



Guiding Principles for Stability and Reconstruction INTRODUCING A ROADMAP FOR PEACE

Beth Cole and Emily Hsu, U.S. Institute of Peace

***I**F HISTORY IS ANY INDICATION, we can be certain that the decade ahead will bring with it many new challenges in peace and security, not just in Afghanistan, but also in new crises around the world. These challenges will force us, as they have time and again, to revisit the crippling gap in U.S. civilian capacity to respond to and operate effectively in stabilization and reconstruction missions. The U.S. military has long called attention to this gap, which has left it without an effective and badly needed partner in these complex missions. Among the newest efforts to reverse this trend is a landmark strategic doctrinal manual that sets out a roadmap for helping countries move from violent conflict to peace. Developed by the U.S. Institute of Peace and the U.S. Army's Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, Guiding Principles for Stabilization and Reconstruction provides comprehensive, shared knowledge validated by the decades of civilian experience in these missions. It is a companion to the U.S. Army's revolutionary Field Manual 3-07, Stability Operations. The following article offers a detailed look into the contributions of the unprecedented civilian doctrine, the unique methodology by which it was developed, and its application in what may very well be the most important fight of this new decade—Afghanistan.*

Beth Cole is the director of intergovernmental affairs at the U.S. Institute of Peace and the institute's liaison to the U.S. Army Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute. Cole received a B.A. in political science and French from the University of Vermont and completed Kent State University's program on international organizations in Geneva, Switzerland.

Emily Hsu is a program specialist at the U.S. Institute of Peace Post Conflict Peace and Stability Operations Center. She graduated from Northwestern University Medill School of Journalism and received an M.A. in international security from Georgetown University.

The Need for Shared Vision

The stakes for success in Afghanistan are higher than ever. At risk are two things: a fragile peace for the Afghan people and the security of America. After having invested our blood and treasures for many long years across the globe, we embark upon a new course in Afghanistan and prepare to deploy tens of thousands of additional U.S. Soldiers. We cannot afford to repeat the mistakes of the recent past, the consequences of which are so severe that they could overwhelm the political will of our nation.

The woes of the Afghan campaign result from many sources. According to a diagnosis last year by the top U.S. commander in Afghanistan, a significant source has been the absence of “unity of effort” in conducting the mission.¹ Seven years of incoherent approaches and competing priorities across the U.S. government, its global partners, and the Afghan government might be the Achilles heel that undermines our success. Achieving unity of effort in these complex environments requires an institutionalized approach that

PHOTO: U.S. Marine Lt. Col. William F. McCollough, commander of 1st Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, and his staff walk with the Provincial Nawa District Governor Gul Mangal before a shura in Nawa District, Helmand Province, Afghanistan, 4 November 2009. The men will discuss the benefits of growing wheat over poppies, water irrigation, and security in the area. (U.S. Marine Corps, CPL Artur Shvartsberg)

includes a shared strategic vision for where we are headed, a coherent plan with targeted priorities that cascade from that vision, and implementation of that plan in accordance with shared principles of action.

Today the U.S. military is equipped with a sophisticated architecture for that kind of strategic thinking and planning, including—

- Doctrine to guide its actions.
- A “lesson learned” system to refresh the doctrine.
- A planning apparatus that turns doctrine into concrete knowledge.
- An education and training system that imparts this knowledge throughout its ranks.
- A powerful web of support for each Soldier.

This time-tested system is what allows the military to be effective, synchronized, and efficient, even in the most complex of missions—those involving stabilization and reconstruction.²

By comparison, the civilian agencies of the U.S. government, who are charged with leading these missions, still operate without any unifying framework or shared set of principles to guide their actions. This forces civilian planners and practitioners to adopt ad hoc methods that impede the cooperation and cohesion so vital in any stability and reconstruction mission. If Soldiers are to focus on what they are trained to do—establishing security—civilians must be able to sustain that security beyond the presence of a foreign military. The U.S. military must also assist the host nation in establishing the rule of law, stable governance, a sustainable economy, and social well-being. The U.S. military has long sought a partner with the capability to shape these critical end states.

Guiding Principles for Stabilization and Reconstruction

While filling this civilian gap is no simple feat, we are making important inroads today. In October 2009, the U.S. Institute of Peace and the U.S. Army’s Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute published *Guiding Principles for Stabilization and Reconstruction*—the first strategic doctrine ever written for civilians engaged in stability and reconstruction missions.³ The *Guiding Principles* is a practical roadmap for peace builders involved in helping countries transition from violent conflict to peace. The manual documents and records the vast experience and lessons learned by civilians

...the civilian agencies of the U.S. government...operate without any unifying framework or shared set of principles to guide their actions.

who have participated in past missions, and it offers comprehensive, shared knowledge that has been validated by dozens of peace-building institutions.

The release of the *Guiding Principles* manual follows closely on the heels of the launch of the U.S. Army’s revolutionary Field Manual (FM) 3-07, *Stability Operations*, which was a major milestone for Army doctrine. Both manuals are unprecedented in scope and provide a baseline set of principles for engaging in these missions—FM 3-07 for the U.S. military and the *Guiding Principles* for U.S. civilian agencies. Released just one year prior to the *Guiding Principles*, FM 3-07 described for the first time the important role of military forces in supporting broader U.S. efforts in these missions. The two manuals share a common face because they are companion documents and embrace a common strategic framework founded on five end states for stabilization and reconstruction:

- Safe and secure environment.
- Rule of law.
- Stable governance.
- Sustainable economy.
- Social well-being.

For civilian planners and practitioners in these missions, the *Guiding Principles* offers three important contributions: a shared strategic framework, a comprehensive set of shared principles, and key trade offs, gaps, and challenges. Together, these tools aim to increase civilian capacity in U.S. government agencies and improve prospects for unity of effort in missions like Afghanistan.

Strategic Framework

From a planning perspective, perhaps the most significant contribution of the *Guiding Principles* is the Strategic Framework for Stabilization and Reconstruction (Figure 1). This framework offers a comprehensive look at the complexity of these missions and is built on a validated construct of common end states, crosscutting principles, necessary conditions, and major approaches. The overlapping



courtesy of author

Guiding Principles manual launch event, 7 October 2009. Left to right, Dr. Richard Solomon (President, USIP), LTG William B. Caldwell, IV (Commanding General, Combined Arms Center, U.S. Army), Janine Davidson (Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, Plans, U.S. Department of Defense), Robert Jenkins (Deputy Coordinator, Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization, U.S. Department of State), Beth Cole (Lead Writer of manual and Director of Intergovernmental Affairs, USIP), and Daniel Serwer (Vice President of Centers of Innovation, USIP)

major military, diplomatic, and development organizations, as well as several host-country plans developed for stability and reconstruction missions. From this investigation, we discovered an important point of agreement. In every war-torn country, we consistently strive for five general end states. Within each of these end states, we identified up to five necessary conditions, or “minimum standards,” that we must meet to achieve those end states.⁴

bubbles signify interconnectedness across all five end states; the central bubble suggests that the seven crosscutting principles apply in all five end states.

The framework emerged from an extensive analysis of primary resources, including the strategic outlays of

Each of the five end states corresponds with a dedicated section of the *Guiding Principles* manual. These sections drill further below the conditions level, identifying major approaches used and providing key guidance for those approaches. Each



Figure 1. Strategic framework for stabilization and reconstruction.

end state section also includes relevant trade offs, gaps, and challenges, which subsequent sections of this article will explain. An abridged sample of this construct as applied for a safe and secure environment is presented in Figure 2.

The greatest strength of the framework lies in the inclusive and comprehensive process through which it was developed, making the content and structure truly shared. This trait is what gives the framework tremendous potential in uniting disparate players behind a common starting point from which to assess, prioritize, plan, implement, and measure progress in these missions. The framework does not dictate priorities, but depicts a high-level map for where we want to go. From there, planners and practitioners can begin to identify the many possible roads that lead to that destination and debate the best courses for success—based, of course, on the unique circumstances of every conflict. By visualizing in one place all the critical levers for a sustainable peace, leaders can make informed decisions about priorities and resource allocation. Finally, the framework enables civilian agencies to begin institutionalizing their approaches to these missions, thereby minimizing ad hoc decisions, improving cohesion, and boosting overall chances for success.

Guiding Principles

The manual's second contribution is a shared set of principles that guides both civilian and military

actions toward a common goal. Doctrine, as we have learned, sets baseline principles of action that have withstood the test of time. For example, "host-nation ownership" is a fundamental principle that is valid for all end states. In the manual, ownership is the idea that "the affected country must drive its own long-term development needs and priorities."⁵ No matter what end state we are working toward, promoting a sense of ownership by the host-nation government and its people is imperative. Such ownership is a prerequisite for sustainable stability and growth.

The manual elevates this and other principles as ones that should shape strategic plans while guiding the actions of peace builders on the ground. We carefully studied and extracted these principles from best practices that came directly from the field. They are not the personal opinions of the writers, nor do they adopt any single school of thought. We will discuss the unique methodology behind the development of the *Guiding Principles* manual a little later in the article.

Trade offs, Gaps, and Challenges

A third unique contribution of the *Guiding Principles* is the elevation of key trade offs, gaps, and challenges. At a cursory glance, the strategic framework's "snapshot" of stability and reconstruction missions may appear neat and orderly, but the reality is that these missions are often precisely the opposite. To underscore their inordinate complexities, we high-

lighted within each end state the toughest *trade offs* likely to arise in executing day-to-day decisions, the biggest *gaps* in knowledge we have yet to fill as a community of practice, and the many *challenges* we have encountered in trying to implement what we already know. In identifying these elements, we hope to inspire dialogue about possible solutions and present a potential research agenda for future investigations critically needed to continue improving success in these missions.

End State: SAFE AND SECURE ENVIRONMENT

Necessary Condition: Cessation of Large-Scale Violence

- **Approach:** Separation of Warring Parties
Example Guidance: Separate forces to create time and space for the peace process.
- **Approach:** Enduring Ceasefire/Peace Agreement
Example Guidance: Understand that stopping armed conflict requires political, not military, solutions.
- **Approach:** Management of Spoilers
Example Guidance: Anticipate obstructionists and understand their motivations.
- **Approach:** Intelligence
Example Guidance: Local intelligence is a must, but be very aware of sensitivities.

Trade off: Prioritizing short-term stability vs. confronting impunity.
Gap/Challenge: Civilian oversight of the security forces.

Figure 2

Built on Decades of Experience

The unprecedented two-year process through which this manual came to life is as important as the content itself. The core writing team first received a crash course in doctrine development from the U.S. Army's Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, along with invaluable guidance from an extraordinary place that produces doctrine regularly: the U.S. Army Combined Arms Center, whose commander, Lieutenant General William B. Caldwell IV, has since been tapped to lead the NATO training mission in Afghanistan. From our military partners, we learned that doctrine is authoritative in its guidance, but not prescriptive. Doctrine offers a baseline set of principles that can help coordinate the efforts of disparate actors and free decision makers, planners, and practitioners from ad hoc approaches.

With this knowledge, we set out to gather hundreds of strategic-level documents produced by the spectrum of peace-building institutions that have experience in these missions: military, diplomatic, and development agencies of individual nations; the many agencies of the United Nations; other inter-governmental organizations; and nongovernmental organizations. These volumes contained lessons documented from a long history of both muddy combat boots and plain old shoes on the ground. The list of these resources, contained in Appendix A of the manual, draws from experiences in El Salvador, Cambodia, the Balkans, Rwanda, Haiti, Liberia, and many more.

In painstakingly reviewing this body of literature over several months, we were able to identify the principles that consistently rose to the top across dozens of organizations and piece together the foundations for the *Guiding Principles*, which reflects the collective reality and experience of those agencies. As mentioned previously, the manual's content draws directly from the contributions of practitioners past and present. Out of the manual's 800-plus citations, more than 200 are attributed to UN agencies, another 100-plus to the U.S. Agency for International Development, 66 to the United Kingdom government, 31 to the World Bank, and 26 to the U.S. military—just to name a few.

We followed this lengthy review process with months of extensive vetting across the U.S. and global communities of practice. The review

included a three-week tour across Europe to hold workshops with key international organizations and governmental agencies. The manual underwent additional months of revision, based on specific feedback on the content and structure of the manual.

Applying the Framework to Afghanistan

With any new tool, determining the true measure of its worth requires taking it for a road test. In an October 2009 exercise for the House Armed Services Subcommittee for Oversight and Investigations, lead writer of the manual, Beth Cole, applied the strategic framework to the situation in Afghanistan and assessed the conflict against the framework's seven crosscutting principles and 22 conditions. Cole highlighted eight priorities. We discuss each of them in detail below (Figure 3).

Eight Priorities for Afghanistan

The following sections address the eight priorities, which we have derived in part from the recommendations posed to the House Armed Services subcommittee.

Political primacy. Political settlements are essential starting points for promoting national unity and reconciliation that will enable long-term peace and economic and social growth. In Afghanistan today, the leadership crisis involving the presidential office is one that requires acute attention. When some or all of the population no longer view a governing authority as legitimate, peaceful political processes are more likely to break down, making violent alternatives more likely as well. While the crisis has passed for now, questions about the legitimacy of Hamid Karzai's leadership continue to divide the Afghan populace and could spur further violence.

Political settlements are necessary not just at the highest levels of leadership but down to the level of the foot soldier. We must separate those who refuse to forsake violence from reconcilable fighters who only partake in the insurgency out of fear or because they have no viable alternative. Political settlements at this level may involve reintegrating fighters into standing security forces or helping them become peaceful, productive participants in governance, economic, and social life. We have done this before in equally challenging places and we can succeed



Figure 3. Strategic framework with priority conditions for Afghanistan.

again. Nevertheless, we still lack a strategic approach to fostering and sustaining these negotiations.

Physical security. We cannot succeed anywhere in Afghanistan without first establishing a safe and secure environment for the Afghan people.⁶ Physical security primarily involves protecting the population, but it also includes securing key government, cultural, religious, and economic centers whose destruction or harm could incite further violence.

Increasing physical security for the population and gaining their trust will require international forces to work more closely with the Afghanistan National Security Forces. It will also require closing the gap that has grown between the International Security Assistance Force and the population. In these environments, people often fear for their safety and that of their family and friends, and in an insurgency environment they are likely to side with whomever provides them security. Protecting the population from insurgent violence, intimidation, corruption, and coercion is the key to winning the counterinsurgency fight and tipping the balance of support to the

International Security Assistance Force and Afghan government. Ultimately, the Afghans themselves must be able to provide for their own security.

Territorial security. We must prioritize territorial security by mitigating the threats over the long, treacherous Afghanistan-Pakistan border from which many of the greatest insurgent challenges emanate. Increasingly, insurgent leaders and other extremist Islamist groups operate from Pakistan, enjoying the support and protection of one another, as well as some elements of the Pakistani government. From its base in Pakistan, Al-Qaeda continues to provide the Afghan insurgency not only with fighters, suicide bombers, and technical assistance, but also with training and financial support for its operations. The presence of these

Ultimately, the Afghans themselves must be able to provide for their own security.



An Afghan National Army soldier provides security during a joint patrol in Zabul Province, Afghanistan, 30 November 2009. The Afghan National Army's mission is to safeguard the independence and territorial integrity of their country.

threats in the border regions also threatens major supply routes used by the International Security Assistance Force. Establishing territorial security over the border will require a higher level of engagement between the governments of Afghanistan and Pakistan. Ultimately, the two governments will have to forge sustainable agreements for security, trade, and routine travel.

Legitimate monopoly over the means of violence. The Afghans must achieve legitimate monopoly over the means of violence. Increasing the size and accelerating the growth of the Afghan National Security Forces is the challenging mission that General Caldwell has assumed and is one that requires the skills of the Departments of Justice, State, and Homeland Security. In addition to training and equipping legions of police and Soldiers, it is critical that we provide the necessary mentoring, infrastructure, and administrative support to those responsible for managing these forces. Supporting the managerial aspects of the security forces is just as important as boosting their operational capacity. Oversight involves managing district, provincial, and national institutions and ministries with responsibilities for budget execution, personnel management, professional development, and accountability for actions taken by security forces.

Control over illicit economy and economic threats to peace. Even with professional Afghan

forces and a robust International Security Assistance Force presence protecting the population, violence will continue if we do not disrupt, curtail, and try to extinguish the sources of insurgent economic support. We need to continue to identify and disrupt financial networks of local power brokers, insurgent groups, transnational organized crime, and terrorist organizations supporting violence in Afghanistan. This means shutting down foreign financing and disrupting a growing narcotics trade. Severing this flow of illicit resources also helps limit the culture of impunity that results from the entrenchment of criminal networks throughout the economy and within the government. Corruption in the government is tied to the narcotics trade. Funding comes from the narcotics trade.

Access to justice. The Afghan population needs improved access to justice. This means having security forces that protect the population by removing threats, investigators that apprehend financiers of the insurgents, anti-narcotics police

...violence will continue if we do not disrupt, curtail, and try to extinguish the sources of insurgent economic support.

that destroy opium-processing facilities and interdict drug shipments, and an accessible means to address grievances. Improving access to justice may mean bolstering or rebuilding the informal mechanisms for community-level dispute resolution that the Taliban and other insurgents now provide, while resourcing the fledgling formal justice system that provides a continuum from police to defense attorney, then prosecutor to judge, and finally to corrections.

Provision of essential services. To ensure long-term stability, the Afghan government must have the capability and the will to provide the population with essential services, including security, the rule of law, and basic human needs. Afghans must have a reason to support their government. This will only be a lost cause if their government is engaged in corruption and abuse of power or is too weak or unwilling to punish bad behavior by power brokers. To move the population off the fence or away from the insurgents, we must help build the Afghan government so it can deliver these services and be seen as the deliverers. Although we have improved the government's ability to provide basic health care, education, sanitation, food, security, and other core services, the Taliban and other insurgents are providing shadow governance and avenues for

justice, and in the process, de-legitimizing the central government and, in a return to repressive rule, curtailing services to women and other vulnerable groups. If the Afghan government does not deliver services, the insurgents will. We should also seek to improve regional and local governance through informal and formal mechanisms to replace the traction the Taliban and other insurgents have gained by developing a religious and cultural narrative that connects to Afghans.

Stewardship of state resources. Essential services should take place within a construct of institutions of governance. Many Afghans are on the fence and a national crisis exists over leadership of the Afghan state. It is paramount to prioritize support for subnational institutions of governance—state and non-state—that provide the entry point for services and boost confidence in the idea of an accountable and legitimate government. We should enlarge our view of acceptable forms of governance and turn to traditional, informal, tribal, community, and local structures. We should also provide political, financial, and technical assistance to help Afghans serve their communities.

National ministries that have been the focus of attention still require support and enhanced accountability and transparency to win back the trust of the people. Improved financial management and procurement and concessions practices, controls to mitigate against corruption, increasing capacity within the civil service, and better donor coordination to achieve all of these are pressing requirements that are long overdue. Petty corruption is not the issue, but the corruption that enables a dangerous nexus of officials, drug lords, criminal organizations, and insurgents must be halted immediately.

Other Advances in Civilian Capability

While the *Guiding Principles* manual is an important step forward, it is just one brick in the broader architecture necessary to improve civilian capability. For more than six years, the U.S. Institute of Peace has been helping to build the foundation



U.S. Army, SGT Jennifer Cohen

A member of the Nangarhar Provincial Reconstruction Team, left, distributes items to a woman and her daughters during a humanitarian aid hand out in Dudarek, Afghanistan, 2 November 2009.



U.S. Air Force. TSGT Francisco V. Govea

A Soldier carries school supplies in Rajankala, Afghanistan, 2 December 2009. International Security Assistance Forces are providing school supplies in Rajankala.

for that architecture by developing tools and assets for U.S. civilians engaged in these missions, in both Washington and in the field. To help replace ad hoc approaches in the U.S. government with deliberative planning and execution, several federal departments (including Treasury, Justice, Commerce, Agriculture, Homeland Security, and the U.S. Agency for International Development) have come together under an interagency coordination cell known as the U.S. State Department's Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization. The 1986 Goldwater-Nichols effort to unify the armed services was a long and rough road. Uniting civilian assets from disparate agencies with varying authorities, appropriation accounts, and missions is also a Herculean task. However, time is not on our side. We need progress in Afghanistan now.

We have cause for optimism in the field in Afghanistan today. U.S. agencies are on the right path. Last year, the U.S. Embassy in Afghanistan conducted a civilian-led process, involving the International Security Assistance Force and U.S. forces, to develop the Integrated Civil-Military Campaign Plan.⁷ In producing the plan, the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization applied the planning expertise it forged over the past four years. Today, the embassy, the International Security Assistance Force, and U.S. forces have organized into teams to execute this plan along

with the military campaign plan. In addition, the civil-military structure we have sought for years is taking shape as we speak in Regional Commands East and South—the two regions of greatest insurgent activity. Appointment of senior civilian representatives as counterparts to the regional military commanders also marks a significant step forward.

With incremental advancements like these on several different fronts, the hope is that we are, slowly but surely, building a solid foundation on which we can continue to develop tools to improve civilian capability for future missions. Hundreds of new civilians are now deploying to Afghanistan, allowing us finally to bring “all elements of national power” to the fight. There is no better opportunity to put to work the best practices we have learned over the last seven difficult years—and to shape those efforts with the *Guiding Principles*. **MR**

NOTES

1. International Security Assistance Force, “Commander’s Initial Assessment,” Kabul, Afghanistan (30 August 2009), 1-3.
2. For the purposes of this article, “stabilization and reconstruction” missions refer to those that involve helping a country recover from violent conflict and build sustainable peace.
3. See <www.usip.org/resources/guiding-principles-stabilization-and-reconstruction>.
4. The term “minimum standards” is derived from “Sphere Project: Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response,” which set minimum standards for the provision of humanitarian aid.
5. U.S. Institute of Peace and U.S. Army Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, *Guiding Principles for Stabilization and Reconstruction* (October 2009), 3-13.
6. International Security Assistance Force, 1-1.
7. United States Government Integrated Civilian-Military Campaign Plan for Support to Afghanistan, 10 August 2009.