SELECT RAND RESEARCH ON

Counterinsurgency, Stability Operations, Support to Foreign Internal Defense, Nation-Building, and Special Operations

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This brief volume is an important resource for anyone who is interested in gaining an informed understanding of a persistent, though usually low-level, military threat to U.S. security. This threat has been characterized in many ways: low-intensity conflict, irregular warfare, special warfare, counterinsurgency, counter-terrorism, peace enforcement, and hybrid warfare. Although such conflicts do not require the United States to deploy large numbers of forces at any given time, they often last for many years—even decades. Moreover, they have proven difficult to prosecute and conclude in ways that serve our nation's interests and meet its strategic objectives.

Since the 1960s, the RAND Corporation has conducted research and analyses on such small wars and on the nation-building activities that typically occur in their aftermath. These studies have varied widely in scope and approach. They have applied both quantitative and qualitative methods. Some studies have focused on specific conflicts, while others have examined broad trends. This volume succinctly surveys the best examples from this ongoing body of research that are cleared for public release and synthesizes their collective results.

Readers of this volume should not only learn what is currently known about which strategies and practices are likely to succeed in small wars but also develop realistic, evidence-based expectations about their outcomes.

Valuable as the current state of knowledge is, researchers and analysts must continue to improve our understanding of small wars, and how to deter or conduct and win them. The threat evolves, experience builds, and analytic methods advance. This volume might also help to identify opportunities for additional analyses to fill in knowledge gaps, address emerging questions, or extend the scope of past research. We welcome your suggestions.

* * *

This volume is one of a series initiated by RAND Arroyo Center, the Army's federally funded research and development center for studies and analysis. Inaugural titles include Security Cooperation; Counterinsurgency, Stability Operations, Support to Foreign Internal Defense, Nation-Building, and Special Operations; China; and Information Operations, Information Warfare, and Influence. Each succinctly synthesizes decades of RAND research and analysis on topics that represent perennial and evolving challenges to our nation's security.

RAND conducted each of the analyses at the request of a senior leader, uniformed or civilian, who faced a major decision and required high-quality, objective research to help inform it. As a result, each analysis was designed to be not only rigorous and reliable, but also responsive, relevant, and immediately useful. These studies also display the variety of analytic capabilities, methods, and tools that RAND has applied—and sometimes originated or extended—to address our national security challenges. They illustrate the power of applied transdisciplinary research to address complex policy issues through engagement with stakeholders and continual adaptation to exploit improved data sources and advanced analytic methods. The studies highlighted and synthesized here were sponsored by the U.S. Army, the U.S. Air Force, and the Office of the Secretary of Defense and conducted in three federally funded research and development centers managed by RAND: RAND Arroyo Center, Project AIR FORCE, and the National Defense Research Institute.

Though intended to be timely, these analyses have retained their value over time. Together they provide a coherent accumulation of innovation, knowledge, and insights, and they demonstrate the value of sustained, strategic investments in defense analysis. In short, they fulfill RAND's mission to improve policy and decisionmaking through research and analysis and exemplify its core values of quality and objectivity.

Sally Sleeper
Vice President, Army Research Division
Director, RAND Arroyo Center
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WHAT RAND RESEARCH SAYS ABOUT COUNTERINSURGENCY, STABILIZATION, AND NATION-BUILDING

RAND has conducted an extensive body of work on what is sometimes characterized as the other war, that is, those conflicts that have mostly engaged the United States over the past 70 years. These “other wars” have acquired multiple descriptive labels to include low intensity conflict, irregular warfare, special warfare, counterinsurgency (COIN), counterterrorism, peace enforcement, and hybrid warfare. These conflicts have often led to peacekeeping, stabilization and reconstruction activities, also characterized as nation-building. Although these terms have distinct and sometimes doctrinal definitions, they generally describe different and often overlapping aspects of continuous military campaigns. For example, the 1992 U.S. intervention in Somalia began as a humanitarian support mission, transitioned to peacekeeping, and then descended into counterinsurgency before being terminated in 1994, only to reemerge as a counterterrorism mission two decades later. The Afghan and Iraq campaigns began as forced regime change followed by stability operations leading to protracted counterinsurgency campaigns during which the ground combat role was gradually transferred to indigenous troops advised, equipped, and enabled by U.S. forces. There is also a large body of RAND literature on terrorism and counterterrorism, mentions of which we included as related to U.S. military interventions.

Counterinsurgency

Vietnam was the original stimulus for much of RAND’s research on counterinsurgency. Two veterans of France’s losing struggle against Algerian nationalist insurgents wrote early reports containing insights that would become staples of counterinsurgency literature for decades to come. They argued that the population was the key terrain; that a conventional warfare mindset would handicap population-centric operations, that external sanctuaries needed to be eliminated, and that the causes and motivations of the insurgents had to be understood. RAND researchers also looked at the British counterinsurgency campaigns in Malaya and Kenya and the campaign conducted by the white settler-dominated Rhodesian government. These studies emphasized the importance of unity of command, pointing, in particular, to the British appointment of a single individual with authority over both the military and civil spheres in Malaya.

The war in Vietnam itself became a major research focus. RAND opened an office in Saigon out of which its analysts interviewed defectors and prisoners in an extended study of Viet Cong motivation and morale. This led to further RAND work on the Chieu Hoi program, designed to encourage Viet Cong defection. Two Vietnam-era reports stand out for their wider implication. One, titled Rebellion and Authority, challenged the hearts and minds approach to securing population support, an approach that remains dominant today. The authors argued that people are moved less by their wishes or aspirations—what they would like to have—than by the alternatives actually available to them. By manipulating these more immediate cost/benefit calculations—establishing rewards and penalties—the counterinsurgent can secure the desired behavior. Coercion, discriminately applied, can thus be an effective instrument in securing the populations cooperation.

Forty years later, RAND employed a different methodology in a similar inquiry. In Victory Has a Thousand

Abbreviations

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<td>CERP</td>
<td>Commander’s Emergency Response</td>
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<td>COIN</td>
<td>counterinsurgency</td>
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<td>CORDS</td>
<td>Civil Operations and Local Development Support</td>
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<td>CPA</td>
<td>Coalition Provisional Authority</td>
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<td>DoD</td>
<td>U.S. Department of Defense</td>
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<td>GVN</td>
<td>Government of Viet Nam</td>
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<td>SOF</td>
<td>special operations forces</td>
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Fathers: Sources of Success in Counterinsurgency, RAND researchers matched the results of 30 recently concluded insurgencies against 27 COIN practices, 15 generally considered good (e.g., respecting human rights) and 12 bad (e.g., imposing collective punishments). When tested against the historical record, those COIN campaigns that had a positive balance of good factors versus bad factors were always successful regardless of the distinct nature of the conflict. The authors found that repressive tactics could win phases of COIN operations but generally did not have long-term success. They also found, however, that tangible support and popular support are not always in parallel. In many cases, tangible support appeared to be a more important indicator of success. The population was the center of gravity only when the population was the insurgents’ primary source of tangible support.

The second Vietnam-era report of enduring relevance was titled Bureaucracy Does Its Thing. Its author, Robert Komer, had been the principal force behind the creation of the Civil Operations and Local Development Support (CORDS) program. CORDS brought together pacification efforts countrywide in an integrated structure incorporating all U.S. military, State Department, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and Central Intelligence Agency personnel responsible for supporting local security forces, rooting out Viet Cong cadres and promoting economic development. Komer describes the many obstacles and delays occasioned by bureaucratic resistance encountered in setting up this structure.

A 2006 review of Vietnam-era RAND research, On “Other War”: Lessons from Five Decades of RAND Counterinsurgency Research, cited four findings related to counterinsurgency and irregular warfare of particular relevance to the campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq. These were (1) the importance of civil/military unity of command as exemplified in the CORDS program, (2) the value of amnesty and reward programs for taking enemy fighters off the battlefield on the model of the Chieu Hoi program, (3) the need for border controls to block external sources of support, and (4) the preferability of concentrating stabilization efforts locally rather than concentrating on ambitious nationwide plans.

A few Cold War-era COIN campaigns scored operational successes but most, like that in Vietnam, ended in strategic failure. The lesson drawn by the American body politic and its military leadership from that experience was not to work harder at honing COIN-related skills, but rather to avoid becoming directly involved in such conflicts henceforth. After withdrawing from Vietnam, and for the rest of the Cold War, the United States confined its engagement with insurgencies and counterinsurgencies to advice and material support for one side or the other. There was a corresponding drop-off in counterinsurgency-related studies.

Stabilization

The collapse of the Soviet Union left the United States as the world’s only superpower. Over the following decade, Washington led a series of multinational military interventions, while taking great care to avoid casualties. President Clinton withdrew U.S. forces from Somalia after losing 18 soldiers in a Mogadishu firefight. A RAND examination of public support for U.S. military operations concluded that tolerance for U.S. casualties was based on judgments regarding the benefits and costs as reflected in consensus (or its absence) among political leaders and also the broader support among the public for the mission at hand. When such an agreement is missing or when the stakes of the intervention seem low, as was the case throughout the 1990s, even low costs can erode public support for the intervention. In years following the withdrawal from Somalia, the United States and its allies deployed large and capable stabilization forces to Haiti, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Kosovo in successful efforts that had relatively low costs in terms of U.S. casualties and that were framed to the public as necessary to prevent humanitarian suffering.

This risk calculus changed dramatically in reaction to al Qaeda’s attacks on 9/11. The interventions in Afghanistan and later in Iraq were launched without provisions to counter or deter enduring resistance or to control the costs in terms of American lives or resources. Lessons learned from Cold War-era insurgencies and post–Cold War stability operations alike were ignored. RAND analysis based on historic experience and published as American forces occupied Iraq estimated the manpower requirements for successfully stabilizing a post-conflict society to be on the order of 20 police or soldiers per 1,000 inhabitants. This translated into a force of some

500,000 for Iraq, more than three times the number that was actually deployed there. In other words, these operations were seriously underresourced in ways that undermined their ability to achieve the stated U.S. objectives.

RAND was involved directly and through research in the execution and evaluation of activities in Iraq and Afghanistan. RAND sent several analysts to the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) in Iraq to assist in planning coalition operations and strategies for counterinsurgency and institutional development. Following the closure of the CPA, RAND was given access to its archives and began work on a history of the Iraq occupation. This report found preparations for Iraq’s post-combat stabilization to have been grossly inadequate. Various agency plans were never fully integrated, not even the several developed within the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD). Most planning tended to be based on unexamined best-case assumptions and largely ignored both recent and more distant experience with post-combat stabilization. The CPA and CJTF-7 (the military command for Iraq) were both severely understaffed throughout their existence. President George W. Bush’s decision to delegate responsibility for interagency coordination to the DoD was ineffectual as DoD proved ill-equipped for the task. This left the CPA bereft of adequate guidance, oversight, and support.

RAND also assigned analysts to the U.S. military command in Afghanistan where they helped design and implement the Afghan Local Police (ALP) program. RAND analysts found weaknesses and suggested improvements in COIN campaign assessment techniques, in efforts to build the Afghan army, in programs for encouraging insurgent defections, and in arrangements for civil and military integration.

A review of the Commander’s Emergency Response Program (CERP) funds found that this form of spending, usually for small development projects, could be effective when nested within operations. “Softer” outcomes (e.g., building relationships with locals) were more important to implementers than building infrastructure. Almost all operators indicated that implementation was suboptimal and significant changes in the program were desirable. The report recommended that (1) the program be restricted to small dollar–value projects, (2) processes be put in place to ensure that CERP projects were effectively transitioned to incoming units, (3) those units should have personnel with appropriate training and experience to execute CERP, and (4) a more formal role should be established for USAID and civilian authorities in the implementation of CERP.

RAND has also conducted empirical research to assess where and when the United States has undertaken stabilization operations and when it has been successful in achieving its political objectives. Specifically, RAND undertook a review of some 145 U.S. military interventions going back to 1898 when the Spanish-American War resulted in the liberation of Cuba and the conquest of the Philippines. Findings relevant to the counterinsurgency and stabilization aspects of these operations include:

- The United States has generally been able to achieve its objectives when it applies substantial numbers of forces, particularly ground forces.
- Pre-intervention planning and nonmilitary resources are critical to success.
- The ability of the United States to focus on and achieve its political objectives in stability operations appears to diminish as the intensity of conflict increases.
- The initial quality of host-nation political institutions and the support of the host-nation government can have a substantial effect on the success of stability operations.
- Third-party interference can substantially affect the likelihood of success.
- Operations tend to last significantly longer than intended.

Past RAND work has also assessed the effectiveness of U.S. stabilization missions, large and small. RAND drew on several hundred cases to evaluate the efficacy of low-cost and small-footprint military options for intervention in civil conflicts, such as those in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Syria, and Yemen. The study concluded that small interventions can reduce the odds of defeat, but not even large interventions can significantly improve the chances of outright victory. Foreign interventions can help prevent the defeat of a partner government, but they do not, on average, increase the chances of a decisive military victory. Thus, interventions of at least 1,000 soldiers roughly double the probability of achieving a negotiated settlement between the government and rebels, and larger interventions can improve
these odds still more—albeit at a diminishing rate of return. The same study also concluded that limited strike operations can disrupt militant networks—but generally only when they are conducted intensively and in cooperation with a reasonably effective partner on the ground. Indirect options, such as safe areas, no-fly zones, and interdiction campaigns were found to have limited effects.

Another line of RAND research concluded that successful stabilization depends on success in each of four domains—political, social, security, and economic. Failure in any one of these can doom the entire enterprise. Of course, it is worth noting that there are clearly context-specific factors that shape the success of stabilization (and counterinsurgency) missions. In other words, factors that work in one place might not work in others, even if identically applied.

**Nation-Building**

In addition to assessing discrete stabilization-related programs, activities, and strategies, RAND launched a series of studies evaluating entire stabilization campaigns from the initial entry, whether forced or permissive, through to their final conclusion. The first volume, *America’s Role in Nation-Building: From Germany to Iraq*, described and assessed six stabilization and reconstruction campaigns, beginning with the occupations of Germany and Japan and moving on to the post–Cold War interventions in Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, and Afghanistan. Three subsequent volumes evaluated the performance of the United Nations, the European Union, and the African Union across 18 other interventions.

The first of these volumes evaluated U.S. performance. RAND found that an important determinant of success was the level of effort measured in time, manpower, and money; that the higher the proportion of stabilizing troops to population, the lower the risk of casualties; that unity of command was as important in a peace operation as it is in war; and that it was nearly impossible to put a fragmented nation back together if its neighbors persisted in trying to tear it apart.

Looking across the 24 stabilization campaigns described in these four volumes, RAND found that the majority eventually succeeded in their primary purpose, consolidating an enduring peace, Afghanistan and Iraq being notable exceptions. Most, including Afghanistan and Iraq, also fostered significant economic growth and measurable improvements in governance, democratization, and human development, albeit generally from a very low base.

Interestingly, there did not seem to be any correlation between success or failure to stabilize a society and its prior level of development, experience with democracy, or its degree of ethnic, religious, or linguistic diversity. The two conditions that best distinguished successful from unsuccessful stability operations were whether neighboring governments had been persuaded not to oppose the effort, and whether the contending factions within the society had been coopted into some nonviolent form of power-sharing and peaceful competition.

**By, With, and Through Counterinsurgency**

Frustrated with the cost, casualty toll, and duration of the Afghan and Iraqi campaigns, the American public and its leaders again turned away from large-scale counterinsurgency, nation-building, and stability operations. The Obama administration withdrew U.S. forces from Iraq, made no appreciable effort to stabilize post-Qaddafi Libya, and did not intervene to stop Syria’s civil war. The emergence of the Islamic State gave rise to an alternative U.S. approach that depended much more heavily on indigenous forces bolstered by U.S. advisers, enablers, and air power. This *by, with, and through* strategy led to a new emphasis on building partner capacity for COIN and counterterrorism, and to a growing body of research on that topic.

A RAND review of security assistance in Africa found that these programs have had little net impact on political violence there, but significant positive impacts on the quality of African peacekeeping. Researchers found that durable improvements in indigenous security capacity require the U.S. to make long-term commitments, construct a comprehensive political-military strategy, invest in institutions, and maintain a presence to provide advice and assistance over a long-term horizon.

Other findings from this line of research stress the importance of personal relationships and the need to build rapport and assure continuity as U.S.
advisers rotate in and out. Material assistance has proved less effective than that focused on training and education. Durable improvements require long term commitment and security assistance might not suffice to save a badly faltering partner given the lengthy timelines involved. In highly fragile states, such programs might also prove insufficient to avoid collapse. And, significantly, RAND found that without stabilization, warfighting often does not provide desired outcomes.

**Conclusion**

Much of RAND’s other war research has helped identify emerging best practices which have since become common practice. Two oft-repeated research conclusions, however, tend to be ignored in practice. The manpower guideline of 20 security personnel per 1,000 inhabitants for pacifying (or, in modern parlance, stabilizing) a society emerging from conflict has been written into U.S. military doctrine but is seldom achieved. The reason is clear. This level of foreign troop density can only be attained when seeking to stabilize fairly small societies, such as Bosnia and Herzegovina (with a population of about 3 million) or Kosovo (2 million). The guideline would have yielded a combined force for the simultaneous operation in Afghanistan and Iraq twice the size of the entire active duty U.S. Army, assuming a combined population of approximately 60 million. Such numbers were actually achieved years later, but only after raising, training, and equipping large indigenous armies.

The importance of unifying the management of the civil and military aspects of both COIN and stability operations is another oft-repeated and generally ignored dictum. The most substantial U.S. effort to do so was the CORDS program instituted in the waning years of the Vietnam War. Komer’s account of its difficult and prolonged gestation helps explain why nothing on that scale has been attempted since.

Insurgency is likely to remain the dominant form of armed conflict in the decades to come, as it has been for most of the past 75 years. Today’s *by, with, and through* approach to counterinsurgency has proved a comparatively low cost means to dismantle the Islamic State’s caliphate in Syria and Iraq, but similar approaches have not always been successful. Furthermore, almost any successful counterinsurgency effort also requires an extended commitment to reconstruction and stabilization. The United States has often shown an aversion to post-combat stabilization and reconstruction, which tends to threaten the durability of counterinsurgency accomplishments.
Annotated Bibliography

**COUNTERINSURGENCY**

**Counterinsurgency: A Symposium, April 16–20, 1962**

*Stephen T. Hosmer and S.O. Crane*

*R-412-1-ARPA/RC (2006)*

This report is based on the Symposium on Counterinsurgency held at RAND’s Washington Office during the week of April 16, 1962. The purpose of the symposium was to bring together those with firsthand experience of guerrilla and counterguerrilla warfare for informal exchanges of information that might lead to fresh insights and a detailed body of expert knowledge. The subjects discussed include patterns and techniques of counterinsurgency, effective organizational and operational approaches, political action, psychological warfare, intelligence and counterintelligence, and requirements for victory. This new release of the report includes a new foreword by Stephen T. Hosmer that elucidates the relevance of this symposium to contemporary guerrilla and counterguerrilla operations.

Find the full report at www.rand.org/pubs/reports/R412-1 (originally published in 1963; link to edition reissued in 2006, with new foreword)

**Notes on Non-Military Measures in Control of Insurgency**

*Guy J. Pauker*

*P-2642 (1962)*

A discussion of the nonmilitary measures taken in countering insurgencies in the Philippines and Malaya. Large-scale, structural, social reform seems to have been less important in bringing insurgency under control than is often assumed. However, the reestablishment of the authority of the government was successfully accomplished in both countries and perhaps contributed more to the control of insurgency. This was achieved by implementing firm policies and also by reawakening the people’s confidence and hope through convincing evidence that the government did care about their welfare. In one case, this was done by the national government through Magsaysay; in the other case, by the colonial government through Briggs and Templer.

Find the full document at www.rand.org/pubs/papers/P2642

**Pacification in Algeria, 1956–1958**

*David Galula*

*MG-478-1-ARPA/RC (2006)*

When Algerian nationalists launched a rebellion against French rule in November 1954, France—mired in similar wars for independence in its colonial territories—was in a poor position to cope with further upheaval.
The Algerian strategy encompassed varying approaches and was more adaptable than that of the French, necessitating a rethinking of traditional counterinsurgency methods. In this volume, originally published in 1963, David Galula reconstructs the story of his highly successful command in the district of Greater Kabylia, east of Algiers, at the height of the rebellion, and presents his theories on counterinsurgency and pacification. In the process, he confronts the larger political, psychological, and military aspects of the Algerian war, and provides a context for present-day counterinsurgency operations. This groundbreaking work retains its relevancy as a challenge to traditional counterinsurgency tactics and presents approaches to predicting, managing, and resolving insurgent and guerilla conflict. The parallels between the Algerian war and modern warfare are striking, and lessons can be extracted from French successes and failures in its drive to contain and manage the Algerian uprising. A new foreword by counterterrorism expert Bruce Hoffman elucidates the relevance of this historic study in the context of modern times.

Find the full document at www.rand.org/t/MG478-1 (originally published in 1963; link to edition reissued in 2006, with new foreword)

**Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Algeria**

Constantin Melnik

**D-10671-1-ISA (1964)**

A study of insurgency and counterinsurgency with special attention to the Algerian rebellion as it was viewed from high quarters in the French government. The study is based in the French experience with the insurrections of the Front de Liberation Nationale (FLN) and the Organisation de l’Armee Secrete (OAS) in Algeria and results from the author’s participation in that experience.

Find the full document at www.rand.org/pubs/documents/D10671-1

**Counterinsurgency: Principles and Practices in Viet-Nam**

James Farmer

**P-3039 (1964)**

Discussion of the criteria for measuring success in counterinsurgency. The author concludes that a Viet Cong military victory in South Vietnam is not possible as long as the United States is supporting the government.

Find the full document at www.rand.org/pubs/papers/P3039

**Insurgency and Counterinsurgency: New Myths and Old Realities**

Charles Wolf, Jr.

**P-3132-1 (1965)**

A discussion of the current doctrine that popular support is the key to successful insurgency and counterinsurgency movements. An alternative approach to the analysis of insurgency is presented. Its implications for U.S. attitudes toward the problem and for the design of operationally useful actions and programs in the counterinsurgency field are discussed.

Find the full document at www.rand.org/pubs/papers/P3132-1
Viet Cong Motivation and Morale: The Special Case of Chieu Hoi
J. M. Carrier and Charles Alexander Holmes Thomson
RM-4830-2-ISA-/ARPA (1966)
An examination of the Chieu Hoi (Open Arms) program established by the government of South Vietnam to induce Viet Cong defections and of the motives associated with defection, desertion, and surrender. It is based on interviews with many former Viet Cong and on the personnel data cards of more than 1,000 Viet Cong who rallied to the Government of Viet Nam (GVN) in 1965–1966.
Find the full document at www.rand.org/pubs/research_memoranda/RM4830-2

Some Findings of the Viet Cong Motivation and Morale Study: June–December 1965
Leon Goure, A. J. Russo, and D. H. Scott
RM-4911-2-ISA/ARPA (1966)
A study of Viet Cong captives and defectors, civilian refugees, and North Vietnamese cadres and regulars. The memorandum emphasizes the testimony of Viet Cong captives and defectors who came into government hands from June to December 1965. The interviews are not offered as a statistical sample but as a body of evidence that yields impressions and suggests ways to exploit the current vulnerabilities of the Viet Cong.
Find the full document at www.rand.org/pubs/research_memoranda/RM4911-2

Observations on the Chieu Hoi Program
Lucian W. Pye
RM-4864-1-ISA/ARPA (1969)
A discussion of the Chieu Hoi (Open Arms) program to induce the Viet Cong to return to the South Vietnamese government side. Development of the program is reviewed and suggestions for present and future operations presented.
Find the full document at www.rand.org/pubs/research_memoranda/RM4864-1

Impact of Pacification on Insurgency in South Vietnam
Robert W. Komer
P-4443 (1970)
The 1967–1970 Vietnam pacification program is described in terms of management, style, size, and program emphasis. Compared with previous programs, this pacification program is more comprehensive and requires greater effort. Unified management pulled together a variety of subprograms and for the first time carried them out on a countrywide scale. Although the new program is not without flaws and weaknesses, it has contributed materially to at least an immediate improvement in the GVN’s ability to cope with rural insurgency. Distinctive features include a USAID-supported hamlet school and teacher training program, improved rural hospital facilities, and a massive increase of resource inputs. Programs were staffed and run primarily by Vietnamese from the outset, although extensively subsidized and logistically supported by the United States.
Find the full document at www.rand.org/pubs/papers/P4443
**U.S. Strategy in South Vietnam: Extrication and Equilibrium**

Gerald Cannon Hickey  
D-19736-ARPA (1969)

Failure to appreciate either the political character of revolutionary war or the full effects of U.S. military policy in Vietnam has helped foster conditions favorable to enemy aims that American involvement was originally intended to counter. A prime example: severe disruption of the existing social order in South Vietnam. A wartime boom side by side with mass destruction, near administrative anarchy, and the cultural shock caused by the presence of 700,000 foreigners prompts a doubtful prognosis for the ability of South Vietnam to maintain its equilibrium in the face of U.S. withdrawal unless several ideal political and economic conditions are met. Among others: use of U.S. capital to develop Works Projects Administration-like programs to absorb the unemployed left in the wake of American extrication.

Find the full document at www.rand.org/pubs/documents/D19736

**Why the North Vietnamese Keep Fighting**

Brian Michael Jenkins  
D-20153-ARPA/AGILE (1970)

With a quarter of North Vietnam's troops in the South, leaders historically committed to the struggle, losses acceptable and the prize great if victory is achieved, it is unlikely that the question of whether or not the war should be carried on is seriously debated in Hanoi. Abandoning the war involves too many political risks—among them the possibility that China might well continue support for the war in hopes of advancing its own ambitions in Indochina. The author of this assessment of North Vietnamese war intentions concludes that although postponement or a temporary scaling down of the level of hostilities is a possibility, the arguments for continuing the struggle are too powerful to permit hopeful speculation over a North Vietnamese decision to quit the fight—especially in view of moves in Laos and Cambodia.

Find the full document at www.rand.org/pubs/documents/D20153

**Organization and Management of the New Model Pacification Program, 1966–1969**

Robert W. Komer  
D-20104-ARPA (1970)

This 1970 analysis of pacification organization and management in South Vietnam is believed to be the first comprehensive systematic treatment of the pacification program. It evolved from a three-day seminar at RAND in November 1969, which included an extensive question-and-answer session with two U.S. Army historians who are doing the official history of the Vietnam War. The paper concentrates on the organization and management of this essentially Vietnamese (even if largely U.S.-sponsored) pacification effort—a unique large-scale experiment in how to cope with insurgency war. It is designed as a contribution to a RAND analysis under Advanced Research Projects Agency auspices of U.S. government organization and performance in counterinsurgency war.

Find the full document at www.rand.org/pubs/documents/D20104
**Revolutionary Judo: Working Notes on Vietnam No. 10**

Daniel Ellsberg

D-19807 (1970)

A preliminary draft from 1970 intended to evoke comment and counterexamples by analyzing the tendency of an existing authority to “cooperate suicidally” with insurgents by actions that alienate the public. Using “judo,” the rebels (R) act as the controller in a servo-system in which A (Authority) and P (Public) are the main energy sources. Small-energy inputs from R (e.g., assassinations, small attacks, sniper fire) evoke large-energy responses from A, such as airstrikes on the snipers’ villages. These responses, in turn, cause significant shifts in P’s support away from A. One of the most useful aids to communistic insurgents is for A to suppress the noncommunist opposition. If A will not cooperate, if (as in Bolivia) it suppresses any tendencies to alienate the population under R’s stimulus; R’s efforts alone cannot rouse P to overthrow A.

Find the full document at www.rand.org/pubs/documents/D19807

**Border Security in South Vietnam**

Marvin Schaffer and Milton G. Weiner

R-572-ARPA (1971)

This summary report is concerned specifically with infiltration of personnel across the land borders of South Vietnam. Three border security programs are discussed: enhanced border surveillance and two manned systems—a strong-point system and a barrier system (strong-points plus barrier). The two latter systems would involve “screening forces” deployed forward for surveillance and interdiction and “fire support and maneuver forces” to engage the enemy. The strong-point system would consist of a string of semi-independent defense positions to survey the border area and provide immediate local reaction with forces, including artillery and helicopters. The barrier would increase the capability of the strong-point for immediate and local reaction to infiltration. The barrier type considered in this report employs detection devices linked to emplaced ordnance through a communication network under human control. The costs and effectiveness of the three programs are estimated.

Find the full report at www.rand.org/pubs/reports/R0572

**Organizing and Managing Unconventional War in Laos, 1962–1970**

Douglas S. Blaufarb

R-919-ARPA (1972)

A case study in a broader examination of the strengths and weakness of the U.S. government in dealing with counterinsurgency. This report describes and assesses the U.S. role in Laos from 1962, when the Geneva Accords went formally into effect, to 1970, when the “quiet war” in Laos intensified and changed its character. The emphasis is on organizational and managerial problems, especially given the constraints imposed by the Geneva Accords.

Find the full report at www.rand.org/pubs/reports/R919

Robert W. Komer
R-967-ARPA (1972)
An analysis of the impact of institutional factors on the U.S./GVN response in Vietnam. Essentially, both governments attempted to handle an atypical conflict situation by means of institutions designed for other purposes. Such constraints as institutional inertia—the inherent reluctance of organizations to change operational methods except slowly and incrementally—influenced not only the decisions made but what was actually done in the field. These constraints helped lead to

• an overly militarized response
• diffusion of authority and fragmentation of command
• hesitation to change the traditional relationship of civilian to military leadership
• agency reluctance to violate the conventional lines dividing responsibilities

The conclusion is that atypical problems demand special solutions. Policymakers must be sure the institutions carrying out the policy can execute it as intended. Adequate follow-through machinery must exist at all levels, to force adaptation if necessary. Where the United States is supporting an enfeebled ally, effective means of stimulating optimum indigenous performance are essential.

Find the full report at www.rand.org/pubs/reports/R967

The Chieu Hoi Program in South Vietnam, 1963–1971

Jeanette A. Koch
R-1172-ARPA (1973)
Begun in 1963 by the United States, which recognized its potential as a counterinsurgency weapon, the Chieu Hoi Program became one of the most cost-effective programs in the pacification effort, resulting in the defection and neutralization of over 194,000 Viet Cong/North Vietnamese Army (VC/NVA) adherents and personnel. Now entirely GVN-administered, it has made some progress as a framework for national reconciliation and as such may serve as a precedent and device for use by those concerned with post-war rehabilitation in South Vietnam or in other countries threatened by insurgency. The author sums up the results of earlier research on the defection of VC/NVA personnel and describes the organization and operation of the program. A bibliography includes numerous documents constituting policy and operating guidelines. Included as appendices are GVN and U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam documents essential to analysis and evaluation of the program.

Find the full report at www.rand.org/pubs/reports/R1172

Government Responses to Armed Insurgency in Southeast Asia: A Comparative Examination of Failures and Successes and Their Likely Implications for the Future

Guy J. Pauker
P-7081 (1985)
This paper was originally presented at a workshop sponsored by the Regional Strategic Studies Programme of the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore, in December 1984. It reviews the efforts of governments
of various Southeast Asian countries, newly independent following World War II, to counter communist and/or separatist insurgencies. The leaders of these fragile new governments discovered that democratic processes were at best partial answers against armed insurgencies and had to be buttressed by military and psychological operations and by social and economic incentives. The author suggests that counterinsurgency operations are successful if military activities are blended skillfully, in the short term, with socioeconomic policies that give the people hope that the future will be better than the present.

Find the full document at www.rand.org/pubs/papers/P7081

**The Army’s Role in Counterinsurgency and Insurgence**

**Stephen T. Hosmer**

**R-3947-A (1990)**

This report identifies potential initiatives for improving Army doctrine and capabilities for counterinsurgency and insurgency warfare. These include recommendations that the Army (1) build and maintain small cadres of counterinsurgency and insurgency experts; (2) create, along with the other services, a counterinsurgency institute to train U.S. and foreign nationals; and (3) ensure more appropriate and effective U.S. arms and equipment transfers to countries facing insurgent threats. The author also examines the reasons insurgency is likely to continue to be a frequent form of conflict, describes the threat of insurgency to important U.S. interests in the developing world, explores the potential for U.S. Army noncombat support to developing countries fighting insurgency, describes the impediments to U.S. influence and assistance, outlines the potential situations that might lead to U.S. involvement in counterinsurgency combat, and discusses the Army’s role in support of friendly insurgency.

Find the full report at www.rand.org/pubs/reports/R3947

**American Counterinsurgency Doctrine and El Salvador: The Frustrations of Reform and the Illusions of Nation Building**

**Benjamin Schwarz**

**R-4042-USDP (1991)**

This report assesses the political and social dimensions of American counterinsurgency policy in El Salvador. It attempts to explain why low-intensity–conflict doctrine has not produced the desired results and to reassess that doctrine’s future utility. The author’s appraisal of U.S. involvement in El Salvador leads him to conclude that there is a vast disparity between U.S. objectives and achievements there. For a decade, U.S. policy toward El Salvador tried to synthesize liberal and conservative aims: foster political, social, and economic reform; and provide security to a country whose freedom from communism the United States deemed essential. In attempting to reconcile these objectives, however, the United States pursued a policy that used means unsettling to itself, for ends humiliating to the Salvadorans, and at a cost disproportionate to any conventional conception of the national interest.

Find the full report at www.rand.org/pubs/reports/R4042
**Defense Policy and Low-Intensity Conflict: The Development of Britain’s “Small Wars” Doctrine During the 1950s**
Bruce Hoffman and Jennifer Taw
R-4015-A (1991)
This report examines the planning and conduct of three counterinsurgency campaigns waged by Great Britain in Malaya, Kenya, and Cyprus during the 1950s. Certain mistakes were repeated in each conflict, from which the following lessons can be drawn: (1) The administration, police, and military should be coordinated under a single individual; (2) intelligence-gathering and collation should be coordinated under a single authority; (3) late recognition of an insurgency is costly; (4) large-scale formal operations should not be emphasized in lieu of special forces operations; (5) routine police work should continue; and (6) without sufficient low-intensity–conflict training for troops and appropriate materiel, the conflict will last longer and cost more. The authors point out that situational factors must be considered in an insurgency; also critical is the nature of the insurgency, especially the breadth of its appeal.
Find the full report at www.rand.org/pubs/reports/R4015

**Lessons for Contemporary Counterinsurgencies: The Rhodesian Experience**
Bruce Hoffman, Jennifer Taw, and David W. Arnold
R-3998-A (1991)
This report examines the counterinsurgency campaign waged by Rhodesia between 1965 and 1980. Its purpose is to analyze the lessons learned from the Rhodesian conflict and to assess the relevance of these lessons both to United States low-intensity–conflict training and doctrine and to the insurgencies occurring at this time in Central America. The research concentrated on the four areas common to most insurgencies: (1) security force organization and attendant command-control-communication issues; (2) countermeasures to suppress urban terrorism; (3) rural pacification and security; and (4) intelligence collection, collation, and dissemination. The greatest challenge facing the U.S. Army in evolving a credible and coherent low-intensity–conflict doctrine was overcoming the institutional barriers that inhibit change and adaptation. The Army must adjust its dominant conventional warfighting mindset to the vagaries and complexities of warfare at the low end of the conflict spectrum.
Find the full report at www.rand.org/pubs/reports/R3998

**Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Iraq**
Bruce Hoffman
The United States has long been frustrated in fighting insurgencies. An almost unbroken string of mostly ill-fated experiences in effectively prosecuting this unique blend of political-military operations can be traced backward over nearly half a century from the situation in Iraq today to the early 1960s when the United States became heavily engaged in Indochina’s wars. Vietnam and Iraq thus form two legs of a historically fraught triangle—with America’s experiences in El Salvador in the 1980s providing the connecting leg. The aim of this paper is not to rake over old coals or rehash now-familiar criticism. Rather, its purpose is to use the present as a prologue to understand in counterinsurgency terms where we have gone wrong in Iraq; what unique challenges the current conflict in Iraq presents to U.S. and other coalition military forces deployed there; and what light both shed on future counterinsurgency planning, operations, and requirements.
Find the full document at www.rand.org/pubs/occasional_papers/OP127
On “Other War”: Lessons from Five Decades of RAND Counterinsurgency Research
Austin Long
MG-482-OSD (2006)

The challenges posed by insurgency and instability have proved difficult to surmount. This difficulty may embolden future opponents to embrace insurgency in combating the United States. Both the current and future conduct of the war on terror demand that the United States improve its ability to conduct counterinsurgency (COIN) operations. This study makes recommendations for improving COIN based on RAND’s decades-long study of it.

First, organization for COIN must be improved. The Provincial Reconstruction Team model that has been implemented in parts of Iraq and Afghanistan is a good start but does not go far enough. This model, which unites U.S. civilian and military personnel with local government, should be expanded and made the basis for current and future COIN efforts. Second, amnesty and reward programs should be implemented or expanded. These programs push insurgents out of the movement without having to fight them literally to the last person. A new study of insurgent motivation and morale should also be undertaken. Third, given the cross-border elements of insurgency in Iraq and Afghanistan, border security systems should be studied for both conflicts. Finally, pacification efforts should be focused on the lowest political echelons and combined with census-taking and national identification cards.

Find the full document at www.rand.org/t/MG482

Rebellion and Authority: An Analytic Essay on Insurgent Conflicts
Nathan Constantin Leites and Charles Wolf, Jr.
R-462-ARPA (1970)

Economic reasoning applied to an analysis of rebellion and authority yields some new conclusions about both. Fundamentally, the struggle for popular support is not exclusively or primarily a “political” contest as these terms are usually understood. People act rationally, calculate costs and benefits, and choose sides accordingly. Successful rebels act on this assumption, applying discriminate force, coercing the populace into cooperation or compliance, and “proving” authority to be not merely unjust, but a certain loser. Rebellion is a system and an organizational technique. It can be countered, but not with rhetoric aimed at winning hearts and minds, and not necessarily with economic pump-priming. What is needed is organizational techniques to match the rebel drive—effective intelligence coupled with a discriminating use of force capable of obtaining compliance from the population. One major caveat: Authorities are not invariably worthy of support from within or without, and careful calculation of ultimate interests should guide U.S. policy on this point.

Find the full report at www.rand.org/pubs/reports/R0462
Counterinsurgency in a Test Tube: Analyzing the Success of the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI)
Russell W. Glenn
MG-551-JFCOM (2007)

With a matter of weeks to prepare, Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) personnel landed on July 24, 2003, armed for conflict but equally ready to restore peace without firing a shot in anger. RAMSI’s aim was to assist the existing government in reestablishing order and rebuilding this island nation plagued by escalating militia violence, crime, and corruption. RAMSI police forces, with the much larger military component in a supporting role, were patrolling the streets alongside their Solomon Islands counterparts on the very day of arrival. This and many other early actions on the part of RAMSI leadership presented a clear and cohesive message that would characterize operations from that day forward: RAMSI had not come to take charge through the use of force, though it had the capability to do so; it had come to assist and protect. This study reviews the remarkable successes, and the few admitted shortcomings, of RAMSI operations through the lens of broader application to current and future counterinsurgency efforts. Foremost among these lessons is the need for consistency of mission and message from leadership down to the lowest echelons of an operation, ensuring that the population is appropriately and consistently informed.

Find the full document at www.rand.org/t/MG551

Money in the Bank: Lessons Learned from Past Counterinsurgency (COIN) Operations
Angel Rabasa, Lesley Anne Warner, Peter Chalk, Ivan Khilko, and Paraag Shukla
OP-185-OSD (2007)

As insurgent threats evolve and assume new forms, the United States must also evolve in its ability to counter potentially prolonged threats in several parts of the world. Because of the potential for global reach in contemporary insurgencies, the ability to draw on lessons learned from past counterinsurgency (COIN) campaigns using different historical cases can be valuable, helping current and future leaders prevent a repetition of mistakes and building a foundation on which to build contemporary responses. To this end, six historic COIN operations from the 19th and 20th centuries are examined to determine which tactics, techniques, and procedures led to success and which to failure. The Philippines, Algeria, Vietnam, El Salvador, Jammu and Kashmir, and Colombia were chosen for their varied characteristics relating to geography, historical era, outcome, type of insurgency faced, and level of U.S. involvement. Specific issues examined include the counterinsurgents’ ability to innovate and adapt, the need to find a way to recognize the threat, and tactics for confronting it.

Find the full document at www.rand.org/t/OP185
**Understanding Proto-Insurgencies: RAND Counterinsurgency Study—Paper 3**

Daniel Byman  
OP-178-OSD (2007)

To gain the size and capabilities of an insurgency, a would-be insurgent movement must create a politically relevant identity; it must espouse a cause that is popular beyond the group; it must gain dominance over rival organizations; and it must find a sanctuary that provides respite from police, intelligence, and military services. Violence is instrumental in all the tasks proto-insurgencies seek to accomplish. However, violence can also backfire on them, because few people support it.

Support from outside states offers numerous advantages to groups seeking to become insurgencies. It can provide safe haven, money, training, and help with political mobilization. It can also help groups overcome logistical difficulties, hinder intelligence-gathering against them, and legitimize them, making government delegitimization efforts almost impossible. Outside states, however, often deliberately try to control or even weaken the group and at times can reduce its political popularity.

The reaction of the state is often the most important factor in a movement’s overall success. Perhaps the best and most efficient way to prevent proto-insurgents from gaining ground is through in-group policing, because groups know their own members and can enable arrests or other forms of pressure. The government can also promote rival identities. Governments must, however, recognize the proto-insurgents’ weaknesses and avoid overreaction that may inadvertently strengthen them. The most obvious action for the United States is to anticipate the possibility of an insurgency developing before it materializes. It can also provide behind-the-scenes training and advisory programs and can help inhibit outside support.

Find the full document at www.rand.org/t/OP178

**Subversion and Insurgency: RAND Counterinsurgency Study—Paper 2**

William Rosenau  
OP-172-OSD (2007)

The conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan have generated intense interest in counterinsurgency within the U.S. armed forces, the intelligence community, the State Department, and the Department of Defense. However, subversion—a critical part of the repertoire of many insurgent groups—remains a neglected subject. This paper presents a set of case studies to explore the elements of subversion. It discusses preliminary ideas for combating subversive activities in the context of the “long war” against violent Islamist extremism and concludes with a discussion of how American support for countersubversion within authoritarian regimes can conflict with other important U.S. foreign policy objectives, such as the promotion of human rights.

Find the full document at www.rand.org/t/OP172
Heads We Win: The Cognitive Side of Counterinsurgency: RAND Counterinsurgency Study—Paper 1
David C. Gompert
OP-168-OSD (2007)
Current U.S. counterinsurgency (COIN) strategy has relied heavily on the use of force against Islamist insurgents—a tactic that has increased their ranks. What is needed instead are stronger cognitive capabilities that will enable more effective COIN against an elusive, decentralized, and highly motivated insurgency—capabilities that will enable the United States to “fight smarter.” Cognitive COIN goes beyond information technology and encompasses comprehension, reasoning, and decisionmaking, the components that are most effective against an enemy that is quick to adapt, transform, and regenerate. Countering the challenges of a global insurgency demands the ability to understand it, shape popular attitudes about it, and act directly against it. The four cognitive abilities that are most important to COIN operations are anticipation, opportunism, decision speed, and learning in action, applied through rapid-adaptive decisionmaking. In 21st-century COIN, tight control and bureaucracy must yield to the power of networked intelligence, with each operative authorized to act, react, and adapt. With these notions as a backdrop, this paper offers concrete ideas for gaining the cognitive advantage in anticipating and countering the new global insurgency.

Find the full document at www.rand.org/t/OP168

War by Other Means: Building Complete and Balanced Capabilities for Counterinsurgency: RAND Counterinsurgency Study—Final Report
David C. Gompert, John Gordon IV, Adam R. Grissom, David R. Frelinger, Seth G. Jones, Martin C. Libicki, Edward O’Connell, Brooke Stearns Lawson, and Robert E. Hunter
MG-595/2-OSD (2008)
The difficulties encountered by the United States in securing Iraq and Afghanistan despite years of effort and staggering costs raises the central question of the RAND Counterinsurgency Study: How should the United States improve its capabilities to counter insurgencies, particularly those that are heavily influenced by transnational terrorist movements and thus linked into a global jihadist network? This capstone volume to the study draws on other reports in the series as well as an examination of 89 insurgencies since World War II, an analysis of the new challenges posed by what is becoming known as global insurgency, and many of the lessons learned in Iraq and Afghanistan. The report’s recommendations are based on the premise that counterinsurgency (COIN) is a contest for the allegiance of a nation’s population; victory over jihadist insurgency consists not of merely winning a war against terrorists but of persuading Islamic populations to choose legitimate government and reject violent religious tyranny. The authors evaluate three types of COIN capabilities: civil capabilities to help weak states improve their political and economic performance; informational and cognitive capabilities to enable better governance and improve COIN decisionmaking; and security capabilities to protect people and infrastructure and to weaken
insurgent forces. Gompert and Gordon warn that U.S. capabilities are deficient in several critical areas but also emphasize that U.S. allies and international organizations can provide capabilities that the United States currently cannot. The authors conclude by outlining the investments, organizational changes within the federal government and the military, and international arrangements that the United States should pursue to improve its COIN capabilities.

Find the full document at www.rand.org/t/MG595z2

**Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan: RAND Counterinsurgency Study—Volume 4**

Seth G. Jones

MG-595-OSD (2008)

This study explores the nature of the insurgency in Afghanistan, the key challenges and successes of the U.S.-led counterinsurgency campaign, and the capabilities necessary to wage effective counterinsurgency operations. By examining the key lessons from all insurgencies since World War II, it finds that most policymakers repeatedly underestimate the importance of indigenous actors to counterinsurgency efforts. The United States should focus its resources on helping improve the capacity of the indigenous government and indigenous security forces to wage counterinsurgency. It has not always done this well. The U.S. military—along with U.S. civilian agencies and other coalition partners—is more likely to be successful in counterinsurgency warfare the more capable and legitimate the indigenous security forces (especially the police), the better the governance capacity of the local state, and the less external support that insurgents receive.

Find the full document at www.rand.org/t/MG595


Bruce R. Pirnie and Edward O’Connell

MG-595/3-OSD (2008)

This monograph outlines strategic considerations relative to counterinsurgency campaigns; presents an overview of the current conflict in Iraq, focusing on counterinsurgency; analyzes counterinsurgency operations in Iraq; presents conclusions about counterinsurgency, based on the U.S. experience in Iraq; describes implications from that experience for future counterinsurgency operations; and offers recommendations to improve the ability of the U.S. government to conduct counterinsurgency in the future. For example, U.S. counterinsurgency experience in Iraq has revealed the need to achieve synergy and balance among several simultaneous civilian and military efforts and the need to continually address and reassess the right indicators to determine whether current strategies are adequate. The need to continually reassess counterinsurgency strategy and tactics implies that military and civilian leaders must have not only the will, but also a formal mechanism, to fearlessly and thoroughly
call to the attention of senior decisionmakers any shortfalls in policies and practices, (e.g., in Iraq, failure to protect the civilian population and an overreliance on technological approaches to counterinsurgency). The Iraq experience is particularly germane to drawing lessons about counterinsurgency. In essence, the conflict is a local political power struggle overlaid with sectarian violence and fueled by fanatical foreign jihadists and criminal opportunists—a combination of factors likely to be replicated in insurgencies elsewhere.

Find the full document at www.rand.org/t/MG595z3

**The Phoenix Program and Contemporary Counterinsurgency**

William Rosenau and Austin Long

OP-258-OSD (2009)

Fresh interest in the history of counterinsurgency has focused renewed attention on the Phoenix Program, the United States’ primary effort to improve intelligence coordination and operations aimed at identifying and dismantling the communist underground during the Vietnam War. Modern-day advocates of the program argue that it was devastatingly effective, but detractors condemn it as a merciless assassination campaign. Without a clearer understanding of the truth about Phoenix and its overall effectiveness, analysts risk drawing flawed conclusions about the program’s applicability to contemporary conflicts.

The authors explore the Viet Cong underground (the target of Phoenix operations) and the early U.S. and South Vietnamese operations designed to dismantle it. Tracing the provenance and evolution of the Phoenix Program from these early operations, they identify the program’s three elements and assess its overall success. They conclude that the truth about Phoenix and its effectiveness lies somewhere between the extremes of today’s competing claims: The program made positive contributions to counterinsurgency in South Vietnam, but its political costs to the United States were substantial. The authors note that the Phoenix Program highlights the continuing importance of intelligence coordination and anti-infrastructure operations in contemporary counterinsurgency.

Find the full document at www.rand.org/t/OP258

**Reconstruction Under Fire: Unifying Civil and Military Counterinsurgency**

David C. Gompert, Terrence K. Kelly, Brooke Stearns Lawson, Michelle Parker, and Kimberly Colloton

MG-870-OSD (2009)

Effective civilian relief, reconstruction, and development work can help persuade people to support their government against insurgency. Knowing this, insurgents will target such work, threatening both those who perform it and those who benefit from it. Too often, the result is a postponement of efforts to improve government and serve the population until contested territory has been cleared of insurgents. This can lead to excessive reliance on force to defeat insurgents—delaying or even preventing success. A RAND team with combined security and development expertise set out to learn how civilian counterinsurgency (civil COIN) (essential human services, political reform, physical reconstruction, economic development, and indigenous capacity-building) could be conducted more safely in the face of active insurgency, when it can do the most good. The authors propose the following to improve the security of civil COIN under fire: a concept for setting priorities
among civil COIN measures; a way to allocate security forces optimally among various civil COIN activities, as well as between them and other COIN security missions (e.g., direct operations against insurgents); new, integrated concepts of operation (ICONOPS) that military and civilian leaders could employ during COIN campaigns to manage risk and produce best results for COIN as a whole; and general requirements for capabilities and corresponding investments to secure civil COIN, derived from ICONOPS.

Find the full document at www.rand.org/t/MG870

**Victory Has a Thousand Fathers: Sources of Success in Counterinsurgency**
Christopher Paul, Colin P. Clarke, and Beth Grill
MG-964-OSD (2010)

Insurgency has been the most prevalent form of armed conflict since at least 1949, as well as the subject of countless historical and contemporary studies. Contemporary discourse on the subject is voluminous and often contentious, but to date there has been a dearth of systematic evidence supporting the counterinsurgency (COIN) approaches, practices, and tenets that make for successful operations. Relying on a collection of the 30 most recent resolved insurgencies, along with a bank of factors that helped or hindered the COIN force in each case and in each phase of each case, several commonalities emerge. For instance, the data show that good COIN practices tend to “run in packs” and that the balance of selected good and bad practices perfectly predicts the outcome of a conflict. The importance of popular support is confirmed, but the ability to interdict tangible support (such as new personnel, materiel, and financing) is the single best predictor of COIN force success. Twenty distinct approaches to COIN are rigorously tested against the historical record, providing valuable lessons for U.S. engagement in and support for COIN operations. A companion volume, *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers: Detailed Counterinsurgency Case Studies*, presents in-depth profiles of each of the insurgencies.

Find the full document at www.rand.org/t/MG964

**Understanding and Influencing Public Support for Insurgency and Terrorism**
Paul K. Davis, Eric V. Larson, Zachary Haldeman, Mustafa Oguz, and Yashodhara Rana
MG-1122-OSD (2012)

Building on earlier RAND research that reviewed and integrated social science relevant to understanding terrorism and counterterrorism, this volume focuses on public support for both insurgency and terrorism and incorporates insights stimulated by social movement theory. The authors examine four case studies: al-Qa’ida’s transnational jihadist movement, the Taliban insurgency in Afghanistan, the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) in Turkey, and the Maoist insurgency in Nepal. The authors first developed a model, based on previous work, identifying the factors that influence public support for insurgency and terrorism and how these factors relate to each other. They then drew on extensive primary- and secondary-source material from each of the four case studies to evaluate and refine the model. Comparing the four case studies, the authors discuss which factors were most salient across cases and how their importance varied in each case. Finally, they offer a model of “persuasive communications” that connects the study’s research to issues of strategy and policy.

Find the full document at www.rand.org/t/MG1122
**Embracing the Fog of War: Assessment and Metrics in Counterinsurgency**

Ben Connable  
MG-1086-DOD (2012)

Campaign assessments help decisionmakers in the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD), Congress, and the executive branch shape what tend to be difficult and lengthy counterinsurgency (COIN) campaigns. Assessment informs critical decisions, including the allocation of resources and major shifts in strategy. The complex and chaotic environment of the typical COIN campaign presents vexing challenges to assessment, and efforts to overcome these challenges are mired in an overreliance on aggregated quantitative data that are often inaccurate and misleading. This comprehensive examination of COIN assessment as practiced through early 2011, as described in the literature and doctrine, and as applied in two primary case studies (Vietnam and Afghanistan), reveals weaknesses and gaps in this centralized, quantitative approach. The author proposes an alternative process—contextual assessment—that accounts for the realities of the COIN environment and the needs of both policymakers and commanders. Since this manuscript was completed in mid-2011, various elements of DoD have published new doctrine on assessment, some of which addresses criticisms raised in this report. The International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan has also revamped its assessment process.

Find the full document at www.rand.org/t/MG1086

**Paths to Victory: Lessons from Modern Insurgencies**

Christopher Paul, Colin Clarke, Beth Grill, and Molly Dunigan  
RR-291/1-OSD (2013)

When a country is threatened by an insurgency, what efforts give its government the best chance of prevailing? Contemporary discourse on this subject is voluminous and often contentious. Advice for the counterinsurgent is often based on little more than common sense, a general understanding of history, or a handful of detailed examples, instead of a solid, systematically collected body of historical evidence. A 2010 RAND study challenged this trend with rigorous analyses of all 30 insurgencies that started and ended between 1978 and 2008. This update to that original study expanded the data set, adding 41 new cases and comparing all 71 insurgencies begun and completed worldwide since World War II. With many more cases to compare, the study was able to more rigorously test the previous findings and address critical questions that the earlier study could not. For example, it could examine the approaches that led counterinsurgency forces to prevail when an external actor was involved in the conflict. It was also able to address questions about timing and duration, such as which factors affect the duration of insurgencies and the durability of the resulting peace, as well as how long historical counterinsurgency forces had to engage in effective practices before they won. A companion volume, *Paths to Victory: Detailed Insurgency Case Studies*, offers in-depth narrative overviews of each of the 41 additional cases; the original 30 cases are presented in *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers: Detailed Counterinsurgency Case Studies*.

Find the full report at www.rand.org/t/RR291z1
**Paths to Victory: Detailed Insurgency Case Studies**
Christopher Paul, Colin Clarke, Beth Grill, and Molly Dunigan
RR-291/2-OSD (2013)

In-depth case studies of 41 insurgencies since World War II provide evidence to answer a perennial question in strategic discussions of counterinsurgency: When a country is threatened by an insurgency, what efforts give its government the best chance of prevailing? Each case study breaks the conflict into phases and examines the factors and practices that led to the outcome (insurgent win, counterinsurgent win, or a mixed outcome favoring one side or the other). Detailed analyses of the cases, supplemented by data on 30 previously conducted insurgency case studies (and thus covering all 71 historical insurgencies worldwide since World War II), can be found in the companion volume, *Paths to Victory: Lessons from Modern Insurgencies*. The original set of 30 case studies is available in a 2010 RAND report, *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers: Detailed Counterinsurgency Case Studies*. Collectively, the 71 cases span a vast geographic range (South America, Africa, the Balkans, Central Asia, and the Far East) and include examples of governments that attempted to fight the tide of history—that is, to quell an anticolonial rebellion or uprisings against apartheid.

Find the full report at www.rand.org/t/RR291z2

**Counterinsurgency Scorecard: Afghanistan in Early 2013 Relative to Insurgencies Since World War II**
Christopher Paul, Colin Clarke, Beth Grill, and Molly Dunigan
RR-396-OSD (2013)

The RAND report titled *Paths to Victory: Lessons from Modern Insurgencies* added 41 new cases to a previously studied set of 30 insurgencies, examining the 71 insurgencies begun and completed worldwide between World War II and 2008 to analyze correlates of success in counterinsurgency (COIN). A key finding of this research was that a case's score on a scorecard of 15 equally weighted good and 11 equally weighted bad COIN factors and practices perfectly discriminated the outcomes of the cases analyzed. That is, the balance of good and bad factors and practices correlated with either a COIN win (insurgency loss) or a COIN loss (insurgency win) in the overall case. Using the scorecard approach as its foundation, authors of this RAND study sought to apply the findings to the case of Afghanistan in early 2013. The effort involved an expert elicitation, or Delphi exercise, in which experts were asked to make worst-case assessments of the factors to complete the scorecard for ongoing operations in Afghanistan. The consensus results revealed that early 2013 Afghanistan ranks among the historical COIN winners, but its score is equal to those of the lowest-scoring historical wins. This tenuous position points to several areas in need of improvement, but particularly the need to disrupt the flow of insurgent support and the need for the Afghan government and Afghan security forces to better demonstrate their commitment and motivation. Afghanistan in early 2011 scored in the middle of the historical record in terms of COIN wins and losses, suggesting an overall improvement in COIN progress in that conflict by early 2013. However, conditions may change as coalition forces prepare to hand over responsibility for the country's security to the Afghan government and Afghan security forces in 2014.

Find the full report at www.rand.org/t/RR396
The 2008 Battle of Sadr City: Reimagining Urban Combat
David E. Johnson, M. Wade Markel, and Brian Shannon
RR-160-A (2013)

In late March 2008, a Shi’a uprising in Baghdad’s Sadr City district challenged the authority of the Government of Iraq (GoI) at its heart. The Jaish al Mahdi (JAM) overran GoI outposts in the district and barraged the International Zone with short-range rockets. The eruption of violence threatened to draw U.S. forces into a battle in a closely packed urban area inhabited by an estimated 2.4 million people, many of whom strongly supported the GoI’s main antagonist, Moqtada al-Sadr. U.S. casualties and collateral damage could have been substantial. Instead, through innovative tactics combining high-technology airborne surveillance and strike, elements of siege warfare and vigorous exploitation through civil military operations, coalition forces managed to subdue the uprising with minimum loss to U.S. forces and the civilian population. Success in this battle solidified Iraqi government control over all of Baghdad and throughout Iraq, creating conditions that enabled the United States to realize contemporary operational objectives in Iraq. The authors present the first full operational analysis of the battle and distill insights and lessons that can inform a broader understanding of urban operations, particularly those conducted as part of irregular warfare. This new paradigm can help the Army focus on what capabilities it will need in the future for such operations.

Find the full report at www.rand.org/t/RR160

From Stalemate to Settlement: Lessons from Afghanistan from Historical Insurgencies That Have Been Resolved Through Negotiations
Colin P. Clarke and Christopher Paul
RR-469-OSD (2014)

In June 2013, the Afghan Taliban opened a political office in Qatar to facilitate peace talks with the U.S. and Afghan governments. Negotiations between the United States and the group that sheltered al-Qaeda would have been unthinkable 12 years ago, but the reality is that a negotiated settlement in Afghanistan is one of several possible end games under the current U.S. withdrawal plan. Negotiating an end to an insurgency can be a long and arduous process beset by false starts and continued violence, but a comprehensive review of historical cases that ended in settlement shows that these negotiations followed a similar path that can be generalized into a master narrative. This research examines 13 historical cases of insurgencies that were resolved through negotiated settlement in which neither side (insurgents or counterinsurgents) unambiguously prevailed. Taken together, these cases reveal that the path to negotiated settlement generally proceeds in seven steps in a common sequence. Although this resulting master narrative does not necessarily conform precisely to every conflict brought to resolution through negotiation, it can serve as an important tool to guide the progress of a similar approach to resolving the conflict in Afghanistan as U.S. forces prepare to withdraw.

Find the full report at www.rand.org/t/RR469
**Countering Others’ Insurgencies: Understanding U.S. Small-Footprint Interventions in Local Context**

Stephen Watts, Jason H. Campbell, Patrick B. Johnston, Sameer Lalwani, and Sarah H. Bana

RR-513-SRF (2014)

This study examines the counterinsurgency strategies and practices adopted by threatened regimes and the conditions under which U.S. “small-footprint” partnerships are likely to help these governments succeed. The report’s findings are derived from a mixed-method research design incorporating both quantitative and qualitative analysis. Simple statistical analyses are applied to a data set of counterinsurgencies that have terminated since the end of the Cold War (72 in all), and more in-depth analyses are provided of two recent cases of U.S. partnerships with counterinsurgent regimes, in the Philippines and Pakistan. The quantitative analysis finds that the cases of small-footprint U.S. operations that are commonly touted as “success stories” all occurred in countries approximating a best-case scenario. Such a verdict is not meant to deny the importance of U.S. assistance; rather it is meant to highlight that similar U.S. policies with less promising partner nations should not be expected to produce anywhere near the same levels of success. The majority of insurgencies have taken place in worst-case conditions, and in these environments, counterinsurgent regimes are typically unsuccessful in their efforts to end rebellion, and they often employ violence indiscriminately. The case studies of the Philippines and Pakistan largely reinforce the findings of the quantitative analysis. They also highlight the challenges the United States faces in attempting to influence partner regimes to fight counterinsurgencies in the manner that the United States would prefer. The study concludes with policy recommendations for managing troubled partnerships.

Find the full report at www.rand.org/t/RR513

**Modeling, Simulation, and Operations Analysis in Afghanistan: Operational Vignettes, Lessons Learned, and a Survey of Selected Efforts**

Ben Connable, Walter L. Perry, Abby Doll, Natasha Lander, and Dan Madden

RR-382-OSD (2014)

RAND conducted a lessons learned examination of operations analysis, modeling, and simulation in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. This report identifies ways in which analysts have attempted to support commanders’ decisions in counterinsurgency and irregular warfare, describes many of the models and tools they employed, provides insight into the challenges they faced, and suggests ways in which the application of modeling, simulation, and analysis might be improved for current and future operations. RAND identified four broad categories of decisions: force protection, logistics, campaign assessment, and force structuring. Modeling, simulation, and analysis were most effective in supporting force protection and logistics decisions, and least effective in supporting campaign assessment and force structuring.

Find the full report at www.rand.org/t/RR382

Walter L. Perry and David Kassing
RR-381-A (2015)

The September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks caught the United States without a plan for military operations in Afghanistan. In less than 30 days, the Department of Defense created a plan that involved an unprecedented combination of special operations forces (SOF), Afghan fighters, and airpower. Operations were initiated on October 7, and Afghanistan’s Taliban government was toppled in less than two months. An interim administration was installed on December 22, and civil-military operations began. This report describes the preparations for Operation Enduring Freedom at U.S. Central Command and elsewhere, Army operations and support activities, building a coalition, and civil-military operations in Afghanistan through the end of June 2002. The research used contemporary records and interviews with key participants to gain authoritative perspectives on events and issues. U.S. forces were surprisingly successful in toppling the Taliban. The rigorous preparation of SOF clearly paid off. Air-land operations were decisive. Small-unit soldiers and leaders passed the tests of the harsh Afghan environment. Force protection, logistics operations, and communications each worked well. Nonetheless, several problems emerged. Joint planning and training needed to be pushed to lower levels, underscoring the need for the Army to jointly plan the employment of its fire support assets. Other issues included logistics procedures for small operations and civil-military organization and procedures. Many of these issues were later addressed by Army leaders.

Find the full report at www.rand.org/t/RR381

Investing in the Fight: Assessing the Use of the Commander's Emergency Response Program in Afghanistan

Daniel Egel, Charles P. Ries, Ben Connable, Todd C. Helmus, Eric Robinson, Isaac Baruffi, Melissa A. Bradley, Kurt Card, Kathleen Loa, Sean Mann, Fernando Sedano, Stephan B. Seabrook, and Robert Stewart
RR-1508-OSD (2016)

This report examines the use of the Commander’s Emergency Response Program (CERP) in Afghanistan. It explores the effectiveness of CERP in supporting tactical operations in Afghanistan during the counterinsurgency-focused 2010–2013 time frame using qualitative and quantitative methods and describes CERP’s origins, history, and existing research on the effectiveness of CERP in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The qualitative component of this analysis provides an assessment of CERP from the perspective of its implementers, drawing on interviews with nearly 200 military officers and noncommissioned officers who designed and implemented CERP projects. These data provide a fine-grain view of the program on the
ground, examining projects its implementers thought were successful and those viewed as unsuccessful. Our intent is to understand how and why tactical and operational units used CERP and whether the program achieved its intended effects in the local areas where it was used.

The quantitative analysis explores the relationship of CERP activity with both population- and coalition-focused outcomes. Our analysis of population-focused outcomes studies population movements, economic activity, and agricultural activity. The comparable analysis of coalition-focused outcomes focuses on intelligence about enemy activity, attacks involving coalition forces, and coalition freedom of movement. This analysis uses geospatial analytic methods, in which CERP administrative data and detailed data from 400 CERP projects collected in our qualitative data set are linked to outcomes based on highly granular locational information. The inclusion of data on the disposition of U.S. forces allows us to compare the impact of U.S. operations with CERP to those without.

Find the full report at www.rand.org/t/RR1508

Counterinsurgency Scorecard Update: Afghanistan in Early 2015 Relative to Insurgencies Since World War II
Christopher Paul and Colin P. Clarke
RR-1273-OSD (2016)

Previous RAND research examined 71 insurgencies begun and completed worldwide between World War II and 2010 to analyze correlates of success in counterinsurgency (COIN). A key finding was that a case’s score on a scorecard of 15 equally weighted good and 11 equally weighted bad COIN factors and practices corresponded perfectly with the outcomes of the cases analyzed. That is, the balance of good and bad factors and practices was always positive when the outcome was a COIN win (insurgent loss) and always negative when the outcome was a COIN loss (insurgent win). Using the scorecard approach as its foundation, a RAND study sought to apply the findings to the case of Afghanistan in 2015. The effort involved an expert elicitation in which experts were asked to make “worst-case” assessments of the factors to complete the scorecard for ongoing operations in Afghanistan. It was the third Afghanistan-focused exercise conducted with the scorecard, allowing rough comparisons with scores assigned by expert panels in 2011 and 2013. The 2015 consensus results indicated that Afghanistan continues to have a positive score, though its score is tied with the lowest-scoring historical wins. Two factors remained absent in Afghanistan in 2015 but essential to success in historical COIN campaigns: disrupting flows of tangible support to the insurgents and a demonstration (and improvement) of commitment and motivation on the part of the Afghan National Security Forces, the primary COIN force since the coalition drawdown. Despite some potentially positive developments resulting from the 2014 election of a new government in Afghanistan, it appears that the most promising end to the conflict will be a negotiated settlement in which the Afghan government makes some concessions to the insurgents and in which external powers, including the United States and Pakistan, help broker a satisfactory power-sharing agreement that brings greater stability to the country.

Find the full report at www.rand.org/t/RR1273
Counterterrorism and Counterinsurgency in Somalia: Assessing the Campaign Against Al Shabaab
Seth G. Jones, Andrew Liepman, and Nathan Chandler
RR-1539-OSD (2016)

This report analyzes the U.S. and allied campaign against the al Qaeda–linked terrorist group al Shabaab in Somalia, examines what steps have been most successful against the group, and identifies potential recommendations. It concludes that, while al Shabaab was weakened between 2011 and 2016, the group could resurge if urgent steps are not taken to address the political, economic, and governance challenges at the heart of the conflict. This study finds that a tailored engagement strategy—which involved deploying a small number of U.S. special operations forces to conduct targeted strikes, provide intelligence, and build the capacity of local partner forces to conduct ground operations—was key in degrading al Shabaab. Still, progress in Somalia is reversible in the absence of continued and consistent pressure and political, economic, and social reforms. Today's terrorism and insurgency landscape defies easy solutions, with challenges from the Islamic State, al Qaeda, and other groups across the Middle East, Europe, Asia, and Africa. Although there has been a significant focus on how and why the U.S. and other Western governments have failed to degrade terrorists and insurgents in Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, Libya, and other countries, there has been far less attention on successful efforts to degrade groups. In Somalia, there has been limited progress. The challenge will be preventing a reversal.

Find the full report at www.rand.org/t/RR1539

The U.S. Army and the Battle for Baghdad: Lessons Learned—And Still to Be Learned
RR-3076-A (2019)

The U.S. Army’s many adaptations during the Iraq War were remarkable, particularly in the areas of doctrine, organization, training, materiel, personnel, and leader development and education. The Army has already institutionalized some of those adaptations; however, other important lessons have not yet been institutionalized. In an effort to help the U.S. Department of Defense and the Army retain institutional knowledge and capabilities and fully prepare leaders for future conflicts, RAND researchers recount the Army’s efforts in the Iraq War, especially in Baghdad, and offer lessons learned and recommendations. For example, if the United States engages in a similar conflict in the future, the Army should prepare to prevent insurgencies; provide robust division, corps, and theater headquarters; and consider making advisement a necessary assignment for career advancement. Instability and insurgency are part of the future, and if history is any guide, the United States will look to the Army to deal with these challenges. Thus, the ultimate goal of this report is to help the Army continue to institutionalize the lessons from the Iraq War and the Battle for Baghdad to minimize the amount of adaptation the Army will have to undergo when it is called to serve in similar circumstances.

Find the full report at www.rand.org/t/RR3076
STABILITY OPERATIONS

**Operation Just Cause: Lessons for Operations Other Than War**

Jennifer Taw  
MR-569-A (1996)

The study of past operations is helpful in defining U.S. Army roles and functions in military operations other than war (OOTW) and in assessing the range of missions and requirements the Army is likely to face in the future. Operation Just Cause (OJC) can be distinguished from subsequent OOTW—in Kuwait, Iraq, Bangladesh, Bosnia, and Somalia—in part because it was a unilateral effort that did not involve coalition issues or problems. Nor did the United States have to coordinate its efforts with nongovernment organizations or humanitarian relief organizations. Nevertheless, OJC offers the Army some practical lessons for current and future OOTW: (1) Army training in military operations on urban terrain (MOUT) is inadequate; (2) electronic intelligence is insufficient in OOTW and must be supplemented by human intelligence and imagery; (3) efforts to streamline joint operations must not overlook service-specific needs, and must take care to maximize the use of special operations forces by employing them in the specialized tasks for which they were trained; (4) more emphasis is needed on equipment technology for the special requirements of MOUT; (5) planning for OOTW must not overlook or underemphasize stability operations (as was the case in OJC); and (6) civilian agencies (including the State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development) must be involved in the planning for most OOTW, but need to develop the capability to offer valuable and timely contributions.

Find the full document at www.rand.org/t/MR569

**RAND Review: Vol. 27, No. 2, Summer 2003**

James Dobbins, James T. Quinlivan, Jennifer Brower, Peter Chalk, Nicholas M. Pace, Robert T. Reville, Lois M. Davis, John P. Godges, Brett Grodeck, and Paul S. Steinberg  

American efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq have yet to reflect some of the hard-learned lessons from either the 1940s or the more recent—and, in some respects, more relevant—nation-building experiences of the 1990s, according to former ambassador James Dobbins. In an accompanying essay, James Quinlivan underscores that we have yet to provide the levels of troops historically required for stabilizing war-torn countries, completely aside from building them into vibrant democracies. Separate essays address the transnational threat of infectious diseases, the state of workers’ compensation courts in California, and the health-related consequences of releasing prisoners. Various news stories are also included.

Find the full document at www.rand.org/t/CP22-2003-08
Networked Forces in Stability Operations: 101st Airborne Division, 3/2 and 1/25 Stryker Brigades in Northern Iraq
Daniel Gonzales, John S. Hollywood, Jerry M. Sollinger, James McFadden, John DeJarnette, Sarah Harting, and Donald Temple
MG-593-OSD (2007)

The Stryker brigade, one of the Army’s newest units, has a full complement of Army digital networked communications and battle command systems. An important issue for the Department of Defense and the Army is whether these networking capabilities translate into an information advantage and, if so, whether that advantage results in greater mission effectiveness in stability operations. To answer those two questions, the authors compare three units that operated in the same area in Iraq’s northern provinces between 2003 and 2005: the 101st Airborne Division (ABD) (which had only limited digital communications capabilities), the 3/2 Stryker brigade combat team (SBCT), and the 1/25 SBCT. Overall, the 1/25 SBCT and 101st ABD performed best in the stability phase in northern Iraq. They were particularly effective in social networking with the local populace and civilian leaders. The 3/2 SBCT did not perform as well as the 1/25 SBCT, even though it was equipped with some of the same digital networking capabilities. Some of the tactics it employed, such as indiscriminate sweeps, widened the gulf between coalition forces and the local populace. Although networking technologies confer obvious benefits, the authors conclude that command leadership, training, and the processes employed in stability operations are just as important for improving mission effectiveness in stability operations.

Find the full document at www.rand.org/t/MG593

Preparing the Army for Stability Operations: Doctrinal and Interagency Issues
Thomas S. Szayna, Derek Eaton, and Amy Richardson
MG-646-A (2007)

This monograph presents the results of a project titled Improving Army Doctrine and Planning for Stability Operations. A great deal of activity has been aimed at revising the approach to the planning and implementation of stabilization, security, transition, and reconstruction (SSTR) operations. The primary emphasis of the changes is on ensuring a common U.S. strategy rather than a collection of individual departmental and agency efforts and on mobilizing and involving all available U.S. government assets in the effort. However, using a template to assess the extent of progress in building collaborative interagency capacity for SSTR operations, the authors find that some elements essential to the success of the process are not yet in place. They provide a series of recommendations on how the Army, as a major stakeholder, can act to advance the interagency process. The authors also assess the ongoing development of Army doctrine on SSTR operations and compare it with the emerging guidelines for SSTR operations at the interagency level. They provide specific recommendations for the Army to consider in revising its doctrine on SSTR operations, to bring it further in line with interagency guidelines. They also point out omissions in the security sector of the emerging interagency task list for SSTR operations.

Find the full document at www.rand.org/t/MG646
Underkill: Scalable Capabilities for Military Operations amid Populations

David C. Gompert, Stuart Johnson, Martin C. Libicki, David R. Frelinger, John Gordon IV, Raymond Smith, and Camille A. Sawak

MG-848-OSD (2009)

The battle for Gaza revealed an extremist strategy: hiding in cities and provoking attack to cause civilian deaths that can be blamed on the attacking forces. The U.S. and allied militaries, having no options but lethal force or no options at all, are ill-equipped to defeat this strategy. The use of lethal force in dense populations can harm and alienate the very people whose cooperation U.S. forces are trying to earn. To solve this problem, a new RAND study proposes a “continuum of force”—a suite of capabilities that includes sound, light, lasers, cell phones, and video cameras.

In missions ranging from counterinsurgency to peacekeeping to humanitarian intervention to quelling disorder, the typical small unit of the U.S. military should and can have portable, easy-to-use, all-purpose capabilities to carry out its missions without killing or hurting civilians that may get in the way. The technologies for these capabilities are available but have not been recognized as a solution to this strategic problem and, consequently, need more high-level attention and funding.

Find the full document at www.rand.org/t/MG848

Stabilization and Reconstruction Staffing: Developing U.S. Civilian Personnel Capabilities

Terrence K. Kelly, Ellen E. Tunstall, Thomas S. Szayna, and Deanna Weber Prine

MG-580-RC (2008)

The United States participated in several interventions and state-building efforts during the 1990s, and the rationale for U.S. engagement in such efforts received a new urgency after the 9/11 attacks. However, recent U.S. experiences in Afghanistan and in Iraq, especially, have shown that engaging in stability and reconstruction operations is a difficult and lengthy process that requires appropriate resources. Most of all, to have a chance of succeeding, such operations require a realistic understanding of the capabilities needed for them.

The authors present the results of research on the U.S. civilian personnel and staffing programs for stability and reconstruction operations undertaken in other countries under U.S. leadership or with the participation of the United States. The study uses the Office of Personnel Management's Human Capital Assessment and Accountability Framework to assess the personnel requirements for such operations. This framework advocates strategic alignment, workforce planning and development, leadership and knowledge management, results-oriented performance culture, talent management, and accountability. The authors also present recommendations that the U.S. government should consider undertaking to deal with the types of problems that the United States has encountered in post-2003 Iraq. The research draws on the rapidly growing body of literature dealing with reconstruction and stability missions, interviews with U.S. and British civilian personnel deployed to Iraq, and the authors’ own experiences in Iraq as U.S. civilians involved with the Coalition Provisional Authority. The study should be of interest to policymakers dealing with stability and reconstruction operations.

Find the full document at www.rand.org/t/MG580
Improving Capacity for Stabilization and Reconstruction Operations

Nora Bensahel, Olga Oliker, and Heather Peterson

MG-852-OSD (2009)

Until recently, governments and militaries have preferred to focus attention and resources on conventional military operations rather than stabilization and reconstruction missions. Thus, skills and capacities for the latter set of missions have remained underdeveloped or have been allowed to atrophy. U.S. experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan have demonstrated, however, that improving U.S. capacity for stabilization and reconstruction operations is critical to national security. To help craft a way ahead, the authors provide an overview of the requirements posed by stabilization and reconstruction operations and recommend ways to improve U.S. capacity to meet these needs. Among other findings, the authors suggest that the United States

- emphasize building civilian rather than military capacity
- realign and reform existing agencies rather than creating new organizations
- fund and implement the Civilian Stabilization Initiative
- improve deployable police capacity
- develop stronger crisis-management processes
- ensure coherent guidance and funding.

Find the full document at www.rand.org/t/MG852

Integrating Civilian Agencies in Stability Operations

Thomas S. Szayna, Derek Eaton, James E. Barnett, Brooke Stearns Lawson, Terrence K. Kelly, and Zachary Haldeman

MG-801-A (2009)

In a project titled “Integrating the Interagency in Planning for Army Stability Operations,” RAND Arroyo Center examined the question of how the Army can help make key civilian agencies more capable partners in the planning and execution of stability, security, transition, and reconstruction (SSTR) operations. The authors identify the primary and secondary civilian agencies that should be involved in strategic-level planning and implementation of SSTR operations. Then, relying on available information on Provincial Reconstruction Teams and using a variety of federal databases, the authors identify the skill sets needed for the envisioned Field Advance Civilian Teams and where these skills reside in the federal government. The authors then assess the capacity of the main civilian agencies to participate in SSTR operations and analyze the recurring structural problems that have plagued their attempts to do so. The authors suggest a series of options that are worth considering in order to improve the current situation. Even without much action at the national level, the Army can still improve the situation by improving Army Civil Affairs and by executing a well-thought-out strategy of liaison officers assigned to the civilian agencies most important for SSTR operations.

Find the full document at www.rand.org/t/MG801
Band of Brothers or Dysfunctional Family? A Military Perspective on Coalition Challenges During Stability Operations
Russell W. Glenn
MG-903-JFCOM (2011)

Counterinsurgency and other stability operations seldom present a nation with trials that threaten its very survival, barring cases in which that nation is the target of insurgents. Bonds between coalition members are therefore weaker than when threat of annihilation reinforces mutual dependence. Such situations are further complicated by the use of force likely not being the primary implement for attaining ultimate success. Devoid of a preeminent threat and denied primary dependence on armed forces, core coalition objectives tend to be political rather than military in character and include counterinsurgency, nation-building, developing government capacity, and providing humanitarian assistance—activities often associated with stability operations. Armed forces are not staffed or trained to meet the long-term demands of many of these tasks. An alliance or coalition must therefore incorporate participation by other government agencies and—ultimately—that of the indigenous government and its population more than is expected during conventional combat operations. Recent contingencies have also seen commercial enterprises, militias, intergovernmental organizations, and nongovernmental organizations become key participants in these undertakings. The result is coalitions of a size seldom seen and with a number of affiliations rarely, if ever, approached before the late 20th century. This monograph investigates the dramatic expansion of challenges confronting alliances and coalitions today and thereafter considers potential solutions that include questioning the conception of what constitutes a coalition in today's world.

Find the full document at www.rand.org/t/MG903

Monitoring and Evaluation in Stabilisation Interventions: Reviewing the State of the Art and Suggesting Ways Forward
Christian Van Stolk, Tom Ling, Anais Reding, and Matt Bassford
TR-962-SU (2011)

This report reviews the state of the art in monitoring and evaluation in stabilisation environments and suggests ways to improve practice. The report was commissioned by the United Kingdom's Stabilisation Unit and is based on a documentary review and a dozen interviews conducted with experts in the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia, the United Nations, the European Commission, and the World Bank. The report argues that theories of change are central to effective monitoring and evaluation (M&E) but remain scarcely applied in the field. It is suggested that contribution stories be used to develop these theories of change in a way which is adapted to the complex and turbulent environments in which stabilisation operations take place. The report also points to the importance of moving from a view of M&E as an ad hoc process to integrating it into stabilisation operations. Given the complexity and turbulence of stabilisation environments, this would also allow monitors to retain flexibility, and adapt indicators when necessary.

Find the full report at www.rand.org/pubs/technical_reports/TR962

Assessing Locally Focused Stability Operations
Jan Osburg, Christopher Paul, Lisa Saum-Manning, Dan Madden, and Leslie Adrienne Payne
RR-387-A (2014)

This report describes how the Army and other services can better measure and assess the progress and outcomes of locally focused stability operations (LFSO), which are defined as the missions, tasks, and activities that build security, governance, and development by, with, and through the directly affected
community, in order to increase stability at the local level. Several issues related to assessing LFSO are identified, along with foundational challenges that include an inherently complex operational environment, limited doctrinal guidance, competing visions of stability, untested assumptions, and redundant or excessive reporting requirements. The report offers solutions to these and other challenges, and provides concrete recommendations and implementation-related guidance for designing and conducting assessments of LFSO. The report concludes with an assessment plan for a notional African LFSO scenario that illustrates the practical application of those insights.

Find the full report at www.rand.org/t/RR387

Task Force for Business and Stability Operations: Lessons from Afghanistan
S. Rebecca Zimmerman, Daniel Egel, and Ilana Blum
RR-1243-OSD (2016)

The Task Force for Business and Stability Operations (TFBSO), a multi-year endeavor for the U.S. Department of Defense, sought to use private-sector strategies to create sustainable economies in Iraq and Afghanistan. In this report, RAND researchers use semistructured interviews and both public and internal documentation to identify lessons from the Task Force’s activities in Afghanistan, offering insights for similar projects in the future. The analysis describes the multitude of the Task Force’s stakeholders resulting from its complex institutional status, plus the challenges that resulted from these diverse stakeholders. It uses a stakeholder-focused approach to explore several prominent TFBSO projects, informed by disparate stakeholder views. Ultimately, lessons identified from the Task Force’s activities in Afghanistan fell under six categories: programmatic flexibility, leadership, measures of success, staffing, freedom of movement, and contracting. Because economic development is likely to remain a key component of U.S. contingency operations, policymakers can use the lessons identified in this report when planning and designing similar organizations in the future to find the right balance for success.

Find the full report at www.rand.org/t/RR1243

Limited Intervention: Evaluating the Effectiveness of Limited Stabilization, Limited Strike, and Containment Operations
RR-2037-A (2017)

The foreign policy and defense communities have intensively debated the efficacy of low-cost and small-footprint military options for crises such as those in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Syria, and Yemen. This report divides these operations into three types: limited stabilization (involving the deployment of hundreds or thousands of ground forces to bring a conflict to a favorable end), limited strike (involving airpower—predominantly drone strikes—to disrupt and degrade militant networks), and indirect options to contain or
mitigate a conflict. The report provides a statistical analysis of hundreds of cases, supplemented by case studies, to evaluate the strategic effects of each type of operation. Limited stabilization missions can improve the odds of achieving an acceptable outcome at relatively low cost, but the odds of outright military victory are generally small. Larger numbers of forces, on average, yield better outcomes, but only at extremely high cost. The United States can instead rely on partners to conduct these operations, but doing so often comes with numerous drawbacks. Limited strike operations can disrupt militant networks—but generally only when they are conducted intensively and in cooperation with a reasonably effective partner on the ground. Where these conditions do not hold, such strikes appear to have counterproductive effects, including increased militant attacks and propaganda activity. Finally, indirect options were found to have limited effects. Efforts to bolster front-line states to prevent conflict spillover did not have any observable effect. Safe areas, no-fly zones, and interdiction campaigns can all provide important benefits—but usually as elements of a larger military operation, not as alternatives to large-scale intervention.

Find the full report at www.rand.org/t/RR2037

**Making Victory Count After Defeating ISIS: Stabilization Challenges in Mosul and Beyond**

Shelly Culbertson and Linda Robinson

RR-2076-RC (2017)

This report investigates humanitarian and stabilization needs in Iraq, through a case study of Mosul, and offers recommendations for immediate actions for stabilization after military operations to liberate it from ISIS. The study is based on data collection and review; visits to Iraq; and more than 50 in-depth interviews with a range of key senior officials. The research team examined humanitarian needs, security implications, infrastructure and services, and governance and reconciliation. All of these activities will affect the immediate stabilization of Mosul, and Iraq more broadly, including whether civilians can return home. Another wave of violence could engulf Iraq in a matter of months if stabilization activities are insufficiently robust. The gains already earned through combat need to be consolidated to secure peace through adequate humanitarian and stabilization measures. The actions needed are in great part dependent on Iraq's national government plans, decisions, and implementation, as well as diplomatic support and funding from the international community. The results achieved thus far demonstrate that success is possible through a moderate but thoughtfully applied set of programs that leverage the will and know-how of local and international actors.

Find the full report at www.rand.org/t/RR2076
Finding the Right Balance: Department of Defense Roles in Stabilization
Linda Robinson, Sean Mann, Jeffrey Martini, and Stephanie Pezard
RR-2441-OUSD (2018)

The pendulum regarding the level of U.S. military participation in stabilization efforts has swung dramatically since 2001, from a low level of preparation and participation in the early days of the Afghanistan and Iraq operations in 2003, to widespread stabilization activities costing billions of dollars in the ensuing years, to significantly scaled-back forces and resources devoted to stabilization in recent years. To remedy the initial lack of preparation, the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) issued a directive with guidance on stabilization requirements in 2005 and then updated it with more expansive requirements in 2009. This report supports DoD efforts to update this guidance by assessing the accumulated experience of the past 17 years and evaluating the appropriate roles for the U.S. military and its ability to execute them in conjunction with interagency and other key partners.

Without stabilization, successful warfighting often does not produce desired political outcomes. Yet warfighters are not the most capable actors for many stabilization tasks. Therefore, the authors recommend shifting DoD guidance on stabilization away from requiring high levels of proficiency in a large number of tasks to emphasizing three key roles for DoD: prioritizing security tasks; providing support to other actors performing stability functions; and performing crosscutting informational, planning, coordination, and physical support roles.

Find the full report at www.rand.org/t/RR2441

**SUPPORT TO FOREIGN INTERNAL DEFENSE**

The Long March: Building an Afghan National Army
Obaid Younossi, Peter Dahl Thruelsen, Joleit Vaccaro, Jerry M. Sollinger, and Brian Grady
MG-845-RDCC/OSD (2009)

The Afghan National Army (ANA) is critical to the success of the allied efforts in Afghanistan and the ultimate stability of the national government. This monograph assesses the ANA’s progress in the areas of recruitment, training, facilities, and operational capability. It draws on a variety of sources: in-country interviews with U.S., NATO, and Afghan officials; data provided by the U.S. Army; open-source literature; and a series of public opinion surveys conducted in Afghanistan over the past several years. Although the ANA has come a long way since the outset of the recent conflict in the country, the authors conclude that coalition forces, especially those of the United States, will play a crucial role in Afghanistan for the foreseeable future, particularly in light of the increased threat from Taliban forces and other illegally armed criminal groups.

Find the full document at www.rand.org/t/MG845
Developing an Army Strategy for Building Partner Capacity for Stability Operations

Jefferson P. Marquis, Jennifer D. P. Moroney, Justin Beck, Derek Eaton, Scott Hiromoto, David R. Howell, Janet Lewis, Charlotte Lynch, Michael J. Neumann, and Cathryn Quantic Thurston

MG-942-A (2010)

The U.S. government is facing the dual challenge of building its own interagency capacity for conducting stability operations while simultaneously building partner capacity (BPC) for stability operations. The purpose of this study is to assist the U.S. Army, the Department of Defense, and other U.S. government agencies in developing an integrated BPC for stability operations strategy. To accomplish this goal, a RAND Arroyo Center study team conducted an exploratory analysis of key strategic elements within the context of BPC and stability operations guidance as well as ongoing security cooperation programs, using a variety of analytical techniques. In general, this study concludes that BPC and stability operations are receiving a good deal of attention in official strategy and planning documents. However, insufficient attention is being paid to the details of an integrated strategy. A baseline analysis of existing security cooperation programs needs to be undertaken to comprehend the type, scope, and target of activities related to BPC for stability operations. An assessment of these activities should then be conducted, focusing on both process outputs and operational outcomes. In addition, the Departments of State and Defense should develop a rigorous method for selecting and prioritizing partners whose stability operations capacity they wish to build. Ideally, the results of these analytical processes will have a significant impact on the set of BPC for stability operations activities and partners, aligning relevant and effective activities with appropriate partners.

Find the full document at www.rand.org/t/MG942


Terrence K. Kelly, Nora Bensahel, and Olga Oliker

MG-1066-A (2011)

Security force assistance (SFA) is a central pillar of the counterinsurgency campaign being waged by U.S. and coalition forces in Afghanistan. The outcome of the campaign hinges, in large measure, on the effectiveness of the assistance given to the Afghan National Army, Afghan National Police, and other security forces, assistance that the International Security Force must provide while fighting the insurgents. Yet senior U.S. military and civilian officials have posed many questions about the effectiveness of SFA in Afghanistan, and no empirically rigorous assessments exist to help answer these questions. This monograph analyzes SFA efforts in Afghanistan over time and documents U.S. and international approaches to building the Afghan National Security Forces from 2001 to 2009. Finally, it provides observations and recommendations that emerged from extensive fieldwork in Afghanistan in 2009 and their implications for the U.S Army.

Find the full document at www.rand.org/t/MG1066
How Successful are U.S. Efforts to Build Capacity in Developing Countries? A Framework to Assess the Global Train and Equip “1206” Program

Jennifer D. P. Moroney, Joe Hogler, Beth Grill, Lianne Kennedy-Boudali, and Christopher Paul
TR-1121-OSD (2011)

The U.S. government has long worked with allies and partners in a security cooperation context. Assessing the effect of such activities, and particularly how they contribute to U.S. objectives, is extremely important. The Global Train and Equip “1206” Program is a multiagency security cooperation program that would benefit from an improved framework for thinking about, planning for, and implementing security cooperation assessments. The program, established in Section 1206 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2006, supports U.S.-led capacity-building activities focused on counterterrorism and stability operations with foreign military partners. The process to develop an assessment framework for the 1206 program began with a series of discussions with policymakers and subject-matter experts to identify current roles, data sources, and assessment processes. These discussions formed the basis for a survey of program stakeholders on the processes, responsibilities, assessment guidance, and skills needed to conduct assessments. An analysis of the survey results revealed the need for formal guidance on the assessment of 1206 projects, gaps in data collection and reporting, unclear roles, and inconsistent levels of communication across the program. However, it also showed that a two-track (short- and longer-term) approach to implementing an assessment framework, closing gaps, and improving coordination would be the best fit for the 1206 Program’s structure.

Find the full report at www.rand.org/t/TR1121

What Works Best When Building Partner Capacity and Under What Circumstances?

Christopher Paul, Colin P. Clarke, Beth Grill, Stephanie Young, Jennifer D. P. Moroney, Joe Hogler, and Christine Leah
MG-1253/1-OSD (2013)

The United States has a long history of helping other nations develop and improve their military and other security forces. However, changing economic realities and the ongoing reductions in overall defense spending related to the end of more than a decade of war will affect the funding available for these initiatives. How can the U.S. Department of Defense increase the effectiveness of its efforts to build partner capacity while also increasing the efficiency of those efforts? And what can the history of U.S. efforts to build partner capacity reveal about which approaches are likely to be more or less effective under different circumstances? To tackle these complex questions and form a base of evidence to inform policy discussions and investment decisions, a RAND study collected and compared 20 years of data on 29 historical case studies of U.S. involvement in building partner capacity. In the process, it tested a series of validating factors and hypotheses (many of which are rooted in “common knowledge”) to determine how they stand up to real-world case examples of partner capacity building. The results reveal nuances in outcomes and context, pointing to solutions and recommendations to increase the effectiveness of current and future U.S. initiatives to forge better relationships, improve the security and stability of partner countries, and meet U.S. policy and security objectives worldwide.

Find the full document at www.rand.org/t/MG1253z1
**Leveraging Observations of Security Force Assistance in Afghanistan for Global Operations**

Leslie Adrienne Payne and Jan Osburg

**RR-416-A (2013)**

The U.S. Army's Asymmetric Warfare Group (AWG) requested that the RAND Corporation conduct a study on how to leverage observations from Security Force Assistance (SFA) efforts in Afghanistan for global operations. Researchers interviewed 67 advisers and SFA practitioners at the tactical and operational levels to collect their firsthand insights into SFA. Interviewees included members of security force assistance teams and Special Forces Operational Detachments–Alpha, senior leadership at the brigade level, and AWG Operational Advisors. The enduring nature of most of these challenges suggests that solutions still remain uncertain. Future SFA missions, such as those envisioned for the Army's Regionally Aligned Forces, can benefit from the experience gained from SFA in Afghanistan as captured in this report. These lessons need to be incorporated both at the institutional level and by individual SFA advisers.

Find the full report at www.rand.org/t/RR416

**Review of Security Cooperation Mechanisms Combatant Commands Utilize to Build Partner Capacity**

Jennifer D. P. Moroney, David E. Thaler, and Joe Hogler

**RR-413-OSD (2013)**

Security cooperation has long been an important instrument of the U.S. government and the Department of Defense for advancing national security objectives vis-à-vis allies and partner countries, including building critical relationships, securing peacetime and contingency access, and building partner capacity (BPC). One of the key challenges for policymakers and combatant commands is gaining a more complete understanding of the real value of BPC activities. Assessments of prior and ongoing BPC activities, in particular, have become increasingly important given the current fiscal climate and budgetary limitations. But it is no easy task to assess the value of what are essentially qualitative activities, and data limitations severely hinder assessments. The tools available—such as resources, authorities, programs, processes, and organizational relationships—may or may not be the optimal ones for the delivery of BPC activities to partner countries. This report characterizes security cooperation mechanisms used by combatant commands for BPC, produces a detailed database of the mechanism elements, develops and applies a preliminary means of evaluating the effectiveness and efficiency of select mechanisms, and draws on the analysis from the case studies to recommend ways to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of those mechanisms in the future.

Find the full report at www.rand.org/t/RR413
Lessons Learned from the Afghan Mission Network: Developing a Coalition Contingency Network
Chad C. Serena, Isaac R. Porche III, Joel B. Predd, Jan Osburg, and Brad Lossing
RR-302-A (2014)
Recent and likely future U.S. military operations depend on coalitions of foreign military and nonmilitary partners, and a coalition mission network is necessary to support those operations. The Afghan Mission Network (AMN) is the primary network for the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan, allowing the United States and its coalition partners to share information and data across a common Secret system. Many view the AMN as a successful enabler of coalition information sharing. It is thus critical that the Army understand the principal lessons of the development of this network as it plans to develop future coalition contingency networks. To this end, the Army Chief Information Officer/G-6 asked RAND Arroyo Center to provide an independent review and assessment of the operational and technical history of the AMN and to identify lessons learned for future coalition networks. The history of the AMN provides an example of how to develop information systems to support operational missions, but perhaps more important, it also yields tactical, operational, and policy-relevant lessons that can inform future efforts to create contingency networks that are both effective across the range of military operations and useful to a host of military and nonmilitary partners. This report presents findings drawn from interviews with key AMN developers and maintainers and the documentation they produced during the network’s development.
Find the full report at www.rand.org/t/RR302

Assessing Security Cooperation as a Preventive Tool
Michael J. McNerney, Angela O’Mahony, Thomas S. Szayna, Derek Eaton, Caroline Baxter, Colin P. Clarke, Emma Cutrufello, Michael McGee, Heather Peterson, Leslie Adrienne Payne, and Calin Trenkov-Wermuth
RR-350-A (2014)
The report tested the assertion that U.S. security cooperation (SC) can help reduce fragility in partner states. The test used statistical analysis to assess SC data and state fragility scores for 107 countries in 1991–2008. After controlling for a variety of factors, the main finding was that provision of SC by the United States and a reduction in partner state fragility were correlated. The strength of correlation did not increase proportionally with additional funding; most of the effect was concentrated at the low end of SC funding. In addition, the correlation depended on recipient country characteristics. Correlation was stronger in more democratic states and in states with stronger institutions. In especially fragile states, there was only a weak or no correlation of SC with fragility decrease. Of the types of SC provided, the correlation was strongest with education-focused SC. Foreign Military Financing, a type of SC, did not correlate with reductions in fragility.
Find the full report at www.rand.org/t/RR350

Security Cooperation Amidst Political Uncertainty: An Agenda for Future Research
Larry Hanauer and Stephanie Pezard
WR-1052 (2014)
Security cooperation, through which the United States provides a wide range of military training and assistance to partner states, is a central element of U.S. foreign policy. This working paper examines the challenges that may arise when the United States seeks to intervene in uncertain political environment, such
as instances in which the United States’ partner—which may be a besieged government or a non-state actor—is actively engaged in military conflict. A fair amount of literature exists that can help assess whether and to what extent security cooperation may be a useful tool for shaping such environments. This literature identifies five key issues that the U.S. government should consider before deciding whether or not to offer military training and equipment to potential partners operating amidst uncertainty: (1) identifying the parameters that guide security cooperation decisions, including statutory requirements that may prevent the provision of certain types of assistance to certain types of recipients; (2) identifying the criteria according to which the United States will decide which party to a conflict it should support; (3) assessing potential partners; (4) evaluating the potential usefulness of security cooperation tools in different scenarios; and finally, (5) examining the potentially adverse implications of offering security assistance in the midst of political uncertainty, including the dangers of choosing the “wrong” partner, choosing the “wrong” timing for intervention, or remaining uninvolved in circumstances in which the United States would have benefited from direct intervention. Based on a careful review of these five challenges, the working paper suggests avenues for future research.

Find the full document at www.rand.org/t/WR1052

What Works Best When Building Partner Capacity in Challenging Contexts?
Christopher Paul, Jennifer D. P. Moroney, Beth Grill, Colin P. Clarke, Lisa Saum-Manning, Heather Peterson, and Brian J. Gordon
RR-937-OSD (2015)

For both diplomatic and national security reasons, security cooperation continues to be important for the United States. The needs and existing capabilities of various nations differ, however, as will results. In previous research, RAND identified a series of factors that correlate with the success of building partner capacity (BPC) efforts. Some of these are under U.S. control, and some are inherent in the partner nation or under its control. Strategic imperatives sometimes compel the United States to work with partner nations that lack favorable characteristics but with which the United States needs to conduct BPC anyway. This report explores what the United States can do, when conducting BPC in challenging contexts, to maximize prospects for success. The authors address this question using the logic model outlined in a companion report and examining a series of case studies, looking explicitly at the challenges that can interfere with BPC. Some of the challenges stemmed from U.S. shortcomings, such as policy or funding issues; others from the partner’s side, including issues with practices, personalities, baseline capacity, and lack of willingness; still others from disagreements among various stakeholders over objectives and approaches. Among the factors correlated with success in overcoming these challenges were consistency of funding and implementation, shared security interests, and matching objectives with the partner nation’s ability to absorb and sustain capabilities.

Find the full report at www.rand.org/t/RR937
**Identifying and Mitigating Risks in Security Sector Assistance for Africa’s Fragile States**

Stephen Watts  
RR-808-A (2015)

This report explores the nature of the risks inherent in U.S. security sector assistance to the fragile states of Africa and how the United States might better anticipate and mitigate these risks. It examines these issues through a review of qualitative and quantitative literature from both the academic and policy fields and through interviews conducted throughout the agencies of the U.S. government. The quantitative literature suggests a stark dilemma for those responsible for U.S. security sector assistance to the U.S. Africa Command area of responsibility: The countries that are most in need of assistance are usually the ones least able to make positive use of it. Case studies of security sector assistance in fragile countries in Africa are used to trace multiple specific pathways by which such assistance can have negative second- and third-order effects. Finally, the report provides numerous recommendations about ways in which the United States can improve the processes by which it monitors and evaluates, plans, and implements security sector assistance in the fragile states of Africa and more generally.

Find the full report at www.rand.org/t/RR808

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**A Building Partner Capacity Assessment Framework: Tracking Inputs, Outputs, Outcomes, Disrupters, and Workarounds**

Christopher Paul, Brian J. Gordon, Jennifer D. P. Moroney, Lisa Saum-Manning, Beth Grill, Colin P. Clarke, and Heather Peterson  
RR-935-OSD (2015)

For both diplomatic and national security reasons, security cooperation continues to be important for the United States. The Department of Defense conducts an assortment of programs aimed at building the capacity of partner nations, and training is an important element of these efforts. The needs and existing capabilities of various nations differ, however, as will results. Planning for each building partner capacity (BPC) effort carefully, assessing progress while the effort is in progress, and assessing results are all important to ensure that it meets U.S. goals and partner expectations. This report presents a framework intended to aid all these steps. Before execution, the framework can help determine and plan for what might go wrong with the intended BPC effort. During BPC execution, the framework can help monitor progress to discover whether everything is going according to plan and, if not, what is wrong and what can be done about it. Finally, the framework can help determine whether the BPC has achieved its objectives and, if not, why and what can be done about it in the future.

Find the full report at www.rand.org/t/RR935
Defense Institution Building: An Assessment
Walter L. Perry, Stuart Johnson, Stephanie Pezard, Gillian S. Oak, David Stebbins, and Chaoling Feng

RR-1176-OSD (2016)

A key element in the Department of Defense's Defense Strategic Guidance is building the capacity of partner nations to share the costs and responsibilities of global leadership. To implement this goal, the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy uses several security cooperation and assistance programs to work with partner countries to support defense institution building (DIB), i.e., build the capacity of their defense ministries. In addition, the combatant commands engage in DIB in response to the security cooperation focus areas in the Guidance for Employment of the Force. DIB has four primary components—Wales Initiative Funds-DIB, Defense Institutional Reform Initiative, Ministry of Defense Advisors, and Defense Institute of International Legal Studies—but includes all security cooperation activities that develop accountable, effective, and efficient defense institutions. The primary objective of many existing DIB activities is to help partner nations develop and manage capable security forces subject to appropriate civilian control. This report presents an analysis of a range of DIB activities, recommends a set of goals and objectives for achieving them, identifies partner nation and DIB activity selection criteria, develops a strategy for coordinating DIB activities, and recommends procedures for achieving accountability and assessment. It also identifies the most critical challenges DIB programs will face as they go forward: the inherent complexity of the DIB enterprise, the difficulty of measuring the long-term success of short-term endeavors, and the challenges of selecting partner nations for DIB activities.

Find the full report at www.rand.org/t/RR1176

Defense Institution Building in Africa: An Assessment
Michael J. McNerney, Stuart Johnson, Stephanie Pezard, David Stebbins, Renanah Miles, Angela O'Mahony, Chaoling Feng, and Tim Oliver

RR-1232-OSD (2016)

This report assesses U.S. efforts in defense institution building (DIB) in Africa and suggests possible improvements to planning and execution. It first defines DIB and reviews some best practices from DIB and security sector reform experiences. It also highlights how DIB activities serve U.S. official strategic guidance for Africa. The report then examines how DIB is currently planned and executed in Africa and describes the range of programs that are available to U.S. planners for that purpose. It also provides a structured approach to aid in the prioritization of such programs. The report then analyzes DIB efforts in two African nations—Liberia and Libya. Finally, it examines how other institutions and countries undertake DIB by taking a closer look at the DIB activities of DoD’s regional centers, as well as the relatively extensive experience of two key U.S. allies—the United Kingdom and France—in this domain.

Find the full report at www.rand.org/t/RR1232
**Building Armies, Building Nations: Toward a New Approach to Security Force Assistance**

Michael Shurkin, John Gordon IV, Bryan Frederick, and Christopher G. Pernin  
RR-1832-A (2017)

This report proposes an alternative approach to Security Force Assistance (SFA) derived from an interpretation of nation-building and legitimacy formation grounded in history; it highlights the importance of ideas, identities, and ideology and argues that SFA efforts often err by focusing too much on force structure, capabilities, and readiness, while not sufficiently considering the extent to which a force’s development complements the larger nation-building project and the formation of appropriate ideas, identities, and ideologies within the force. The report uses six case studies (South Korea, South Vietnam, Iraq, Ghana, Mali, and Nigeria) to analyze the relationship between building armies and building nations as well as potential U.S. contributions.

Find the full report at www.rand.org/t/RR1832

**Assessment of the Politico-Military Campaign to Counter ISIL and Options for Adaptation**

Linda Robinson  
RR-1290-OSD (2016)

This report assesses the campaign against the Islamic State (ISIL), focusing on the military and political lines of effort. The capabilities and motivations of the various counter-ISIL forces on the battlefield are assessed, as well as the U.S.-led efforts to provide training, equipment, advice, and assistance, including air support. Although the campaign has degraded ISIL by targeting leadership and retaking a portion of territory, achieving lasting defeat of ISIL will be elusive without local forces capable of holding territory. Successful conclusion of the campaign will require significantly increased effort on two fronts. First, more-comprehensive training, advising, and assisting will be required to create more-capable, coordinated indigenous forces of appropriate composition and enable them to regain and hold territory. Second, political agreements must be forged to resolve key drivers of conflict among Iraqis and Syrians. Without these elements, resurgent extremist violence is likely. Many factors complicate the prospects for success, including sectarian divisions in Iraq, Iranian support for Shia militias in Iraq and Syria, the Syrian civil war, and Russian intervention to support the besieged regime of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. However, the Syrian regime also lacks sufficient competent local forces and is heavily reliant on external militia support. The government in Iraq, led by Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi, has pledged decentralization efforts to address Sunni concerns, but lacks sufficient Shia support to enact them. This report offers recommendations for a more comprehensive advisory approach, emphasizing the political line of effort, and achieving synergy between the military and political efforts.

Find the full report at www.rand.org/t/RR1290

**Rolling Back the Islamic State**

Seth G. Jones, James Dobbins, Daniel Byman, Christopher S. Chivvis, Ben Connable, Jeffrey Martini, Eric Robinson, and Nathan Chandler  
RR-1912 (2017)

The Islamic State is a byproduct of the 2003 U.S. intervention in Iraq and the subsequent U.S. departure in 2011. At its peak in late 2014, the group held more than 100,000 square kilometers of territory with a population of nearly 12 million, mostly in Iraq and Syria. Beginning in 2015, the Islamic State began to lose
territory as it faced increasingly effective resistance. Still, the Islamic State continues to conduct and inspire attacks around the world. This report assesses the threat the Islamic State poses to the United States and examines four possible strategies to counter the group: disengagement, containment, rollback “light” (with a reliance on local forces backed by U.S. special operations forces, Central Intelligence Agency and other intelligence assets, and airpower), and rollback “heavy” (adding the employment of American conventional forces in ground combat). The authors conclude that the United States should pursue a light rollback strategy. They also recommend additional steps, such as rebalancing counterterrorism efforts to address grievances, loosening restrictions on U.S. military operations, increasing U.S. military posture in Africa, and tightening restrictions in the Islamic State’s internet access.

Find the full report at www.rand.org/t/RR1912

Reforming Security Sector Assistance for Africa
Stephen Watts, Kimberly Jackson, Sean Mann, Stephen Dalzell, Trevor Johnston, Matthew Lane, Michael J. McNerney, and Andrew Brooks
RB-10028-OSD/AFRICOM (2018)

The United States has sought to combat security threats in Africa—whether terrorism or, in a previous era, communism—principally by providing security sector assistance (SSA) to partner governments on the continent. Proponents of such assistance claim that it is a cost-effective tool for advancing U.S. interests on the continent while being welcomed by the African partners. By strengthening partners’ security capabilities, the United States can help partners deter challenges by militants and degrade and ultimately defeat those challengers that do arise. Moreover, by professionalizing and socializing partner security personnel, the United States can stabilize governments through improved civil-military relations and human-rights practices. Critics, on the other hand, contend that SSA has been at best ineffective, leading to brief but unsustainable improvements in security, or at worst detrimental in undercutting precisely the goals the United States has tried to achieve by inflaming inter-communal tensions, undermining civil-military relations, or contributing to human-rights abuses.

RAND Corporation analysts have conducted research to evaluate these contending claims and recommend improvements in SSA practices. This research brief summarizes the results of two RAND studies: one sponsored by the Office of African Affairs in the Office of the Secretary of Defense and one sponsored by U.S. Africa Command. Together, these studies suggest that U.S.-provided SSA in Africa has largely failed to achieve its goals. For most of the past quarter-century, SSA has been highly inefficient, achieving no aggregate reduction in insurgencies or terrorism in the countries that received the SSA. During the Cold War, it appears to have even been counterproductive, increasing the incidence of conflict in recipient countries. But there is also evidence that, under the right conditions, SSA can reduce violence and human-rights abuses.

Find the full document at www.rand.org/t/RB10028
A Developmental Approach to Building Sustainable Security-Sector Capacity in Africa

Stephen Watts, Kimberly Jackson, Sean Mann, and Stephen Dalzell

RR-2048-AFRICOM (2018)

In this report, RAND researchers analyze options to improve the sustainability of security sector assistance (SSA) in the U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) area of responsibility. They derive insights from the development community that might usefully be modified to meet the unique challenges of the security sectors of African partner nations. More specifically, they outline five development principles (and associated “good practices”) that have particular relevance to building sustainable partner capacity: local ownership; a comprehensive approach; selectivity; harmonization; and long-term, iterative adaptation. The authors review the many challenges that the U.S. Department of Defense faces in applying these principles. Finally, the authors recommend changes to overall SSA structures and specific practices to enhance the sustainability of partner capacity gains.

Find the full report at www.rand.org/t/RR2048

Building Security in Africa: An Evaluation of U.S. Security Sector Assistance in Africa from the Cold War to the Present

Stephen Watts, Trevor Johnston, Matthew Lane, Sean Mann, Michael J. McNerney, and Andrew Brooks

RR-2447-OSD (2018)

The United States has sought to combat security threats in Africa principally by supporting partner governments, and security sector assistance (SSA) has been one of the primary tools it has used. Rigorous evaluations of the overall impact of SSA, however, have been extremely rare. A RAND Corporation study used statistical models to evaluate the impact that U.S.-provided SSA has had on political violence in Africa—in particular, the incidence of civil wars and insurgencies, terrorist attacks, and state repression. The authors found that SSA has had a mixed record. During the Cold War, SSA likely exacerbated instability, leading to a higher incidence of civil wars. During the post–Cold War era, it seems to have had little net effect, likely reflecting recipient-government failures to sustain the capabilities developed through SSA and to harness these capability gains to effective political–military strategies. When SSA has been implemented in conjunction with peacekeeping operations, however, it has had a consistently positive impact across a range of outcomes, including the likelihood of civil war recurrence, the incidence of terrorist attacks, and the extent of state repression. These findings have important implications for future U.S. policies in Africa and potentially beyond.

Find the full report at www.rand.org/t/RR2447
**America’s Role in Nation-Building: From Germany to Iraq**

James Dobbins, John G. McGinn, Keith Crane, Seth G. Jones, Rollie Lal, Andrew Rathmell, Rachel M. Swanger, and Anga R. Timilsina


The post–World War II occupations of Germany and Japan set standards for postconflict nation-building that have not since been matched. Only in recent years has the United States felt the need to participate in similar transformations, but it is now facing one of the most challenging prospects since the 1940s: Iraq. The authors review seven case studies—Germany, Japan, Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, Kosovo, and Afghanistan—and seek lessons about what worked well and what did not. Then, they examine the Iraq situation in light of these lessons. Success in Iraq will require an extensive commitment of financial, military, and political resources for a long time. The United States cannot afford to contemplate early exit strategies and cannot afford to leave the job half completed.

Find the full report at www.rand.org/t/MR1753

**The UN’s Role in Nation-Building: From the Congo to Iraq**

James Dobbins, Seth G. Jones, Keith Crane, Andrew Rathmell, Brett Steele, Richard Teltschik, and Anga R. Timilsina

MG-304-RC (2005)

The authors review nearly 50 years of UN nation-building efforts to transform unstable countries into democratic, peaceful, and prosperous partners. They also examine the UN’s experience in the Congo, Namibia, El Salvador, Cambodia, Mozambique, Eastern Slavonia, Sierra Leone, and East Timor and also the U.S. experience in Iraq. The book complements the authors’ earlier study, America’s Role in Nation-Building: From Germany to Iraq (MR-1753-RC), which focuses on U.S.-led nation-building efforts. UN missions are nearly always undermanned and underfunded, with uneven troop quality and late-arriving components. But despite these handicaps, the UN success rate among missions studied—seven out of eight societies left peaceful, six out of eight left democratic—substantiates the view that nation-building can be an effective means of terminating conflicts, insuring against their reoccurrence, and promoting democracy. The authors conclude that the UN provides the most suitable institutional framework for nation-building missions that require fewer than 20,000 men—one with a comparatively low cost structure, a comparatively high success rate, and the greatest degree of international legitimacy. American or other major power leadership is, by contrast, needed for operations which require forced-entry operations or force levels in excess of 20,000 soldiers. Unfortunately, the United States has been less successful than the UN in learning from its mistakes and improving its nation-building performance over time, and this is reflected in the lower success rate among U.S.-led missions studied in this series.

Find the full document at www.rand.org/t/MG304
The Beginner’s Guide to Nation-Building
James Dobbins, Seth G. Jones, Keith Crane, and Beth Cole DeGrasse
MG-557-SRF (2007)

Since the end of the Cold War, the United States, NATO, the United Nations (UN), and a range of other states and nongovernmental organizations have become increasingly involved in nation-building operations. Nation-building involves the use of armed force as part of a broader effort to promote political and economic reforms, with the objective of transforming a society emerging from conflict into one at peace with itself and its neighbors. This guidebook is a practical “how-to” manual on the conduct of effective nation-building. It is organized around the constituent elements that make up any nation-building mission: military, police, rule of law, humanitarian relief, governance, economic stabilization, democratization, and development. The chapters describe how each of these components should be organized and employed, how much of each is likely to be needed, and the likely cost. The lessons are drawn principally from 16 U.S.- and UN-led nation-building operations since World War II and from a forthcoming study on European-led missions. In short, this guidebook presents a comprehensive history of best practices in nation-building and serves as an indispensable reference for the preplanning of future interventions and for contingency planning on the ground.

Find the full document at www.rand.org/t/MG557

Europe’s Role in Nation-Building: From the Balkans to the Congo
James Dobbins, Seth G. Jones, Keith Crane, Christopher S. Chivvis, Andrew Radin, F. Stephen Larrabee, Nora Bensahel, Brooke Stearns Lawson, and Benjamin W. Goldsmith

Two previous RAND volumes addressed the roles of the United States and the United Nations in nation-building, defined as the use of armed force in the aftermath of a conflict to promote a durable peace and representative government. This volume presents six case studies of recent European-led nation-building missions: Albania, Sierra Leone, Macedonia, Côte d’Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Bosnia. It also reviews the Australian assistance mission to the Solomon Islands. Using quantitative and qualitative measures to compare inputs (such as military levels, economic assistance, and duration) and outcomes (such as levels of security, economic growth, refugee return, and democracy), the analysis concludes that these European-led missions have been competently managed and, within their sometimes quite limited scope, generally successful. Most helped achieve sustained peace, gross domestic product growth, and representative government. The EU has a wide array of civil competencies for nation-building, but it is sometimes slow to deploy them in support of its military operations, particularly when these are conducted far from Europe. The UN offers the most cost-effective means to address most postconflict stabilization requirements and NATO the better framework for large-scale force projection in cases in which the United States is ready to participate. But the EU now offers European governments a viable alternative to both these organizations in cases in which European interests are high, U.S. interests are low, and the UN is, for some reason, unsuitable or unavailable.

Find the full document at www.rand.org/t/MG722

**Occupying Iraq: A History of the Coalition Provisional Authority**

James Dobbins, Seth G. Jones, Benjamin Runkle, and Siddharth Mohandas

MG-847-CC (2009)

The U.S. engagement in Iraq has been looked at from many perspectives—the flawed intelligence that provided the war’s rationale, the failed effort to secure an international mandate, the rapid success of the invasion, and the long ensuing counterinsurgency campaign. This book focuses on the activities of the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) and its administrator, L. Paul Bremer, who governed Iraq from May 2003 to June of the following year. It is based on interviews with many of those responsible for setting and implementing occupation policy, on the memoirs of U.S. and Iraqi officials who have since left office, on journalists’ accounts of the period, and on nearly 100,000 never-before-released CPA documents. The book recounts and evaluates the efforts of the United States and its coalition partners to restore public services, reform the judicial and penal systems, fight corruption, revitalize the economy, and create the basis for representative government. It also addresses the occupation’s most striking failure: the inability of the United States and its coalition partners to protect the Iraqi people from the criminals and extremists in their midst.

Find the full document at www.rand.org/t/MG847

**Libya’s Post-Qaddafi Transition: The Nation-Building Challenge**

Christopher S. Chivvis, Keith Crane, Peter Mandaville, and Jeffrey Martini

RR-129-SRF (2012)

A year after Qaddafi’s death, the light-footprint approach adopted for Libya’s postwar transition is facing its most serious test. Security, the political transition, and economic development all present challenges. The security situation requires immediate attention and could worsen still. Until the militias are brought under state control, progress on other fronts will be very difficult to achieve. In most cases, the appropriate approach is a combination of incentives and broad-based negotiation between Tripoli and militia leaders. Only in extreme cases should the use of force be considered. On the political front, Libya and international actors deserve credit for the successful elections in July, but the political challenges ahead are significant. Libya still needs to write a constitution, and in doing so, it must determine the degree to which power is centralized in Tripoli and how to ensure inclusive yet stable governing institutions. Libya also needs to begin rethinking the management of its economy, and especially of its energy resources, to maximize the benefit to its citizens, reduce corruption, and enable private enterprise to flourish in other areas, such as tourism. Libya also needs sustained assistance—mainly technical in nature—from the countries that helped oust Qaddafi lest the transition run off the rails. Despite its role in helping topple Qaddafi, NATO is absent from Libya today. A greater role for the alliance is worth exploring, for example training Libyan security officials and forces and providing technical assistance for security-sector reform. An international Friends of Libya conference on assistance to Libya is warranted. Post-conflict transitions normally span years, and Libya’s will be no different. Nevertheless, if current challenges are handled adroitly, Libya could still emerge as a positive force for democratic stability in North Africa and a valuable partner against al-Qaeda.

Find the full report at www.rand.org/t/RR129
The Uses and Limits of Small-Scale Military Interventions
Stephen Watts, Caroline Baxter, Molly Dunigan, and Christopher Rizzi
MG-1226-RC (2012)

The authors assess the utility and limitations of “minimalist stabilization”—small-scale interventions designed to stabilize a partner government engaged in violent conflict. They propose policy recommendations concerning when minimalist stabilization missions may be appropriate and the strategies most likely to make such interventions successful, as well as the implications for U.S. Army force structure debates and partnership strategies. Minimalist stabilization missions do not significantly increase a partner government’s odds of victory in a counterinsurgency campaign, but they do dramatically reduce the probability of defeat. Minimalist stabilization typically yields operational successes that degrade rebel capabilities and make it unlikely that the insurgents can topple the government. Such missions typically do not, however, alter the underlying structure of the conflict. They usually do not help foster significant political reforms in the partner government. Nor are they typically able to cut insurgents off from their resource bases. These dynamics suggest that the operational gains attributable to minimalist stabilization can usually be converted into strategic success only if the underlying political or international structure of the conflict can be altered. Military power plays a role, but the infrequency of victory suggests that the role of force is more about creating the framework within which a political process can operate successfully rather than winning per se. These findings do not yield simple policy prescriptions. These findings do, however, caution against viewing minimalist stabilization as a panacea. Modest resource commitments generally yield modest results. In some circumstances, such modest results will be adequate to secure important U.S. interests. In other cases, they will not—and in some cases, the underresourcing of interventions may have catastrophic results.

Find the full document at www.rand.org/t/MG1226

Ending the U.S. War in Iraq: The Final Transition, Operational Maneuver, and Disestablishment of United States Forces–Iraq
Rick Brennan, Jr., Charles P. Ries, Larry Hanauer, Ben Connable, Terrence K. Kelly, Michael J. McNerney, Stephanie Young, Jason H. Campbell, and K. Scott McMahon
RR-232-USFI (2013)

Over the course of the U.S. engagement in Iraq, the U.S. military managed hundreds of bases and facilities and used millions of pieces of equipment. The military was not only involved with security-related activities but also assisted in political and economic functions the host nation government or other U.S. departments would normally perform. A 2010 assessment identified that responsibility for 431 activities would need to be handed off to the government of Iraq, the U.S. embassy, U.S. Central Command, or other U.S. government departments. Ending the U.S. war in Iraq would also require redeploying more than 100,000 military and civilian personnel and moving or transferring ownership of more than a million pieces of property, including facilities, in
accordance with U.S. and Iraqi laws, national policy, and DoD requirements. This book looks at the planning and execution of this transition, using information gathered from historical documents and interviews with key players. It examines efforts to help Iraq build the capacity necessary to manage its own security absent a U.S. military presence. It also looks at the complications that arose from uncertainty over just how much of a presence the United States would continue to have beyond 2011 and how various posttransition objectives would be advanced. The authors also examine efforts to create an embassy intended to survive in a hostile environment by being entirely self-sufficient, performing missions the military previously performed. The authors draw lessons from these events that can help plan for ending future wars.

Find the full report at www.rand.org/t/RR232

**Are U.S. Military Interventions Contagious over Time? Intervention Timing and Its Implications for Force Planning**

Jennifer Kavanagh

RR-192-A (2013)

Current DoD force planning processes assume that U.S. military interventions are serially independent over time. This report challenges this assumption, arguing that interventions occur in temporally dependent clusters in which the likelihood of an intervention depends on interventions in the recent past. The author used data on 66 U.S. Army contingency and peacekeeping deployments of at least company size between 1949 and 2010 and found evidence of temporal dependence between military interventions even when controlling for political, economic, and other security factors. However, the results also suggested that clustering is affected by the nature of the geopolitical regime and is stronger at certain points than others, for example, after the Cold War as compared to during the Cold War. The results suggested that as few as two military interventions above average are often enough to trigger interventions in subsequent years. Because current planning processes address only the direct force demands of a given deployment and ignore the heightened risk for additional demands created by temporal dependence, these processes may project force requirements that understate the demands placed on military deployments during a period of clustered interventions. This analysis suggests that DoD should consider modifying the integrated security constructs to incorporate serial correlation of interventions, making assumptions about the nature of the current or future geopolitical regime explicit, and assessing whether the existing set of force planning frameworks reflects the spectrum of potential future geopolitical regimes.

Find the full report at www.rand.org/t/RR192

**Overcoming Obstacles to Peace: Local Factors in Nation-Building**

James Dobbins, Laurel E. Miller, Stephanie Pezard, Christopher S. Chivvis, Julie E. Taylor, Keith Crane, Calin Trenkov-Wermuth, and Tewodaj Mengistu

RR-167-CC (2013)

This volume analyzes the impediments that local conditions pose to successful outcomes of nation-building interventions in conflict-affected areas. Previous RAND studies of nation-building focused on external interveners' activities. This volume shifts the focus to internal circumstances, first identifying the conditions that gave rise to conflicts or threatened to perpetuate them, and then determining how external and local actors were able to modify or work around them to promote
enduring peace. It examines in depth six varied societies: Cambodia, El Salvador, Bosnia and Herzegovina, East Timor, Sierra Leone, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It then analyzes a larger set of 20 major post–Cold War nation-building interventions. The authors assess the risk of renewed conflict at the onset of the interventions and subsequent progress along five dimensions: security, democratization, government effectiveness, economic growth, and human development. They find that transformation of many of the specific conditions that gave rise to or fueled conflict often is not feasible in the time frame of nation-building operations but that such transformation has not proven essential to achieving the primary goal of nation-building—establishing peace. Most interventions in the past 25 years have led to enduring peace, as well as some degree of improvement in the other dimensions assessed. The findings suggest the importance of setting realistic expectations—neither expecting nation-building operations to quickly lift countries out of poverty and create liberal democracies, nor being swayed by a negative stereotype of nation-building that does not recognize its signal achievements in the great majority of cases.

Find the full report at www.rand.org/t/RR167

**Operation IRAQI FREEDOM: Decisive War, Elusive Peace**

Walter L. Perry, Richard E. Darilek, Laurinda L. Rohn, and Jerry M. Sollinger (eds.)

RR-1214-A (2015)

Soon after Operation IRAQI FREEDOM (OIF) began in March 2003, RAND Arroyo Center began compiling an authoritative account of the planning and execution of combat and stability operations in Iraq through 2004 in order to identify key issues that could affect Army plans, operational concepts, doctrine, and other Title 10 functions.

The resulting analysis, completed in January 2006, will interest those involved in organizing, training, and equipping military forces to plan for, deploy to, participate in, and support joint and multinational operations. Although focused primarily on Army forces and activities, the analysis also describes aspects of joint and multinational operations. RAND analysts collected the information in this report from many sources, including unit after-action reports, compilations of lessons learned, official databases, media reports, other contemporary records, and interviews with key participants in OIF. This report presents a broad overview of the study findings based on unclassified source material. It traces the operation from its root causes in the first Gulf War through operations up to approximately the end of June 2004. It addresses strategy, planning, and organization for OIF; air and ground force operations; personnel, deployment, and logistics issues; coalition operations; the occupation that followed combat operations; and civil-military operations. Also, because the research conducted for this report covers events only through June 2004, events that occurred after that date would alter some of the conclusions and recommendations. In other cases, some recommendations might already have been implemented in whole or in part. Nevertheless, the report’s recommendations are provided as they were originally formulated.

Find the full report at www.rand.org/t/RR1214
The Past, Present, and Future of U.S. Ground Interventions: Identifying Trends, Characteristics, and Signposts

Jennifer Kavanagh, Bryan Frederick, Matthew Povlock, Stacie L. Pettyjohn, Angela O’Mahoney, Stephen Watts, Nathan Chandler, John Speed Meyers, and Eugeniu Han

RR-1831-A (2017)

In recent years, the frequency of U.S. military interventions in overseas areas, including not only those involving conventional war but also peacekeeping and humanitarian relief operations, has risen. These interventions have involved thousands of troops, cost billions of dollars, and placed significant demands on Army leadership, planning, and resources. The Army would benefit from an enhanced ability to anticipate the types and conditions of overseas military interventions it is most likely to be called on to undertake in the future. This report constructs three different sets of models using historical data (one for each of three intervention types: interventions into armed conflict, stability operations in conflict and postconflict environments, and deterrent interventions). It examines the key factors influencing the incidence of military interventions and intervention size. Finally, the analysis provides the Army with signposts and metrics that can be used to identify countries, conflicts, and crises that are at highest risk for a U.S. intervention. Key signposts include the relationship between the target of the intervention and the United States, past U.S. military involvement in that country, and the severity of the crisis or threat to which the United States is responding. These signposts would allow the Army to better anticipate and plan for future interventions and could improve both near- and medium-term force-planning decisions.

Find the full report at www.rand.org/t/RR1831

Characteristics of Successful U.S. Military Interventions

Jennifer Kavanagh, Bryan Frederick, Alexandra Stark, Nathan Chandler, Meagan L. Smith, Matthew Povlock, Lynn E. Davis, and Edward Geist

RR-3062-A (2019)

Using an original data set of 145 ground, air, and naval interventions from 1898 through 2016, this report identifies those factors that have made U.S. military interventions more or less successful at achieving their political objectives. While these objectives were often successfully achieved, about 63 percent of the time overall, levels of success have been declining over time as the United States has pursued increasingly ambitious objectives.

The research combines statistical analysis and detailed case studies of three types of interventions—combat, stability operations, and
deterrence. The research highlights that the factors that promote the successful achievement of political objectives vary by the nature of the objective and the intervention. For example, sending additional ground forces may help to defeat adversaries in combat missions but may have a more contingent effect on success in institution-building in stability operations, where nonmilitary resources and pre-intervention planning may be especially vital.

The report offers five main policy recommendations. First, planners should carefully match political objectives to strategy because factors that promote success vary substantially by objective type. Second, sending more forces does not always promote success, but for certain types of objectives and interventions, greater capabilities may be essential. Third, policymakers should have realistic expectations regarding the possibility of achieving highly ambitious objectives. Fourth, pre-intervention planning is crucial. Finally, policymakers should carefully evaluate the role that might be played by third parties, which is often underappreciated.

Find the full report at www.rand.org/t/RR3062

**Africa’s Role in Nation-Building: An Examination of African-Led Peace Operations**

James Dobbins, James Pumzile Machakaire, Andrew Radin, Stephanie Pezard, Jotes S. Blake, Laura Bosco, Nathan Chandler, Wandile Langa, Charles Nyuykonge, and Kitenge Fabrice Tunda

RR-2978-CC (2019)

Three previous RAND volumes examined the record of U.S.-, United Nations (UN)-, and European-led peacekeeping, peace enforcement, and postconflict stabilization operations. This volume considers similar missions by the African Union and several subregional African organizations. These missions range from mediation and traditional peacekeeping to peace enforcement and extended counterinsurgency campaigns. This report contains case studies of six of these missions in Burundi, the Central African Republic, Darfur, the Comoros, Somalia, and the Lake Chad Basin. The case studies are followed by a statistical comparison of U.S., UN, European, and African missions. The report concludes with recommendations for the relevant African institutions, the UN, and other organizations and governments interested in peace and security in Africa.

Of the six missions examined, two were ultimately successful, and three have shown some progress. What is most remarkable and commendable about Africa’s institutional role in regional peace operations is the level of cooperation generally achieved among the states most directly affected by these conflicts. African countries do not all agree with one another but instead have established effective consultation processes. They are also able to form ad hoc coalitions to pursue their shared interests. African-led peace operations have shown the flexibility to undertake a range of different types of tasks, up to and including high-intensity combat, under different subregional or continentwide institutions, supported by varying partners. African institutions will likely develop new capabilities for peace operations, especially if new funds become available.

Find the full report at www.rand.org/t/RR2978
Developing and Assessing Options for the Global SOF Network

Thomas S. Szayna and William Welser IV
RR-340-SOCOM (2013)

The January 2012 Defense Strategic Guidance calls for small-footprint, low-cost approaches where possible in ensuring U.S. security in a 21st-century world of transnational threats. In response, U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) has developed and put forth its Global SOF Network vision, which calls for a distributed overseas posture for Special Operations Forces (SOF) as part of a new approach based on creating a structure that responds more effectively to emerging threats and deters future ones. USSOCOM posits that increasing SOF forward presence and creating these networks will deepen existing partnerships and provide new ones. This, in turn, will provide greater insight regarding conditions on the ground, shape the environment more effectively, and better enable local SOF partners to meet security threats.

Building and employing a global SOF network and strengthening partners form the core of the Global SOF Network vision. USSOCOM asked RAND to develop options for implementing the vision by creating and then applying an analytically rigorous methodology, and to investigate whether changes to command and control arrangements or Department of Defense funding and budgeting processes might be needed for its effective execution.

Find the full report at www.rand.org/t/RR340

Special Warfare: The Missing Middle in U.S. Coercive Options

Dan Madden, Dick Hoffmann, Michael Johnson, Fred Krawchuk, John E. Peters, Linda Robinson, and Abby Doll
RR-828-A (2014)

This report demonstrates the need for special warfare, a strategic and operational approach to securing U.S. interests. The United States requires new approaches for exerting influence to fill the missing middle between the costly indefinite commitment of conventional forces and the limitations of distant-strike options presented by drones and Tomahawk missiles. Because special warfare works principally through local actors, employs political warfare methods, and requires the integration of a much broader suite of U.S. government agency capabilities than are typically envisioned in conventional campaigns, the United States must adjust its conceptual models for military campaigns to achieve its goals through special warfare. The report has four specific aims: (1) to adapt conventional operational art to the unique characteristics of special warfare, (2) to identify the strategic advantages and risks associated with special warfare, (3) to explore how special warfare campaigns could be used to address challenges identified in strategic guidance, and (4) to provide guidance to military and civilian leaders and planners in designing and executing these campaigns. RAND authors recommend that DoD strengthen its special warfare planning capacity and culture, conduct institutional reforms to facilitate unified action among relevant U.S. government agencies, and place greater emphasis on developing capabilities required to prevail in the human domain.

Find the full report at www.rand.org/t/RR828
Advising the Command: Best Practices from the Special Operations Advisory Experience in Afghanistan

Todd C. Helmus
RR-949-OSD (2015)

The NATO Special Operations Component Command—Afghanistan/ Special Operations Joint Task Force—Afghanistan has tasked Special Operations Advisory Groups with the responsibility of advising headquarter elements of the Afghan Special Security Forces. This report identifies best practices for operational-level advising from this special operations advisory mission. The report also identifies recommendations that are intended to address key challenges in operational-level partnering. Findings are presented on the topics of rapport-building, the advising engagement, integration, sustainability, pre-deployment training, and continuity of operations.

Find the full report at www.rand.org/t/RR949

Building Special Operations Partnerships in Afghanistan and Beyond: Challenges and Best Practices from Afghanistan, Iraq, and Colombia

Austin Long, Todd C. Helmus, S. Rebecca Zimmerman, Christopher M. Schnaubelt, and Peter Chalk
RR-713-OSD (2015)

Building the capacity of Afghan special operations forces (SOF) is a key goal of the United States and its coalition partners. In February and March 2013, RAND analysts conducted extensive battlefield circulations in Afghanistan and visited multiple training sites for Afghan SOF. The mentors at these sites hailed from a variety of International Security Assistance Force contributing nations, including the United States, Lithuania, Romania, Australia, Norway, and the United Kingdom. This report summarizes key partnering practices across these international partners and presents findings from SOF partnership case studies in Iraq and Colombia. The goal is to identify best practices for SOF partnership that can benefit the development of the Afghan special operations capability. These best practices also have broader applicability for special operations partnerships beyond Afghanistan.

Find the full report at www.rand.org/t/RR713
**U.S. Special Operations Forces in the Philippines, 2001-2014**
Linda Robinson, Patrick B. Johnston, and Gillian S. Oak
RR-1236-OSD (2016)

This report examines the 14-year experience of U.S. special operations forces in the Philippines from 2001 through 2014. The objective of this case history is to document and evaluate the activities and effects of special operations capabilities employed to address terrorist threats in Operation Enduring Freedom—Philippines through (1) training and equipping Philippine security forces, (2) providing operational advice and assistance, and (3) conducting civil-military and information operations. The report evaluates the development, execution, and adaptation of the U.S. effort to enable the Philippine government to counter transnational terrorist groups.

An average of 500 to 600 U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps special operations units were employed continuously under the command of a joint special operations task force. They provided training, advice, and assistance during combat operations to both Philippine special operations units and selected air, ground, and naval conventional units; conducted civil–military and information operations on Basilan, in the Sulu archipelago, and elsewhere in Mindanao; provided intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, medical evacuation, and emergency care; aided planning and intelligence fusion at joint operational commands and force development at institutional headquarters; and coordinated their programs closely with the U.S. embassy country team. The authors conclude that Operation Enduring Freedom—Philippines contributed to the successful degradation of transnational terrorist threats in the Philippines and the improvement of its security forces, particularly special operations units. It identifies contributing and limiting factors, which could be relevant to the planning and implementation of future such efforts.

Find the full report at www.rand.org/t/RR1236

**Toward Operational Art in Special Warfare**
Dan Madden, Dick Hoffmann, Michael Johnson, Fred Krawchuk, Bruce R. Nardulli, John E. Peters, Linda Robinson, and Abby Doll
RR-779-A (2016)

Hybrid irregular and conventional military operations are playing an increasingly prominent role in international conflict, exploited by such countries as Russia and Iran. The United States requires new approaches for exerting influence, filling the missing middle—between the limitations of distant strike and the costly, indefinite commitment of conventional forces—to counter these increasing threats. Special warfare provides policymakers with an additional option that can help secure U.S. interests and manage risks. These campaigns stabilize a friendly state or destabilize a hostile regime by operating through and with local state or nonstate partners, rather than through unilateral U.S. action. Currently, there is no shared
understanding of how special warfare campaigns should be designed and executed. This RAND study sought to fill this gap by (1) adapting conventional operational art to the unique characteristics of special warfare, (2) identifying the strategic advantages and risks associated with special warfare, (3) exploring how special warfare campaigns could be used to address challenges identified in strategic guidance, and (4) proposing a framework for military and civilian leaders to design and execute these campaigns. The research indicates that the U.S. Department of Defense should strengthen its special warfare planning capacity and culture, implement institutional reforms to facilitate unified action among relevant U.S. government agencies, and develop enhanced influence capabilities. An accompanying appendix volume provides additional context to supplement the analyses presented in the report.

Find the full report at www.rand.org/t/RR779


RR-1201/1-SOJTF-A (2017)

This report presents findings from an examination of six historical case studies in which the mission of special operations forces (SOF) in each of the six countries transitioned over time to include some level of inclusion in the U.S. embassy’s Security Cooperation Office (SCO). The authors provide background and context for SOF missions in Iraq, Jordan, Pakistan, the Philippines, Uganda, and Yemen and explain the interactions and relationships between SOF organizations and personnel in the U.S. country team in each embassy. Drawing on existing literature and extensive interviews with mission stakeholders, the authors characterize how U.S. SOF transitions in each of these nations have affected SOF’s ability to conduct ongoing missions, and they derive best practices for SOF when transitioning to a SCO in general and for NATO Special Operations Component Command–Afghanistan/Special Operations Joint Task Force–Afghanistan to transition to a SCO in particular.

Find the full report at www.rand.org/t/RR1201z1

Supporting Persistent and Networked Special Operations Forces (SOF) Operations: Insights from Forward-Deployed SOF Personnel

Derek Eaton, Angela O’Mahony, Thomas S. Szayna, and William Welser IV

RR-1333-USSOCOM (2017)

U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) executes its mission through a synchronized network of people and technology that provides sustained, persistent, SOF-specific capabilities and capacities and increased persistent forward-deployed presence to support the geographic combatant commands in the execution of their theater campaign plans. Using a multipronged approach, RAND Corporation
researchers identified three key operational challenges that forward-deployed personnel have encountered—unity of effort, continuity of effort, and administrative complexity—and then assessed the extent to which persistent, networked, and distributed (PND) operations can mitigate these challenges. PND operations can address some of these challenges through enhanced theater special operations commands (TSOCs), increased forward-deployed personnel, and enhanced interagency and partner-country partnerships. As a critical element in PND operations, enhanced TSOCs have the potential to greatly improve SOF effectiveness. Some improvements accruing to enhanced TSOCs will stem directly from the higher personnel numbers assigned and the consequent removal of constraints on USSOCOM’s ability to engage in the full range of planning and coordination activities. However, the assignment of appropriately trained staff to the TSOCs for extended periods of time is essential in order to ensure that all the gains of more-robust TSOCs are realized. Increased forward deployments also have the potential to enhance the impact of SOF activities. The effect can be substantial if the activities are coordinated with other U.S. efforts and build on prior SOF activities with partner forces.

Find the full report at www.rand.org/t/RR1333

**Improving Understanding of Special Operations: A Case History Analysis**

Linda Robinson, Austin Long, Kimberly Jackson, and Rebeca Orrie

RR-2026-A (2018)

This report examines major U.S. decisions related to the development or employment of special operations forces (SOF). The purpose of the report is to analyze how change has previously occurred in Army, Joint, and U.S. Department of Defense policy regarding SOF to inform future development of options for policymakers and to better articulate the ways in which the varied Army SOF capabilities can help to meet U.S. national security objectives. The report aims to assist the special operations community to better understand the policy process; formulate appropriate, sound courses of action; and engage with other members of the U.S. government interagency community in a constructive manner. Thirteen cases are covered in this report: (1) creation of 6th Army Special Reconnaissance Unit; (2) creation of the Office of Strategic Services; (3) creation of U.S. Army Special Forces; (4) special forces expansion under President Kennedy and contraction through the Vietnam War; (5) Central Intelligence Agency–SOF cooperation in Southeast Asia, 1961–1975; (6) special operations capabilities: creation of U.S. Special Operations Command and the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict; (7) special operations capabilities post-9/11 SOF expansion; (8) special mission unit expansion; (9) operational authorities and employment of SOF: section 1208; (10) operational authorities and employment: the Global SOF Network initiative; (11) operational authorities and employment: irregular warfare directive; (12) operational authorities and employment: SOF and Plan Colombia operational authorities and employment; and (13) SOF support to Syrian fighters.

Find the full report at www.rand.org/t/RR2026
Measuring the Effectiveness of Special Operations
Linda Robinson, Daniel Egel, and Ryan Andrew Brown
RR-2504-A (2019)

How can the success (or failure) of Army special operations missions be assessed? The authors develop a methodology for doing so that relies on operational, intelligence, and ambient (publicly available) data, since operational level special operations commands often lack robust staff and resources to generate assessment-specific information. The method assesses the plan’s lines of effort and their objectives, develops relevant measures of effectiveness and indicators, and gathers appropriate qualitative and quantitative data. The resulting analysis is presented to the appropriate commander, who can then use the information to adjust lines of effort or activities and other elements. The seven-step process is illustrated through a fictional scenario. Implementation will include incorporating the approach into doctrine and training and standing up an assessment cell. The cell requires access to data streams and appropriate analytic platforms and reachback support.

Find the full report at www.rand.org/t/RR2504
Additional References


