution a threat to Iraq’s sovereignty.”²⁰ According to Michael Ignatieff, Saddam succeeded in winning the propaganda war in the Arab world by pretending that the sanctions imposed by the UN aggression were “starving his people, when in fact Saddam himself . . . frustrated attempts to assist them.”²¹

The situation after World War II also presented monumental challenges for our occupation force in Germany:

American planning for the occupation of Germany divided the wartime Roosevelt administration as did few other issues. Secretary Morgenthau and the Treasury Department, often joined by Cordell Hull [State] and Harry Hopkins [personal advisor to the President], favored the harshest possible treatment for Germany. Secretary Stimson and the War Department, frequently joined by the career foreign service, favored a firm occupation and a swift rehabilitation.²²

General Lucius D. Clay, the military governor of the US occupation, found himself maneuvering between these two political camps, trying to execute a directive that seemed to be an unworkable compromise. He was dealing with a government in Washington that he was not sure knew what it wanted in the center of Europe.²³

Half a century later, General Wesley Clark wrote that it was more than a month into the air campaign against Serbia over Kosovo before the international community addressed the issues of termination objectives. He observed that end states and objectives can slip and change, especially if the end state is not clear. In his opinion this is a characteristic of modern war.²⁴

“Even in Iraq, where the coalition military victory is unquestioned, the post-conflict situation remains unsettled.”

With regard to Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, because there was no interagency plan before the operation started, there was no clear idea about what termination or the post-conflict scenario would look like. What does “promote regional stability” mean? Does it mean nation-building, which the Bush Administration had stated was not a job for the US military? How did the short-term objectives, such as empowering the various warlords with money and arms, promote regional stability? The answers to these questions are still being debated.²⁵

In spite of all of these problems concerning end states, Fred Iklé offers a way ahead. “In deciding how to end a war, the top government leaders usually do not altogether lack a broad view,” he writes. “It does make sense—within limitations—to talk of a national decision and of national objectives.”²⁶ Within that broad view, the military must strive to narrow the focus and determine the appropriate military objectives. They also must participate in the interagency and multinational process. General Clay, for example, played an active part in helping to shape the political objectives. The process itself is important because it “requires careful dialogue between civilian (strategic) and military (operational) leadership which may, in turn, offer some greater assurance that the defined end state is both politically acceptable and militarily attainable.”²⁷

Intelligence and Signaling

Before any conflict starts, the intelligence community must include factors affecting the termination and post-conflict operational area in the Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield (IPB). The focus and sources for a post-conflict IPB are often quite different from those for warfare and similar to the preparation for a peace operation. The IPB should address political, economic, linguistic, religious, demographic, ethnic, psychological, and legal factors. The sources of information will be nontraditional and include open sources such as commercial ventures, travel agencies, clergy, and international organizations and nongovernmental organizations that have been engaged in the area.

The intelligence operation needs to determine the necessary and sufficient conditions that must exist for the conflict to terminate and the post-conflict

efforts to succeed. As Professor Christopher Mitchell has observed, “It is important to direct some attention to the parties’ internal decisionmaking process which depends on the intermittently presented choice of (1) perpetuation, or (2) terminating the conflict: and to the changing evaluations of the costs and benefits of these options, as perceived by the leaders of the parties in conflict.”²⁸ It also must take into consideration a number of variables beyond that of a “rational actor” to understand the motivation of opposing leaderships. At the end of World War II in the Pacific, the Emperor of Japan and his conservative supporters considered the continued existence of the Japanese monarchy to outweigh all other considerations. Any action that the Allies took that could be interpreted as threatening that monarchy would stand in the way of termination and influence the post-conflict attitudes, even though Japan had lost the ability to achieve any of its wartime goals.

The commander needs to know when the situation is ripe for termination and the post-conflict situation will succeed. “Bernard Brodie, among others, has argued that [during the Korean War] the Eighth Army’s operational decision to halt its spring offensive at mid-peninsula forfeited an opportunity to terminate the war at an early date.”²⁹ The UN forces had the initiative and the Chinese armies were disintegrating. The intelligence operation must always be focused on this question. It requires that the commander stay ahead of breaking news events. These events can have significant political and strategic effects and contain signals for termination.

Predictive intelligence is necessary to ensure that the opportunity for termination is not neglected. The intelligence must assess the leverage that all sides possess and the intentions of the opponents. This information is critical to support an information operation so that the proper signals can be transmitted and received.

When the intelligence indicates that leverage is possible and the enemy mindset is ripe for termination, the opportunity must be seized. Signaling intentions is then critical. This requires that each side be able to communicate and not talk past each other. Signaling is an art form and if used correctly can establish conditions for a successful termination and post-conflict outcome.

The value of information operations to shape outcomes is often overlooked. Regimes can blunt leverage through the successful use of signaling. In the 1991 Gulf War, Saddam Hussein, through his control of information, was able to turn his defeat into a local victory. His own people never knew of the extent of his defeat at the hands of the coalition forces.³⁰ He was able to build on this ignorance and negate the actual military leverage the coalition had over Iraq.

Unity of Effort

In her research on conflict termination, Dr. Vicki Rast has concluded that the inability to develop a viable end state is often the product of a lack of unity of effort in interagency planning. She describes a less than rational process

influenced by personal agendas, institutional biases, congressional pressures, domestic politics, and the emotionalism engendered by the blood and treasure invested in the conflict. The result is usually a plan focused at the tactical level driven by the Defense Department toward an exit strategy.³¹

The first step toward a solution is for the Administration to establish a process that requires an interagency plan for termination and the post-conflict period and have the discipline to make it work. The Clinton Administration attempted to do that through Presidential Decision Directive (PDD) 56. The Bush Administration has issued National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD) 1, which established a Contingency Planning Policy Coordinating Committee, chaired by the National Security Council (NSC) Deputy for Defense Policy, to produce “political-military plans and plan for contingencies outside the deliberate planning cycle. But [the] NSPD-XX draft which was to replace PDD 56 has yet to be signed and promulgated.”³² Just establishing the organization is not enough.

All too often, the interagency process is not allowed to work. It is captured by small groups of key individuals who truncate the process, exclude experts (especially those with contrary views), and attempt to gain the President’s ear to push their agenda. Research has indicated that this does produce termination of fighting, but not a satisfactory conflict resolution.³³ The responsibility lies with the NSC and presidential leadership to force the process to work itself out.

There was no interagency plan developed before Operation Enduring Freedom launched into Afghanistan. A plan was finally requested in April 2002, but what was produced not only fell far short of what was envisaged by the drafters of NSPD-XX but also was too late to shape the conflict termination and post-conflict operation. The end states, interim objectives, and measures of effectiveness were neither disseminated nor used. There was no interagency division of labor and no balance between short-term needs and long-term objectives that would lead to conflict resolution.³⁴

The first key to achieving successful conflict termination and post-conflict unity is defining the nature of the crisis. Understanding the key issues and assessing what the potential future might hold is critical. Without executive guidance, however, the process will degenerate into institutional posturing that will yield a compromise but less than optimal policy. Therefore, the President must provide vision and guidance to limit interagency conflict and focus the effort.

The members of the interagency tend to address the easy issues and the tactical level first because they can gain early consensus. Unfortunately, this can warp the process. Developing a military exit strategy before a true end state is determined is a key example. Instead, a good rule of thumb is to address the most difficult objective first, and then the others will follow. This will establish a correct framework for the rest of the planning.

Describing what conflict termination and resolution should look like is a challenge. “The key is to be able to clearly define both the political conditions and the situation that one envisions existing when both the conflict and dispute are

Sectors	Pre-Hostility	Hostility	Termination	Post-Hostility
Security	Number of systems	Number of systems destroyed	Number of systems remaining	Number of systems needed to prevent aggression
Humanitarian Assistance	Status of displaced persons	Number and location of displaced persons	Number and location of displaced persons and their status	Long-term care established
Human Rights and Social Reconciliation	Status of land ownership	Displaced persons and results of hostilities	Status of land	Final resolution of land ownership
Governance and Civil Administration	Status of government	Results of hostilities	Status of emerging government	Vision of future government
Civil Law and Order, Public Security	Status of legal system	Results of hostilities	Assessment of police, judges	Description of objective system
Infrastructure, Economic Restoration and Transformation	Description	Results of hostilities	Assessment of capabilities	Description of objective capabilities
Public Diplomacy and Information Operations	Description	Themes	Assessment of attitudes	Description of behavior

Figure 1. Termination and post-conflict matrix.

over.”³⁵ In 1992, the Army War College proposed a tool for describing the end state in sufficient detail to support political military planning. It also could allow the leaders to visualize the conflict from beginning through termination to resolution. It can help to identify the potential issues that must be addressed in termination and post-conflict peace building.

This tool is a matrix that describes the situation at the start of a conflict, compares it with the proposed end state, and identifies intermediate stages. Such a matrix can assist planners in designating lead and supporting agencies, setting responsibilities, identifying measures of success, and establishing phases for the operation. Figure one is an example of this matrix.

The sectors in the left column identify the elements of the environment. The seven sectors in this matrix were developed using the eight sectors for com-

plex contingencies established in PDD-56 and carried over to the draft NSPD-XX that has been awaiting presidential signature. NSPD-XX assigns interagency responsibility for each of the sectors to facilitate the development of a Political-Military Implementation Plan. The sectors were modified to fit an assessment of a post-conflict or peace-building environment based on work done in 2001 by the US Army Peacekeeping Institute, the Joint Warfighting Center, and the US Army Center for Strategic Leadership's Post-Conflict Strategic Requirements Conference.³⁶

Sector one, Security, describes the military, paramilitary, and security forces of the country and the status of their arms and personnel. At conflict termination, those forces would be disarmed, demobilized, and restructured as part of a broader transformation from war to peace. Sector two, Humanitarian Assistance, addresses the status and needs of emergency care for endangered sectors of the society, including refugees and displaced persons. Sector three, Human Rights and Social Reconciliation, looks at the long-term healing process. Sector four, Governance and Civil Administration, describes the state of civil society and the vision for future governance, including education and the media. Sector five, Civil Law and Order and Public Security, addresses the police, judicial, and penal systems. Sector six, Infrastructure and Economic Restoration and Transformation, focuses on the initial restoration of key elements of the country and long-term economic development. Last, sector seven, Public Diplomacy and Information Operations, looks at promoting understanding and support for the post-conflict objectives. The various parts of the interagency will have different responsibilities in each of these sectors.

Moving across the matrix from left to right, the second column examines the environment before the conflict in each sector to establish a baseline. The third column describes the results of the conflict on the various sectors. The fourth column, Termination, identifies the environment when the active conflict ends, and the last column, Post-Hostility, identifies the objective end state by sector.

This matrix allows the planners to track the end states as the conflict proceeds. It should allow planners to identify and possibly anticipate end-state development. As the conflict approaches termination, the matrix will allow planners to determine what should be part of the termination agreement and how to adjust the objectives. This tool can form the basis for what needs to be accomplished in the post-conflict plan and the transition to civil authority.

Harmonizing Civil and Military Operations

The matrix also can assist in harmonizing, integrating, and synchronizing the civil and military efforts by establishing responsibilities and measures of effectiveness by agency. Harmonization is essential and must occur across the various institutions and agencies at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels, both horizontally and vertically. All of these levels are interrelated. All military

operations have civil impacts, and many civil programs will affect the military. This integrated planning is only one of four considerations that can enhance civil-military operations. The other three are committed political leadership, the use of lead agencies, and sound coordination mechanisms.

The political leadership must establish a framework so that the objectives of the military and civilian components are not only coordinated but also harmonized. The management structure established by NSPD-XX should be used as a template. Firm and committed political leadership is essential to ensure that the military and civilian agencies develop an integrated interagency plan. Such a plan will facilitate coordination at the various national capitals, the UN, and among the various international organizations and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). If possible, planning should be concurrent and integrated with allies and with the international and nongovernmental organizations.

Additionally, the military commander should establish mechanisms at the combatant command and the operational task force levels to support harmonization. Examples include using extensive liaison, establishing Joint Commissions and Civil Military Operations Centers (CMOC), and using civil affairs assets.

In support of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, for example, Central Command established a Humanitarian Assistance Working Group at its headquarters in Tampa to integrate the efforts of the coalition partners with the UN and NGOs. A liaison cell composed of representatives from the InterAction NGO, the UN Office of Humanitarian Assistance, and the UN Joint Logistics Center worked in close coordination with the J5 (Plans and Policy Directorate) and the Deputy Commander of Central Command to present the positions of those agencies and reach mutually acceptable solutions to problems. In the operational area, a Combined Joint Civil Military Operations Task Force with subordinate CMOCs was formed.³⁷

Often coherence and accountability are best achieved by working through an appropriate lead international organization. A lead agency is one that has been mandated by the international community to coordinate the activities of the civilian organizations that volunteer to participate in a mission. Normally a major UN agency is designated a lead agency, such as the United Nations High Commission for Refugees in Rwanda, the UN Office of the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in East Timor, or the UN Joint Logistical Center in Afghanistan. It also could be an NGO, such as Catholic Relief Services in Bosnia or Cooperation for Assistance and Relief Everywhere (CARE) in Somalia and Haiti.

These lead organizations act as a point of contact for other agencies, particularly in the areas of planning and information-sharing. They coordinate field activities to avoid wasting resources and duplication of effort, and they provide the vital interface with the military. Their existence simplifies civil-military cooperation.

Additionally, if the circumstance is an occupation after a war, the military is responsible under a number of international conventions for the treatment

***“In World War II, the planning for war termination
and the post-conflict period began in 1942.
This is the example that should be followed.”***

and care of the civilians in the occupied territory. Regulations attached to the 1907 Hague Convention stipulate that the occupier is obliged to take all measures to restore and maintain public order and public life. The Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 protects populations against the effects of war—in particular the protection of inhabitants of occupied areas. The First Additional Protocol of 1977 to the Geneva Conventions indicates that the intended military advantage of an action must constantly be weighed against the resulting disadvantage to the civilian population. This obligation also applies to the occupying force.³⁸

Because of the disruption that accompanies war, the military may have to assume the lead during the emergency phase to prevent loss of life or the destruction of essential infrastructure. But as soon as feasible, the military must focus on empowering civilian agencies and organizations to assume full authority for implementing the civil portion of the peace effort. As the operation progresses, civilian organizations should assume greater responsibilities for civil functions and require a decreasing amount of assistance from the military force. The relationships established in the initial stages, coupled with accurate assessments of progress achieved in civil-military implementation, are crucial to effecting a smooth transition of responsibility and the ultimate extraction of the military force. Plans for transition and termination should be completed before deployment or as soon as possible during the initial phase.

The best way to understand the skills, knowledge, and capabilities of international organizations and NGOs, as well as US government agencies, is to establish and maintain relationships with them before embarking on a mission. This can be effectively accomplished by including civilian agency personnel in selected field training exercises. These exercises are effective in developing working relationships based on trust and understanding. Commanders should press for such team-building exercises with as many agencies as possible before deployment.

The roles of indigenous leaders and organizations are also essential and should not be overlooked. Appropriately involving local institutions and agencies with the international effort is a challenging but essential task. The ultimate goal is to turn the country back over to its own people.

Commanders should use military assets sparingly when civilian assets are more appropriate in promoting the overall objectives of the mission. For ex-

ample, Army assets may be able to repair a road quickly and efficiently, but providing work to unemployed civilians may be a better solution, promoting support for the political settlement that the mission is seeking to implement.

Obtaining resources for the post-conflict plan is the final and most difficult step in planning. For a healthy economy to flourish, efforts to attract investors should be vigorously pursued. Numerous international organizations and implementation agencies (e.g., World Bank, International Monetary Fund) and regional organizations (e.g., European Commission, European Union) can assist in generating economic reform and a market economy. However, rapidly changing events may cause donors to quickly withdraw economic support if results are not realized in sufficient time. Donor money generally is focused on infrastructure revival, employment, generation of production, and privatization.

Organization for Termination

Successful termination and transition into post-conflict peace operations requires an appropriate organization to ensure multinational, interagency, and international harmony. The military commander and his staff must be able to coordinate with multiple agencies to achieve success. Can the same joint and multinational headquarters that is conducting the combat operation successfully accomplish termination and transition into a post-conflict peace operations headquarters? History and experience indicate difficulties in doing so.

In Operation Just Cause, the ousting of Manuel Noriega from Panama, US Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) and XVIII Airborne Corps did an inadequate job of preparing for conflict termination and the post-conflict situation. Richard Shultz and John Fishel have conducted exhaustive studies of the termination and post-conflict periods for the Army War College and Air University and concluded that the organization designed for the task “stood completely deficient, lacked a coherent organizational structure, and was short of personnel.”³⁹

The planning and preparation for the termination and post-conflict phase was left to the J5 section (Strategy, Policy, and Plans) of the SOUTHCOM staff. The J5 was prevented by security concerns from coordinating its plan with any external agencies. So from the beginning there was neither an interagency planning staff nor an interagency plan. Neither of the key prerequisites for successful termination was met.

General Maxwell R. Thurman, the SOUTHCOM Commander, did not pay attention to the post-conflict planning effort because he was too concerned with fighting the battle. Thurman noted afterward, “I did not even spend five minutes on Blind Logic [the post-conflict plan] during my briefing as the incoming [commander] in August.” Once in Panama (on 29 September 1989), “the least of my problems at the time was Blind Logic. . . . We put together the campaign for Just Cause and probably did not spend enough time on the restoration.”⁴⁰ In fact, for 22 months, no one on the staff paid much attention to termination planning. As a re-

sult, “The chaotic aftermath of the 1989 US invasion of Panama . . . a decapitated government initially incapable of managing basic governmental functions, a sizable refugee problem, and a widespread lapse in civil law and order all threatened to mock the attainment of the operation’s stated objectives.”⁴¹

The J5 staff section of Southern Command did not have the influence to gain the commander’s attention, let alone coordinate with the interagency elements. It is difficult for a staff section to have the appropriate clout to tend to termination and post-conflict issues given the international and interagency implications. General Thurman said it best:

The warfighting elements are mainly interested in conflict termination as opposed to post-conflict restoration. Which is admittedly a problem for us in the military establishment. If I had been the XVIII Corps commander, I might have very well said Blind Logic is going to be residual. . . . My task is to conduct the strike force operation and get out. I think the proclivity was to leave the fighting to the warfighter and the restoration to the people who were in-country. SOUTHCOM should have been more attentive to the transition from one phase to the other, but I readily admit it was the last priority on my agenda at the time.⁴²

Through the 22 months of planning, it was assumed that the J5 director would serve as the commander of a civil-military operations task force to conduct post-conflict activities. That did not work. A staff officer should not be tasked with being a commander in the future. A staff section does not have the connectivity, the internal organization, or the senior officer leverage to accomplish all of the key coordinating tasks required of a headquarters before an operation.⁴³ In the end, this plan fell apart.

Out of necessity, a new headquarters was formed, the Military Support Group, to assume control of the post-conflict situation. It was a true command with a full staff that reported directly to the SOUTHCOM Commander. It coordinated with the interagency community and had to design an interagency plan for the post-conflict because one did not exist. This command arrangement brought order to the situation and allowed governance to return to Panama.

The same issues existed in Operation Desert Storm. Portions of the Joint Staff, Central Command, the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the State Department, and the National Security Council did forward thinking about the end of the conflict, but it had marginal influence on the conduct of the operation.⁴⁴ The combat commander and his staff were focused on winning the war first and then worrying about what would happen next. Unfortunately, what happens next sometimes comes suddenly, and did in this instance. The US Army’s official history admits that the combat staff was not prepared for termination:

Wars never end cleanly and this one was no exception. The cease-fire occurred more quickly than anyone had expected. The postwar process that had existed only in concept was now imminent. Literally overnight, the army found itself flexing an entirely different set of operational muscles. Staff members still exhausted from

100 hours of combat were suddenly inundated with the details of enforcing the cease-fire provisions.⁴⁵

A combined and interagency task force called the Kuwait Task Force, headed by Colonel Randall Elliott, did provide the needed direction and assistance for the reconstruction of Kuwait City. However, such a task force was not conceived by CENTCOM or the military. It was an initiative by Colonel Elliott, who happened to hold a position in two separate organizations. He was the senior analyst in the Near East Division of the Department of State and also the operations officer of the 352d Civil Affairs Command. Therefore he understood the interagency and multinational requirements for termination and the post-conflict situation.

Once it became operational, the Kuwait Task Force did prove successful, in large part because of the experience of the key individuals and the funding made available by the Kuwaiti government in exile. However, when the post-conflict phase arrived, Task Force Freedom was formed in a manner similar to the Military Support Group in Panama. It integrated the Kuwait Task Force, civil affairs, and other supporting elements. Brigadier General Robert Frix (later Major General), Deputy Commander of ARCENT, was designated the Commander, Task Force Freedom, in recognition of the criticality of this mission.⁴⁶

In World War II, the planning for war termination and the post-conflict period began in 1942. This is the example that should be followed. As the war in Europe was concluding, the need was seen for a post-conflict headquarters to coordinate the multi-agency issues surrounding the termination of the war.

General Lucius D. Clay had been involved in the planning and coordination of civil-military economic projects in Washington for several years. He reported to Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF) headquarters on 7 April 1945 as General Eisenhower's Deputy for Military Government, with his own staff. He reported directly to Eisenhower, the theater commander, and also to the Secretary of War. Eisenhower and his main staff, under his Chief of Staff, Lieutenant General Walter Bedell Smith, focused on the war, while Clay and his staff focused on termination and post-conflict matters. Clay's staff was an integrated civil-military staff because of the political nature of the anticipated post-conflict situation.

Eisenhower saw the merit in this arrangement in spite of the resistance of many on his own staff and in the Army at large. General Smith thought that Clay should be the G5 (Director of Civil Affairs) and not a commander. However, Eisenhower knew the wisdom of the arrangement, for he and his staff had to cease all post-conflict planning to handle the Ardennes campaign. Ike realized that a combatant command must focus on warfighting.

In later interviews, after Clay had finish his tour coordinating the occupation in Germany, he stated,

[The] military government would have fallen apart if it was responsible to the tactical military command structure. I could never have gotten the type and kind of ci-

vilians I had if we had been down there reporting to the General Staff. And more important, I wanted to get military government out of the hands of the Army and into the hands of the State Department as quickly as we possibly could.⁴⁷

The World War II example appears to be the optimal approach. Today the capability that the cyber-revolution grants us should facilitate the establishment and coordination of a parallel headquarters responsible for the planning and execution of war termination and post-conflict operations.

Conclusion

Successful conflict termination, post-conflict peace operations, and conflict resolution depend on the civil and military leadership recognizing that the end of conflict is as critical as the conduct of war. Mechanisms and organizations should be developed and enabled to synchronize the military, political, economic, and informational aspects of the operation as well as harmonizing the interagency, combined, and civilian participants. A civil-military plan needs to be developed that describes the desired end state in sufficient detail so that each of the agencies can develop its supporting plans. Above all, everyone involved must realize that the crystal ball is dark and that end states can shift and develop. Flexibility and adaptability are essential traits. As Thomas Paine wrote, “War involves a train of unforeseen and unsupported circumstances that no human wisdom could calculate the end.”⁴⁸

NOTES

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