



Media and peacebuilding: the new army stability doctrine and media sector development

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ABSTRACT

In October 2008, the US Army released *Field Manual 3-07* laying out its dramatically revised doctrine for peace and stability operations. At the heart of the new doctrine is a comprehensive approach to stability operations in fragile states that integrates the work of the military with that of international partners, humanitarian organizations and the private sector. Within this framework, the manual recognizes the important role media plays in successful stability operations. However, it stops short of recommending concrete steps for integrating media sector development with the full spectrum of reconstruction and stabilization activities. This article reviews what the new doctrine says about media sector development, what the gaps are in its treatment of media development, and provides six guidelines for closing these gaps.

KEY WORDS • fragile states • information operations • media development
• stability operations • strategic communication

Information and communications technologies (ICT) are not 'techie' adjuncts to the major muscle movements of delivering food, water and shelter. They are the critical enablers of everything else that happens. (Dr Linton Wells, Force Transformation Chair, National Defense University)¹

The much publicized release in Washington DC in October 2008 of the US Army's new doctrine on conducting stability operations, *Field Manual 3-07* (FM 3-07) (Headquarters, Department of the Army [HQDA], 2008), created a good deal of excitement in policy circles. As the *Washington Post* reported, the Army unveiled 'an unprecedented doctrine that declares nation-building missions will probably become more important than conventional warfare' (Tyson, 2008). The Center for Strategic International Studies (CSIS) described it as the 'first piece of major doctrine dedicated exclusively to stabilization and reconstruction',² while the Council on Foreign Relations called it 'the first of its kind'.³

The document was generally well received and heralded as a major milestone in the ongoing evolution of military doctrine. Many recognized that it marked a fundamental broadening in military perspective from combat to conflict management, a process begun decades ago, and which promises to continue developing as peacebuilding practitioners and soldiers increasingly work shoulder-to-shoulder in troubled states around the world. 'This is the document that bridges from conflict to peace,' said Lt. Gen. William B. Caldwell IV, Commander of the US Army Combined Arms Center at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, where the manual was drafted over a 10-month period (Tyson, 2008).

For this author, the recent release of the new doctrine was a particularly welcome development. Undoubtedly, the shift in perspective from combat to conflict transformation bodes well for the continuing integration of peacebuilding strategies, including the use of media, into a core competency of stability and reconstruction practitioners. At the same time, the doctrine's release, and the attendant debate of its merits, reminded me of 1993, a year when the confluence of two events first brought home to me the unmistakable need for just such an important change in thinking and policy – and the human suffering that occurs without it.

The first event occurred on a sad autumn day when I was at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, for a solemn memorial ceremony to mark the 10-year anniversary of the bombing of the marine barracks in Beirut where 241 American servicemen were killed. I was there to film this moving tribute for a documentary about the tragedy and the politics of the deployment that led to it.⁴

A short while later, also in 1993, another deployment of US soldiers became embroiled in controversy and more sadness as US soldiers deployed to Somalia – originally on a humanitarian mission (Operation Restore Hope) – found themselves doing a combination of peacekeeping and nation-building, all under hostile fire. During the Battle of Mogadishu helicopters were downed and the dead bodies of young American soldiers were dragged through the streets in a spectacle played out across television screens around the world.

The voices of soldiers interviewed in the aftermath of both missions were sadly and starkly similar as they expressed frustration with the new nation-building jobs they were being called on to perform. Steve Russell, former marine sergeant for the unit that was decimated in 1983, told me in an interview 10 years later: 'Our mission was peacekeepers. I have never, even to this day, ever been trained as a peacekeeper. I was a combat Marine' (Himelfarb, 1993). A similar set of refrains echoed in the media throughout the debate on Somalia, where our soldiers had also been inserted as part of a multinational force into a hostile situation in order to stabilize the security situation so that a more durable peace could take hold.

The Lebanon and Somalia missions were undoubtedly part of the shifting face of modern warfare *and* modern media, fueling debates about the expanding use of the US military in non-traditional, non-combat roles and, by extension, the correct role of the media in this brave new world where military combat and peacekeeping operations converged. In fact, the term 'CNN effect' was coined in part as a result of that network's saturation coverage of the Battle of Mogadishu and the controversial impact on policy that it was said to have had.⁵

One of these two debates – the former, on whether or not the US military is to be trained and capable of being stability builders and peacekeepers – has been settled effectively with a series of political and military directives issued over the last few years, culminating most recently with the 6 October 2008 release of FM 3-07. Despite the reservations of some, a new course has been charted in terms of the prioritization of Army activities for years to come. 'It's certainly going to shape how we will allocate resources and how we direct training,' said Col. Mike Redmond, director of the Army's stability operations division (Tyson, 2008).

The same cannot be said of the role of media in conflict, at least not in terms of military doctrine. This stabilization manual offers a welcome and refreshing new insight into the shifting perspective of the military towards 'information engagement' as they refer to it in the manual, but when it comes to development of the media sector per se – print, radio, TV, the internet, telecom – consideration of these is *de minimus* despite their profound impact on recent Iraq and Afghanistan missions. A close reading of the manual and discussions with its authors suggest that the US Army's thinking has not progressed very far since the early 1990s, when it comes to 'official doctrine' for fostering the development of media in stabilization and reconstruction operations.

This article discusses both what the stabilization manual says about media, as well as what it doesn't say. It examines the new roles and responsibilities set out in the manual for the Army, and in particular those related to information engagement. In conclusion, it offers a set of principles to guide further enhancement of the manual, and invites further comment from others in the hopes of supporting continuous improvement efforts already begun by the Army.

Context

FM 3-07, entitled simply enough, 'Stability Operations' (HDQA, 2008), is a statement of 'new doctrine', according to the Army, detailing the principles

and fundamentals that guide stability operations. It is the embodiment of a directive from the Secretary of Defense himself stating that stability operations are no longer secondary to combat:

Stability Operations are a core U.S. Military mission that the Department of Defense shall be prepared to conduct and support. They shall be given priority comparable to combat operations and be explicitly addressed and integrated across all DOD activities including doctrine, organizations, training, education, exercises, material, leadership, personnel, facilities, and planning. (Department of Defense Directive [DODD] 3000.05, 2005)

It was a long time in coming and, as suggested earlier, was the culmination of the Beirut mission, the Somalia mission and, more recently, more lessons hard won as the US military engagement in the Balkans across the 1990s and then in Afghanistan and in Iraq further highlighted the need to reassess the military's ability to carry out these multi-dimensional operations – offense, defense, and stability – among civilian populations. In military parlance, this is described as 'full spectrum operations' and Secretary of Defense Robert Gates offered this explanation for the importance of the new combination in an introduction to Chapter 2 of the Manual:

Repeating an Afghanistan or an Iraq – forced regime change followed by nation-building under fire – probably is unlikely in the foreseeable future. What is likely though, even a certainty, is the need to work with and through local governments to avoid the next insurgency, to rescue the next failing state, or to head off the next humanitarian disaster.

Correspondingly, the overall posture and thinking of the United States armed forces has shifted – away from solely focusing on direct American military action, and towards new capabilities to shape the security environment in ways that obviate the need for military intervention in the future.

And, in the end, the new manual provided what the *Washington Post* described as:

a plan for a range of military tasks to stabilize ungoverned nations: protecting the people; aiding reconstruction; providing aid and public services; building institutions and security forces; and, in severe cases, forming transitional U.S. military-led governments. (Tyson, 2008)

Furthermore, the doctrine posits 'a comprehensive approach to stabilization efforts that envisions integration of a variety of stakeholders not traditionally combined as full partners in complex contingencies' [http://www.usip.org/events/2008/1007_road_map.html].

So it represented a new breadth of tasks in the stabilization sphere and a new level of on-the-ground-collaboration, packaged in an impressive 200-page document that deserves careful analysis. In particular, there is much at

stake in this plan for the community of peacebuilding practitioners in war zones who leverage the media to accomplish their ends – which amounts to just about everyone these days working on stabilization and reconstruction. While the debate about the appropriate role for media in conflict persists, as noted earlier, the reliance on media as a tool in the peacebuilders' toolkit deepens (Bratic, 2005). Whether you are the military, a government, a non-governmental organization (NGO) or an international organization such as the UN, media is a part of your *modus operandi*.

The Army doctrine recognizes this in a number of ways that will be discussed here. But first, it must be stated that the manual is notable for another reason, highlighted by Col. John Kardos, director of the US Army Peacekeeping and Stability Institute (PKSOI) at the time of the new doctrine's release: 'This groundbreaking manual', he wrote in the *PKSOI Bulletin*, 'is as notable for the degree to which civilian organizations contributed throughout its development as it is for formally capturing for the first time this integral part of full spectrum operations' (Kardos, 2008). In other words, the Army received more input from civilian organizations before producing the new doctrine than it had received on any other comparable publication in its history.

The U.S. Institute of Peace (USIP), which employs this author, played a central role in this process, acting as a facilitator between the military and the civilian NGO community that has in the last several decades also played an increasingly vital role in the post-war reconstruction of fragile states. The Institute did not write the new doctrine, however. The Army is to be commended, first, for recognizing the need for a new doctrine on stability operations and, second, for understanding that the success of this enterprise relies on the actions of many institutions, not just the military. But we are also aware, partly as a consequence of this close involvement with its development, of its shortcomings.

One of these is in its treatment of media development as an integral part of stability operations, or lack thereof. Or as Beth Cole, lead program officer at USIP on the joint military–civilian collaborative effort, described it:

There is a hole in the treatment of media as an instrument to provide an outlet for peaceful debate, inform the public, dispel rumors, condemn hate activities, etc. ... What is the guidance on how to approach establishing media? Is it closely linked to the fundamental priority of security? If so, how do you fill it early if little exists? How do you keep it accountable? How do you prevent it from being used for propaganda against the peace process?⁶

Across the 200 pages there are scant references to the media relative to the importance given to the theme of information engagement throughout. Indeed, information engagement receives significant attention, while the

view of the military on rebuilding viable and sustainable media institutions remains unarticulated. There are numerous insightful references to the importance of 'informing the local populace and influencing attitudes' and how 'the final measure of success or failure (of stability operations) often rests with the perceptions of the people' (HQDA, 2008, Ch. 2: 14). Therefore, 'Army forces seize, retain, and exploit the initiative, drawing on cultural understanding and media engagement to achieve decisive results' (Ch. 2: 12). The doctrine goes on to state, in its most detailed articulation of the strategic context for information engagement:

This requires a mastery of information engagement: the integrated employment of public affairs to inform United States and friendly audiences; psychological operations, combat camera, USG strategic communication and defense support to public diplomacy, and other means necessary to influence foreign audiences; and leader and Soldier engagements to support both efforts. Since stability operations are conducted within a broader global and regional context, success often depends on the integration of information engagement efforts ... among military forces and the various agencies and organizations participating in the operation. (Ch. 2: 71)

Thus, as has often been the case when it comes to the military and the media, there is a good deal of emphasis on 'strategic communications' and versions thereof (psychological operations, public diplomacy, etc.), an area of much confusion in commentary on the role of media and peacebuilding. As the World Bank's Development Communications Division noted in its study, 'Media and Communications in Post-Conflict and Fragile States':

Specifically, the term 'strategic communication' is frequently employed by those working with communication-based activities in post-conflict and fragile states. In fact, this term spans the fields of development, public diplomacy advertising, military operations, and many other areas. More often than not, the term refers to a set of activities whose precise parameters are known only to the speaker, reflecting the speaker's own biases and background. This lack of common consensus on the term's definition as it applies both across fields and within fields ... translates into a certain conceptual muddiness.

Until recently, the term 'strategic communication' often conveyed a managed message designed to persuade audiences of the information disseminator's point of view. In military circles, the term often takes on these nuances. (Kalathi et al., 2008: 7)

And so it is with the Army's new stability doctrine, where the extensive references to information engagement are largely about managing the message rather than the media. As others have noted: 'In war-torn societies, the development of independent, pluralistic, and sustainable media is critical to fostering long-term peace and stability' (Bajraktari and Hsu, 2007). And while a clear interest in working closely with such media actors permeates this new doctrine, it stops short of offering guidance on the *modus operandi*

for doing so. Instead, there is a familiar blurring of the lines between media development and strategic communications, continuing the status quo ante – and perhaps even buttressing it somewhat – of tension between the Army's long standing interest in winning 'hearts and minds' and its interest in supporting independent media.

It should be noted that the military is not alone here, of course. This same tension has long been at the core of the debate among peacebuilding media practitioners themselves and still persists especially on the thorny issue of 'peace journalism'.⁷ At the same time, the use of peacebuilding media in conflict management has become so ubiquitous that the debate over its use has largely shifted away from whether or not its use is appropriate towards how it can be deployed effectively and optimally. One USIP publication remarks:

The positive contribution that the media can make has given media development a central role in stabilizing societies emerging from conflict. Even so, there is still no tried-and-tested strategy to which interveners can turn when seeking to develop media in post-war zones. This strategic gap is reflected in the challenges that plague practitioners in almost every mission. (Bajraktari and Hsu, 2007)

FM 3-07 highlights this strategic gap rather than offering the means to help fill it. Which raises the question: is media development beyond the scope of stability operations and therefore beyond the scope of the new doctrine manual? One would not think so, judging from the Army's own progressive and expansive statements throughout the manual, on those relatively few occasions when it does refer specifically to media. For example:

Stable governments also require free and responsible media, multiple political parties, and a robust civil society. (HQDA, 2008, Ch. 1: 89)

Stability operations are conducted among the people, within the lens of the media. Therefore, during stability operations, effective information engagement is inseparable from initiative ... Through effective information engagement, Army forces ... communicate with the local populace in an honest, consistent fashion while providing fair and open access to media representatives. As much as practical, commanders provide the news media with factual information to facilitate prompt, accurate reporting. (Ch. 2: 12)

This latter reference is one of the touchstone passages in the document, according to its lead author, representing a profound shift towards greater media accessibility and transparency than ever before: 'Many of our colleagues within the Army were pretty resistant to this sentiment; there was a lot of debate around this but in the end we recognized the need to move forward.'⁸ And the *raison d'être* for the shift is fleshed out a little further along in the document:

When the local and national news media are unavailable or unreliable, people often rely on 'word of mouth' to gain information or turn to the Internet, where unverified information flows freely at unimaginable speeds. To the people, perception equals reality. Creating favorable perceptions requires an understanding of the psychological motivations of the populace and shaping messages according to how people absorb and interpret information to ensure broad appeal and acceptance. (HQDA, 2008, Ch. 2: 75)

To some extent, this is a restatement of what is commonplace in other, earlier statements of Army doctrine: acknowledgement of information as vital, especially factual, reliable information as a building block for a lasting peace.⁹ But this doctrine is a more clearly, more firmly stated acknowledgment of the need for transparency and accessibility with respect to the media.

Where the policy meets practicality, of course, is in 'the how', meaning the essential stability tasks that comprise military stability operations and how these will support the new aspirations laid out in the preceding passages. This is where the doctrine comes up somewhat short.

Stabilization tasks and the media

In order to understand the task list constituting operations in the new doctrine, it is first necessary to know that the overarching framework for the doctrine is a set of five end state conditions. These end states are:

- A safe and secure environment
- Established rule of law
- Social well-being
- Stable governance
- A sustainable economy

This framework, as FM 3-07 describes it, provides both 'the underpinning for strategic, whole of government planning' as well as 'a focal point' for integrating specific essential tasks. It then goes on to devote a substantial section of the document – Chapter 3 – to describing these essential stability tasks, as well as key subordinate tasks, which constitute stability operations. These bear enumerating here (see Figure 1) so as to convey both the substance and the degree of detail, as well as a basis for interpreting the task of developing media within the context of the five categories of stability tasks.

There are two key elements of the detailed task articulation within the doctrine document that pertain to the media sector – one of which is apparent here in category V(i): Restore telecommunications infrastructure. This section of the manual acknowledges the media, however briefly, with the statement:

The telecommunications infrastructure of the state exists to support every element of a society from the government to the financial sector, and from the media to the local populace. (HQDA, 2008, Ch. 3: 70)

I Establish civil security

- (a) Enforce cessation of hostilities, peace agreements, and other arrangements
- (b) Determine disposition and constitution of national armed and intelligence services
- (c) Conduct disarmament and reintegration
- (d) Conduct border control, boundary security, and freedom of movement
- (e) Support identification
- (f) Protect key personnel and facilities
- (g) Clear explosive and CBRN hazards

II Establish civil control

- (a) Establish public order and safety
- (b) Establish interim criminal justice system
- (c) Support law enforcement and police reform
- (d) Support judicial reform
- (e) Support property dispute resolution processes
- (f) Support justice system reform
- (g) Support corrections reform
- (h) Support war crimes courts and tribunals
- (i) Support public outreach and community rebuilding programs

III Restore essential services

- (a) Provide essential civil services
- (b) Tasks related to civilian dislocation
- (c) Support famine prevention and emergency food relief programs
- (d) Support non-food relief programs
- (e) Support humanitarian de-mining
- (f) Support human rights initiatives
- (g) Support public health programs
- (h) Support education programs

IV Support to governance

- (a) Support transitional administrations
- (b) Support development of local governance
- (c) Support anticorruption initiatives
- (d) Support elections

V Support to economic and infrastructure development

- (a) Support economic generation and enterprise creation
 - (b) Support monetary institutions and programs
 - (c) Support national treasury operations
 - (d) Support public sector investment programs
 - (e) Support private sector development
 - (f) Protect natural resources and environment
 - (g) Support agricultural development programs
 - (h) Restore transportation infrastructure
 - (i) Restore telecommunications infrastructure
 - (j) Support general infrastructure reconstruction programs
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Figure 1 Essential stability tasks and key subordinate tasks constituting stability operations (HQDA, 2008, Ch. 3).

However, it goes on to circumscribe the role of the military with this:

The military contribution to reconstruction efforts in the telecommunications infrastructure is limited: normally, few essential tasks exist in this area. (HQDA, 2008, Ch. 3: 70)

And perhaps more telling are the essential tasks themselves. The manual states that these are to 'assess overall conditions of the national telecommunications infrastructure' as well as 'determine and prioritize essential infrastructure programs and projects'. But the manual stops short of enabling the Army to provide the resources necessary to implement these programs and projects.

This may not have been noteworthy were it not for the apparent discrepancy between the manual's treatment of essential telecommunications infrastructure and other subcategories of infrastructure, such as transportation infrastructure. In the case of transportation, the doctrine suggests a task list that includes both assessment and prioritization of projects, as well as the capability to 'conduct expedient repairs' and 'build new facilities' (Ch. 3: 18).

Why the distinction? Was the Army intending to steer clear of assuming responsibilities for conducting repairs to those things media – ranging from transmission towers and satellite networks to internet service or buildings that house broadcast studios? Yes, according to one of the doctrine's authors:

Throughout the process of writing this manual we were always conscious of how important it was not to do things for which others would have better knowledge than we in the Army. We have engineers and know how to build roads. Building transmission facilities has not been a core capability of ours.¹⁰

The second occasion when the manual picks up the thread of media-related task description is in closing out the chapter on essential stability tasks – where 'information engagement' is singled out as integral to the success of activities across the stabilization spectrum. 'Although not considered stability tasks', it states, 'information engagement tasks are fundamental to each stability sector' (Ch. 3: 73). It goes on to offer Figure 2, showing six intertwined wires – of which information engagement is one – to illustrate the point, and then concludes by offering its most concrete statement in the document of what this intertwined relationship entails as far as specific actions are concerned:

Executing the following essential tasks can further the populace's and the international community's understanding of the commander's objectives:

- Identify or establish outlets for international, national, and local news media.
- Provide factual, accurate information to the media to control rumors and disinformation.
- Issue effective press releases and prompt information in local languages.

- Assist transitional civil or military authorities with public information programs.
- Synchronize messages with operations; ensure messages are consistent with actions.
- Assess media capability and capacity of the host nation; tailor information engagement strategy to the ability of the local populace to receive messages.
- Integrate cultural understanding with information engagement strategy. (p. 73)

This list of essential tasks underscores once again that the Army's predominant interest in the new stability doctrine manual is about strategic communications and controlling the message. Arguably, one could look to the first bulleted item in this list – 'Identify or establish outlets for international, national, and local news media' as a statement of an intent to involve the Army in helping to build media infrastructure and institutions but, according to its lead author (Steve Leonard), this is not the intent:

Those outlets refer to our interest in giving the media a place to do its work:

SH: Does this include rebuilding infrastructure necessary for local media to broadcast to the population?

SL: No it does not. It's for them to file reports to their TV or radio stations and do their day-to-day jobs.

SH: What if those outlets don't have broadcasting capability any longer, due to the war? Will you help them rebuild that capability?

SL: That's the kind of job others do better than we do in the Army. It's just not one of core activities.¹¹

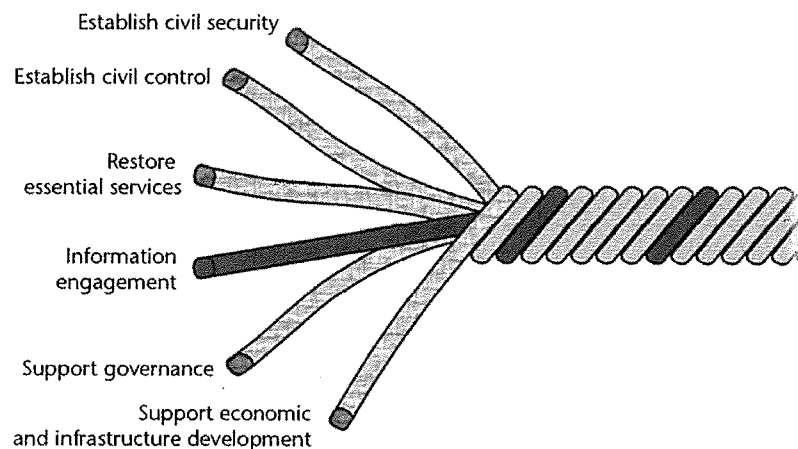


Figure 2 Relating information engagement to the primary stability tasks

This view embodies, to some extent, the policy that is also stated clearly in the doctrine manual of deference to the designation of the State Department as the

lead federal agency for stability operations – and, more precisely, the ‘Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS) within the State Department (HQDA, 2008, Ch. 2: 22). Indeed, it is striking that in Appendix G of the manual, where the Army summarizes the major doctrinal changes made by the field manual there is no mention whatsoever of the media. One major change that it does point to, however, is that the new doctrine ‘addresses essential stability tasks in terms of those always performed by military forces, those military forces must be prepared to perform, and those best performed by civilians with the appropriate level of expertise’ (Appendix G: 2).

Development of the media sector is evidently considered one of those tasks best performed by civilians, although FM 3-07 does not say so specifically. Yet it is quite true that neither the Army, nor the Department of Defense, are the lead agency on the stabilization front, and that S/CRS was created precisely for this task (among others). Furthermore, as a practical matter, much of the work in this area has been done, historically, by the Office of Transition Initiatives within the United States Agency for International Development.

But the reality of resource allocation for message management, institution building *and* infrastructure development among these agencies tells a much different story. Media dollars are being spent in great sums today via the Army and Department of Defense. According to a recent press report, DOD has been given over US\$300 million to spend over the next three years in Iraq, to ‘engage and inspire’ Iraqis to seize the day and do what’s needed to rebuild the country politically and economically. How? The report further indicates that DOD is to achieve this by doling out the \$300 million to private contractors in order to produce news and entertainment programs for the Iraqi public (Tyson, 2008).

Relative to the State Department’s budget for performing similar functions, these are orders of greater magnitude. As some disconcerted policy analysts have observed:

Consider this: The \$100 million annual price tag of the initiative described above is just one element of the Pentagon’s communication efforts in one country. Yet it is equivalent to roughly one-eighth of the State Department’s entire public diplomacy budget for the entire world. (Lord, 2008)

This dissonance between the reality of who manages the media dollars in Iraq’s post-war reconstruction and stabilization efforts, and what is stated in the new doctrine itself, may be a function of experience. In FM 3-07, the Army is hedging its media bets, perhaps because it has been relatively unsuccessful when it comes to working in this sector. An earlier USIP study found that:

... in Iraq the task of media development was given to the US Department of Defense whose major contractors had little or no relevant experience. Science

Applications International Corp (SAIC), a longtime DOD contractor, was awarded an initial contract of \$15 million to undertake something it had never done before – transform an entire state-run media system into an independent, BBC-style national news service. The research and engineering firm received the grant just eight days before the initial US offensive took place in Iraq. Moreover, supervising SAIC was a DOD office specializing in psychological warfare operations, which many believe contributed to the perception among Iraqis that the Iraq Media Network (IMN) was merely a mouthpiece for the Coalition Provisional Authority. Before another company won the contract through a competitive bidding process in January 2004, SAIC's performance in Iraq was considered costly, unprofessional, and a failure in terms of establishing the objectivity and independence of the IMN. (Bajraktari and Hsu, 2007)

In sum, the Iraq conflict has seen the Army involved in both managing the media message and in developing media institutions and infrastructure. Yet, on both fronts, success has been elusive, and the poor performance of the media sector continues to be a drag on the post-war reconstruction efforts of the international community.

So what should a revised stability doctrine manual say about media development to help create a better outcome – recognizing that Army doctrine is, first and foremost for the soldier, providing a practical guide as to how he or she should support the civilian authority to secure stability?

The Army has indicated in the stability manual that a new doctrine manual on information management is forthcoming (HQDA, 2008: 71). Moreover, in interviews, they have indicated an interest, indeed an eagerness, for more input on this precise issue: 'We are revising our manual 3-13 (Information Doctrine) soon and if we weren't explicit or thorough enough here about media development, we'll have a chance to insert important elements in that.'¹²

There are many publications that have appeared stating the importance of an independent and pluralistic media sector as an enabler of stable governance, and in some cases outlining an operational framework for developing such a sector (see Loewenberg, 2006). The authors range from scholars and NGOs to US agencies (such as AID), and international organizations (such as the World Bank). The following set of six guiding principles represents a first effort at distilling this substantial body of work into recommendations appropriate for enhancement of FM 3-07. They are designed in the light of lessons learned from previous military efforts and to build on demonstrated strengths of the Army in this arena of media development.

Six principles

- (1) *Define media broadly*: Adopt an expansive definition of media sector support to include both information and communications technology (ICT),

thereby spanning traditional media (radio, TV, print), new media (text messaging, internet) as well as telecommunications (see Howard, 2001).

- (2) *Clarity of role*: Make clear and distinct the Army's role in helping to provide the telecommunications infrastructure required for media development. This should be defined as not only 'assessing overall conditions of the national telecommunications infrastructure' and 'determining and prioritizing essential infrastructure programs and projects' (as currently stated) but also conducting 'expedient repairs' or 'building new facilities' when others (including the State Department and USAID) are unable to do so effectively.
- (3) *Assess infrastructure and institutions*: Indicate that telecommunications infrastructure assessments should be supplemented by assessments, performed in collaboration with civilian media experts, of the media institution landscape ('who in the media is communicating what and to whom among stakeholders in the conflict', and 'how effective are they at communicating it'). Such assessments are needed to inform prioritization of the expedient repairs and facilities reconstruction, as well as to provide media practitioners with essential information. Yet, evaluation of the media landscape is a perennial challenge that has made it extremely difficult for peacebuilding media practitioners to coordinate their efforts and optimize media dollars. To this end, the Army occupies a pivotal position. In some cases, it may be the only entity possessing the logistical, security, and financial resources to enable these assessments.¹³
- (4) *Make speed a priority*: State the Army's willingness to support the rapid development of the media sector with the funds and resources it has available. Developing a media sector takes a sustained effort – which is why the Agency of International Development plays a key role in leading longer-term media development efforts within the USG. But a clear statement from the Army – often the first responder – on the importance of developing media capabilities early underscores its willingness to provide the resources necessary to jumpstart the process when others, such as the host government or the NGOs on the scene, are unable to do so. To this end, the assessment processes (infrastructure and institutions) should be pulled forward as early in the stabilization process as security allows.
- (5) *Distinguish strategic communications from media development*: Conflating strategic communications and media development diminishes the efficacy of both. The former is about controlling the message; the latter about developing a media sector (radio, TV, print, internet, telecom) that is valued by the body politic and pluralistic. This is not to say that the media sector is unable to engage in social marketing types of messages, but that those messages need to be clearly labeled as such (originating

sponsor/funder) for credibility and usefulness. Information engagement, as detailed in the current iteration of the stability manual, is focused on enabling strategic communication not developing the media sector.

- (6) *Plan for the dual use capacity of media*: With the development of media comes the capacity to promote both peace and conflict. Mindful of this reality, infrastructure and institutional assessment supported by the Army should incorporate credible civilian expertise on monitoring and regulation of media in support of stabilization and reconstruction.

Conclusion

The Army has done an impressive job in FM 3-07 of enhancing its capacity for information engagement in concert with its overall shift in thinking about both conflict management and coordination with civil authorities during stabilization operations. Hopefully, these six guiding principles will lead to something similar with respect to its position on developing the media sector, by clarifying ways in which the Army can and should support this important task in order to give it the best prospect for success.

FM 3-07 begins with a rich and interesting historical perspective on stability operations, tracing America's experience back more than 200 years to the enforcement of various proclamations and peace treaties. But it is also instructive to note what our Founding Fathers were saying about media development in these early days of the Republic. In a letter dated 16 January 1787, for example, a time when America was struggling to forge both a stronger central government as well as a standing Army, Thomas Jefferson wrote that 'were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers, or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter.'

Surely, then, Jefferson would approve of dedicating today's well-trained, well-equipped Army to the task of helping to build that which is necessary for a thriving media today.

Notes

- 1 STAR-TIDES website, 'Tides Week One Summary from Lin Wells', 13 October 2007. URL (consulted 12 Nov. 2008): <http://star-tides.blogspot.com/2007/10/below-is-summary-of-first-week-of-tides.html>
- 2 CSIS website, 'A Road Map from Conflict to Peace: A Discussion on the Army's New Doctrine for Stability Operations and the Implications for Foreign Policy. URL (consulted 12 November 2008): http://www.csis.org/component/option,com_csis_events/task,view/id,1799/

- 3 Council on Foreign Relations website. URL (consulted 28 Oct. 2008): <http://www.cfr.org>
- 4 See the documentary 'First Tuesday: Follow the Flag' (A&E networks, 1993), which tells the story of this attack through interviews with survivors, families, members of Reagan's cabinet, Hizballah, and the Lebanese people.
- 5 For more information, see Livingston (1997).
- 6 Beth Cole, email exchange with Sheldon Himelfarb, 28 October 2008.
- 7 For further discussion on this topic, see 'The Peace Journalism Controversy', 2007 issue of *Conflict & Communication Online* 6(2).
- 8 Phone interview with Steve Leonard, 31 October 2008.
- 9 For more information, see HDQA (2003).
- 10 Phone interview with Steve Leonard, 4 November 2008.
- 11 Phone interview with Steve Leonard, 4 November 2008.
- 12 Phone interview with Steve Leonard, 4 November 2008.
- 13 USIP is currently working to create an assessment template to coherently standardize the mediascape evaluation process. For more information, check the website for the Center of Innovation for Media, Conflict, and Peacebuilding for updates. URL: <http://www.usip.org/media/index.html>

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