



# Toward a Horizon of Hope

## Considerations for Long-term Stability in Postconflict Situations

By WILLIAM E. WARD

**T**he 2006 *National Security Strategy of the United States of America* clearly states our national intent for dealing with regional conflicts through three levels of engagement: “conflict prevention and resolution; conflict intervention; and post-conflict stabilization and reconstruction.”<sup>1</sup> These levels are necessary to prevent “failed states, humanitarian disasters, and ungoverned areas that can become safe havens for terrorists.” The strategy also states that “even if the United States does not have a direct stake in a particular conflict, our interests are likely to be affected over time.” The example given is al Qaeda’s exploitation of the civil war in Afghanistan.<sup>2</sup>

In today’s resource-constrained environment, however, allocating and prioritizing

the expenditure of money and manpower toward a new conflict will be difficult. History shows that we have to be prepared to intervene early, with clear goals, authorities, and responsibilities understood by the parties to the conflict and among the international and interagency partners involved. Building those capabilities with minimal resources requires a new way of approaching postconflict scenarios—a way that takes the perspective of the conflict’s many victims and determines how to address their needs, both immediately and in the longer term. The goal is to provide for them a Horizon of Hope, the prospect that tomorrow will be better than today. From that prospect comes a framework from which we can develop plans and capabilities to address the conditions we want to exist as conflicts are resolved and stable institutions of society are

established. This framework is applicable to most global postconflict situations.

I start by illustrating three personal examples where our success in instilling that hope varied greatly. These examples include my deployments to Somalia as a brigade commander in 1992 and to Bosnia as commander of the Stabilization Force (SFOR) in 2002, and my assignment as the U.S. Security Coordinator to Israel and the Palestinian Authority in 2005. I show how the common elements of these situations led to the development of a framework that permits better international and interagency coordination for influencing outcomes of future conflicts. Employing such a framework improves our ability not only to respond when necessary but also to secure the aftermath of the conflict so the prospects for lasting stability are enhanced.

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## Somalia

In the early 1990s, along with many others, I was shocked by the images of the terrible Somali famine prior to Operation *Restore Hope*, much the same way I was shocked by the images of ethnic cleansing in the former Yugoslavia. The images did not prepare me for what I saw in person as a brigade commander. Seeing the victims of the famine gave me stark reminders of why we were deployed there: to provide security to allow the international relief efforts to happen. Indeed, *Restore Hope* was the appropriate name for the operation; at the time, *there was no hope*, no one standing forward and leading the way to peace. We provided that hope. People by the thousands were fed and given medical treatment.

But providing security was far from enough. The necessary political reforms and institution-building did not happen, leaving the country embroiled in chaos with thugs and warlords controlling the streets and hampering international relief efforts. Consequently, rather than the economic and political foundations for a new Somalia being laid, the thugs became the entrenched political entities. By the time Operation *Continue Hope* began, we had forfeited the advantage, with the mission coming to an end after the infamous Battle of Mogadishu.

More than a dozen years later, Somalia continues to struggle in search of a way to maintain a transitional government. The environment is far from safe, and there is little incentive for foreign investment.

## Bosnia

The story in Bosnia moves in a more positive direction but is still not fully satisfactory. As commander of SFOR, I had the privilege of participating in one of the more successful peacekeeping efforts in history. From 1992 to 1995, Bosnia was embroiled in a war that included genocide and ethnic cleansing, killing a hundred thousand and displacing hundreds of thousands more. Fortunately, the war ended with the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina (the Dayton Accords), which provided a base upon which a lasting peace and a new country could be built, including the establishment of political institutions, economic recovery, and an international security force that transitioned into SFOR.

The Dayton Accords made Bosnia's recovery from the war possible. By the time I took command of SFOR in the fall of 2002,

Bosnia and Herzegovina had conducted several rounds of national elections without incident, made huge strides in disarming the populace through amnesty programs such as Operation *Harvest*, and maintained a safe and secure environment with no possibility of renewed hostilities. SFOR implemented the military provisions of the accords with a force representing over a hundred nations.

The Stabilization Force also participated as a Principal along with the numerous international organizations implementing the Dayton Accords' civil provisions under the auspices of the Office of the High Representative. Other Principals included the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and various United Nations (UN) agencies, such as the Mission in Bosnia and High Commissioner for Refugees. The force was successful in that it provided the safe and secure environment called for in the accords. Consequently, it gradually reduced its size and eventually transferred the mission to the European Union in 2004.

Synchronizing the efforts of the Principals was difficult, with the Office of the High Representative often challenged in leading them to achieve a shared vision. Each agency had its own agenda and mandate, and each had its own problems securing adequate resources for its mission, so the civil reconstruction effort fell short. Demining the Inter-Entity Boundary Line that separated the former warring factions was slow, leaving the region extremely dangerous. Meanwhile, billions of dollars in economic aid were misdirected through corruption, allowing a host of illegal economic activities to spawn. From Dayton through my tenure as SFOR commander, Bosnia's economy suffered from rampant human trafficking, drugs, piracy of intellectual property, illegal logging and smuggling, and extreme levels of corruption that robbed the state of needed revenues.

But what bothered me most was that the aid that reached the people often missed the mark. It reflected what the donors thought was important, and not what the people needed. One farmer had his home rebuilt through donations after the war. The house was beautiful but did not include access to water. The nearest well was driving distance away, and the farmer could not afford a car. He had to beg for rides to get water. There were also villages where the people still lived in squalor, yet they had a brand new church

or mosque. They were resentful that the church or mosque was a higher priority than adequate shelter for their families. I found such situations throughout the country. Not only were these efforts wasteful of time and money, but they also ate away at the credibility of the international community.

SFOR made an honest attempt at fostering unity of effort by developing the Multi-Year Road Map (MYRM) in 2000. The MYRM was a strategic communications tool that established benchmarks toward the full implementation of Dayton's civil and military provisions. It identified several lines of operation relating to economic development, establishment of good governance, and reorganization of Bosnia's military and security forces. It proved highly successful in driving SFOR's activities.

But the MYRM never fully succeeded in creating unity of effort because the road map was developed long after the Dayton Accords' ratification. A road map implemented by the Principals right after Dayton could have established the necessary authorities and responsibilities to prevent the spread of illegal economic activities and blunt the effects of corruption. Therefore, while Bosnia remains at peace, it continues to have difficulties establishing a solid economic foundation, and its political institutions remain less mature than they should be.

## Palestine

Meanwhile, the difficulties in Palestine continue to confound any efforts toward a lasting peace. By all accounts, it should not have gone this way. The Middle East Road Map, the performance-based plan for the establishment of the Palestinian state, was to have resolved the Israeli-Palestine conflict by now. At its inception in mid-2003, the road map offered tremendous promise to the Palestinian people through political reforms, establishment of state institutions such as the security forces, and fair and open elections. These were to be founded on the publication and ratification of a constitution, followed by appointment of state leaders with appropriate authorities. Just as important was the continued encouragement of donor economic support to build a peaceful economy, develop the private sector, and foster a civil society. The road map was supported by a ready and willing interagency and international process

with resources at its disposal. However, pursuing the road map required Palestinian renunciation of violence against Israel. The long history of conflict would have made this difficult under any circumstances, but the Palestinian Authority's failure to rein in terrorist activity was only one factor in its inability to achieve the road map's goals.

During my nearly year-long tenure as the U.S. Security Coordinator to Israel and the Palestinian Authority in 2005, the greatest challenge was the inability of the Palestinian population to establish its own civil norms. The Palestinians were generally unsuccessful at building effective institutions or instilling the rule of law in daily life. In June of that year, I reported to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that there were roughly 58,000 Palestinians holding jobs in the state's disparate security forces, yet only a third of them ever showed up for work. The judicial system, comprising the courts, lawyers, and judges, was undergoing slow reform. There was limited confidence that criminals would be punished for their deeds rather than released back to the streets. The Palestinian Authority's leader, President Mahmoud Abbas, was working to coalesce the disparate factions under him into a cohesive and effective central government. But that was a hard task confounded by several rogue elements seeking to prevent peaceful coexistence with Israel.

### Losing the Initiative

Although the situations in Somalia, Bosnia, and Palestine were very different in their history and their impact on the global environment, their stories reflect common threads. We, as national security professionals, will often default to the strategic view. That is, we recognize that no country can rebuild itself alone after experiencing total conflict. The international community must infuse cash, manpower, and other resources to render aid and build the foundations for the country's rebirth. We also often assert that a country must take responsibility for its own reconstruction. We rightfully respect a nation's sovereignty and therefore often must trust that its provisional postconflict leaders will use donated resources for the common good.

But the above three situations show that we must look at the micro-level, the perspective of the individual victim. Whenever a war ends, these victims care little about our national strategic aims or those of the inter-

national community. They only want answers to basic questions: "What will happen to me? Where will I get food and medical help? How will we care for our children, our sick, and our injured? Who will lead us? Will they help us or try to steal what little we have? What about tomorrow? The day after?" If we take too long and allow others to answer those questions, we lose the initiative.

When initiative is lost, the results are always bad. In Somalia, for instance, the warlords took over the political landscape. In Bosnia, the thugs and criminals became the economic leaders. In Palestine, institutions of good governance, progressive economic activity, and rule of law were lacking. President Abbas' vision of "one law—one gun" was never realized. If we quickly provide solutions to the problems facing the people, backed by the right resources, the people will lose their fear and embrace hope for peace and security.

That is what establishing a Horizon of Hope is about. The United States and the international community must take the initiative to influence and rectify postconflict situations *before* they become new fronts in the war on terror. It is having the resources at the ready, much the way we do now for other humanitarian assistance missions and disaster relief operations. It is having the processes, authorities, and responsibilities prearranged to coordinate and deliver adequate aid, security, and reconstruction capabilities in the critical early moments after the war. But most importantly, it is instilling hope in the minds of victims by providing answers to basic questions of survival.

We want to give victims something seemingly miraculous: a long-term view. This is why it is called a Horizon of Hope; the people have a sense of direction, and they believe the peace and stability we initiate are permanent. Clearly visible on the horizon is a future secure from further conflict, of economic recovery and promise, and of a government responsive to their needs. There lies the next generation of the rebuilt country's citizens: a generation that embraces the rule of law, takes care of its own people, participates in the processes of good governance, and most importantly rejects terrorism and its associated ideologies. Of course, obstacles will litter the path to that horizon, but a hopeful populace will overcome them, knowing that the journey is worth it.

So how can we accomplish this? The horizon is our strategic endstate. What are

the ways and means for creating it, and how do we know when we must employ it? We can start by describing how it differs from traditional military planning. Most of the assigned resources for postconflict situations deal with those conflicts that we either initiate or participate in, the so-called Phase Four style of application. In these cases, we already have the initiative. Our mission is to establish peace in the form of our choosing after we have unseated an undesirable politico-military structure or condition. In theory, we have already assessed the requirements to establish a lasting peace and build the foundations for secure and stable governance, allowing for the eventual transition to a (hopefully) democratic government. We have already learned from Operation *Iraqi Freedom* how difficult Phase Four operations can be.

Consider cases such as Somalia, Bosnia, and Palestine. Creating the Horizon of Hope would have occurred from a cold start, in the absence of any established war plans. Merely subsuming these types of scenarios in the Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan (JSCP) process will not work. First, JSCP is a Defense Department tool, while postconflict scenarios of interest require a deeply embedded interagency process to create the necessary national unity of effort. Second, the JSCP is designed for developing deliberate and contingency plans specific to an expected scenario or range of scenarios. It requires significant manpower and time to produce a single plan. The range of potential scenarios that fall under the horizon umbrella is too great and dynamic. A catastrophic war could flare up and dissipate quickly in a location that we did not anticipate. In the war on terror, these wars matter as they provide potential seedbeds of terrorism directed at the United States or its friends. Third, the resulting plans are necessarily reactive, as they require significant formal authorization from either the executive or legislative branches before operations can begin. For the postconflict situations addressed here, that process already cedes the initiative to the enemies of peace. We need a much more flexible and dynamic tool for these scenarios.

### The Road Map

The good news is that such a tool conceptually exists. Road maps, such as the MYRM in Bosnia and the Middle East Road Map, establish sequences of conditions of progress along a range of functions and

activities that lead to the desired endstates for the assisted nations. Unlike war plans that direct our own activities to achieve an objective, road maps recommend activities of the supported nation. Thus, they provide war-torn nations with plans and a direction that they themselves should embark upon. Its mechanism is reward-based. Initially, the nation receives significant aid and assistance in providing for its people and permits a high degree of external involvement in its affairs. As the nation progresses, the external community transfers responsibilities and authorities to it. The rewards are greater autonomy for the nation and greater stability, economic development, and security for the people. Road maps are also useful in informing the reconstruction effort of the types of external assistance required without being too specific or inflexible. This permissiveness allows tailoring the relief effort to meet the needs of the people as the complexities of the postconflict scenario play out, while encouraging international and nongovernmental organizations to participate in a coordinated fashion.

We can readily develop a generalized set of road maps because the goals of postconflict reconstruction do not vary much. In fact, they tend to contain three basic lines of operation—security, economic, and societal—along which the Horizon of Hope must be established. Lasting progress requires balanced and fully synchronized efforts. Progress along the lines will vary, so they should be kept as simple as possible.

Postconflict reconstruction will generally have two distinct phases: initiation and implementation. The initiation phase covers the international community's first responses to the situation, such as providing basic needs to the people and restoring order. This is the critical phase in which the Horizon of Hope is established. The more situation-dependent implementation phase follows with the deliberate efforts to stabilize, reconstruct, and rebuild the country, concluding with the transition to an effective and stable society. The following describes the three lines of operation by phase.

The *security line of operation* involves those activities and agencies that provide external and internal security to the nation. These include the military, border patrols, customs services, police, and the judicial system (the courts, lawyers, judges, and prisons). During the initiation phase, the focus is on immediately providing law and order

and securing the border, including airports and seaports. Success during initiation instills a sense in the people's minds that the security forces will not tolerate criminal activity and that streets, marketplaces, and business areas are safe. Dominating the implementation phase is the effort to build the indigenous military and police forces to provide for the nation's own security. This includes establishing the military under civilian control and providing mechanisms to prevent corruption within the police, especially reprisal activities related to the war. The implementation phase is complete when international forces no longer actively provide security.

The *economic line of operation* involves those activities and agencies that ensure the basic needs of the people are met and that prepare the society to provide those needs for itself while establishing the foundations of its own economy. At initiation, relief agencies focus on providing crucial supplies and services such as food, water, clothing, and shelter. Also, agencies secure the critical surviving infrastructure such as power grids, transportation networks, farmland, manufacturing, and other elements vital to the early reconstruction of the economy. Initiation further establishes the mechanisms to solicit, receive, and distribute donated resources with a primary objective of preventing the introduction or empowerment of corrupt elements within the populace. The implementation phase involves activities that build the institutions and infrastructure, permitting the nation to feed and care for its own people and provide the conditions under which they can clothe and shelter themselves. The nation also establishes the means to ensure

that corrupt practices and illegal economic activities do not take root. At the end of the implementation phase, the nation's economy is sufficiently self-sustaining that it can seek any further economic assistance on its own through standard international channels.

The *societal line of operation* is the most complex and situation-specific. It encompasses the necessary activities to establish good governance and a stable and self-sustaining populace free from the threats of renewed conflict. The complexity arises in that the society itself will define its own end-state, which may or may not be inimical to the desires of the international community providing relief. External actors will take the lead at initiation but must step back at implementation and play a supporting role to minimize the risk of creating a dependent or resentful society. There will be points of conflict that must be addressed head on in open forums between the society and relief effort. That will be difficult, just as it was in Somalia, Bosnia, and Palestine. But governing this line of operation throughout is expectation management. So long as we give the people hope early, then let them act on that hope in concert with us, the society will progress—and we will get the job done as a team.

### War's Lingering Hazards

The societal line has several components at initiation, each involving close interaction between us and the nation we are helping. The first is the political, with the overarching goal of establishing good leadership for the people and eliminating the bad, such as apprehending war criminals. The challenge is differentiating the two while



Iraqi soldier and judge informing locals about election process, Operation Iraqi Freedom

Fleet Combat Camera Group, Pacific (Michael Larson)

avoiding undesirable power vacuums or creating confusion in the minds of the people. However, a clearly defined and communicable standard of good governance, backed by force if necessary, will ensure that those exercising leadership abide by the rule of law.

The second component is environmental. War is damaging to the environment. From pollution to unexploded ordnance to damaged infrastructure, war zones create lingering hazards that have a depressing effect on the public. Cleaning and resetting the environment is important for reestablishing a sense of normalcy in the populace and reducing health risks.

The third component is health, including caring for the sick and injured and preventing the spread of disease. It also includes the dignified handling of those in need. Visions of overcrowded and understaffed treatment centers reflect poorly on the relief effort as chaotic and uncaring. Conversely, an adequately resourced and efficient treatment center paints a powerful and hopeful picture in the minds of everyone, internally and externally. This point cannot be overemphasized.

Finally, there is the informational component, where the international community and the people of the nation establish common understandings of expectations, needs, and the way ahead. This is where the citizens establish their expectations and voice their needs, which the international community translates into action. It is also where the people establish a renewed sense of culture and identity, followed by openness toward reconciliation. This encourages the locals, particularly those formerly on opposite sides of the conflict, to work together.

In the implementation phase, the people form their own society, guided by the international community, and determine how they want to choose their leaders, maintain their environment, care for their sick, create their own societal norms, and establish educational, cultural, and other institutions. We should guide the society to choose norms consonant with international law, but otherwise support their intentions.

### Advantages and Concerns

This framework for handling postconflict scenarios offers tremendous advantages. First, the requirements of the initiation phase are fairly standard regardless of the situation. Consequently, there is the potential to assign to U.S. Government agencies the responsibility

to provide the necessary capabilities, leading to the assembly of a standing postconflict interagency task force ready to conduct the initiation phase on a moment's notice.

Second, we can modularize the functions along each line of operation to facilitate the distribution of responsibilities among international agencies and nongovernmental organizations. Modularization permits the establishment of different road maps based on classes of scenarios. Examples include size (differentiating future events on the scale of an Iraq versus a Liberia, for example), political nature (permissive environment versus nonpermissive, such as an active insurgency or presence of potential legitimate government elements versus predominance of war criminals or other undesirables), economic nature (landlocked country versus maritime, available critical natural resources, such as nuclear materials, versus purely agricultural versus drug-oriented), and specific threats to stability (pandemic disease, weapons of mass destruction, human trafficking).

Third, we will be better poised to address scenario-specific issues, such as rules of engagement, national and organizational caveats, and other limitations and constraints on the response force. Fourth, it permits the development of effective coordination tools, such as road maps, that empower the effort to communicate progress internally and externally and to tailor the effort in ways most meaningful to the people.

Some may have concerns about establishing such a framework and developing the associated capabilities. First is the fear that if we lean forward too far, we will assume responsibility for an undue percentage of these missions as they arise. We would expend extraordinary amounts of our own resources and not realize burdensharing. That is a patently false assumption. The international community will be more likely to sign up for postconflict operations with the clear goals, capability requirements, and lines of coordination that the framework would provide. Ambiguity and lack of clarity of purpose drive away potential donors of forces and resources.

Second is the concern that many volunteer relief organizations are fiercely independent and will refuse to participate in any centralized mechanism that coordinates relief activities. This framework does not

*ambiguity and lack of clarity of purpose drive away potential donors of forces and resources*

suggest attempts to control the relief effort centrally but rather to encourage greater coordination and communication. It helps us express our intent and ensure we generate the right capabilities to stabilize and reconstruct the nation according to its needs. Lacking a common language and approach guarantees that no such coordination will occur and that the mission will suffer.

The third concern is the potential for "sticker shock." The up-front costs of conducting initiation phase operations will appear disproportionately high, especially in comparison to the up-front costs of interventions in Bosnia and Somalia. However, we have already seen what happened in the long run, that cutting corners early meant far longer and more expensive operations than originally planned. Modularizing road map functions leads to efficiencies that reduce the overall cost of operations.

Whatever solution comes about, it must address postwar situations from the perspective of those who have just lost everything to a terrible conflict. It is in our national interest to ensure that they are cared for by the right people. If that does not happen, someone else will do it, and the results may not be to our liking. If we are to win the war on terror, we must take on the challenge of postconflict situations head on and provide the Horizon of Hope that will convince people in strife that there is indeed a path to lasting peace. After all, these are the same people we will eventually want as partners. **JFQ**

### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: The White House, March 2006), 16.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

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