



What Have We Learned About Establishing Internal Security in Nation-Building?

Nation-building operations have become more frequent in the post-Cold War era, as the two ongoing operations in Afghanistan and Iraq highlight. While nation-building has many components—including the reconstruction of public health, economic, and education systems—establishing police, courts, border control, and other elements of internal security should be the most important objective of policymakers immediately after major combat. This raises two questions: How successful have United States and allied efforts been in reconstructing internal security institutions? What are the most important lessons for current and future operations?

RAND Corporation researchers sought to answer these questions, using a comparative case study approach to examine nine efforts in the post-Cold War era: Panama, El Salvador, Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, East Timor, Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq. The researchers assessed how successful the United States and its allies were at reducing the level of violence and establishing a functioning rule of law—the ultimate outcomes of interest in the study.

How Successful Were the Cases?

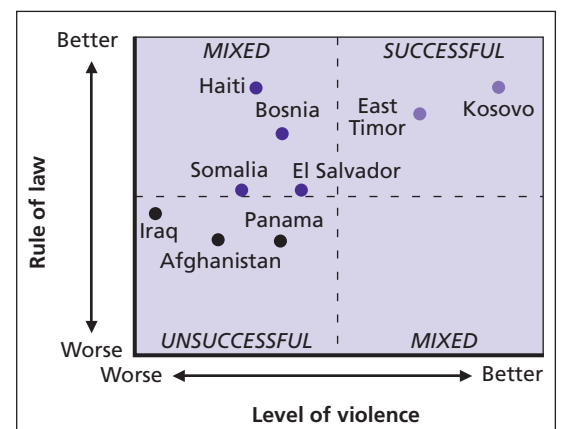
The matrix in the next column shows the results of the assessment and summarizes how successful the cases were in establishing a viable rule of law and level of violence over the first five years of reconstruction. (Because reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq have not yet lasted five years, change was measured through the most recent year.)

As the matrix shows, only two of the cases—East Timor and Kosovo—were deemed successful by the researchers’ criteria, with both the level of violence and rule of law improving over the course of reconstruction. Three of the cases—Panama,

Abstract

Comparing nine nation-building efforts in terms of how successful they were at establishing internal security, we found that, with two exceptions, most efforts were either unsuccessful or mixed. These findings were driven by differences in initial conditions in each country, as well by the inputs (e.g., the amount of financial assistance provided) and outputs (e.g., training). Based on these findings, we highlight six overall lessons learned that can help policymakers in current and future nation-building efforts.

Summary Assessment of Cases Studied



Afghanistan, and Iraq—had the opposite result and were considered unsuccessful. The remaining four cases—El Salvador, Somalia, Haiti, and Bosnia—achieved a mixed result, regarded as successful in establishing a better rule of law but unsuccessful on the level of violence.

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What Accounts for the Results?

RAND researchers found that success was largely a function of initial conditions in the country (e.g., whether a functioning central government or peace treaty existed), inputs (e.g., the amount of financial assistance provided), and outputs (e.g., training, infrastructure, and institutional development). Those outputs influenced such outcomes as crime rates and levels of political violence.

For Kosovo and East Timor, the data and case studies show that the amount of financial assistance, duration of assistance, size of international military and police, size of national police, and proportion of personnel trained were consistently high. These two countries also had the highest levels of civilian police forces, which were armed and given arrest authority. In Kosovo, for example, law enforcement was placed under civilian, not military, authority.

Reconstruction efforts in Panama, Iraq, and Afghanistan have not been successful by the researchers' measures, although it is still too early to tell for the latter two. Panama experienced a reduction in the perception of the rule of law and an increase in homicide rates. Unlike Kosovo and East Timor, Panama received significantly less international assistance. The level of financial assistance was the lowest of all the cases, except for Afghanistan. Also in Panama, the United States deployed medium levels of military forces and no international civilian police.

The mixed outcomes in the remaining four countries were partly attributable to low inputs and outputs. All these cases, except for Bosnia, received lower levels of international aid than did Kosovo and East Timor. In El Salvador and Somalia, the least successful of the mixed cases, the perception of the rule of law and civil liberties did not change over time. Homicide became more problematic in El Salvador, and insurgency levels increased in Iraq and Somalia.

And while initial conditions tended to be poor across the board, one condition—the existence of a peace agreement or formal surrender—was particularly noteworthy. All the successful and mixed cases (except Somalia) had one or the other. All three unsuccessful cases, including Iraq and Afghanistan, did not.

What Were the Overall Lessons Learned?

Six cross-cutting lessons emerge from the case studies:

- *Give as much attention to planning post-conflict internal security as to planning combat operations.* This includes gathering systematic, actionable intelligence on internal security structures prior to intervening, improving institutional planning mechanisms within the U.S. government, and ensuring pre-intervention mobilization of police and justice resources.

- *Negotiate a peace treaty or formal surrender.* Results show a peace treaty or formal surrender is highly correlated with peaceful security environments.
- *Fill the security gap quickly with U.S. (and allied) military and constabulary forces.* This involves amending U.S. joint doctrine, training, and posture and boosting U.S. and international constabulary forces.
- *Develop a comprehensive doctrine for post-conflict internal security reconstruction.* This includes developing doctrine that lays out options to ensure unity of command and effort. Within the United States, the Defense Department, State Department, and other government agencies need to clarify interagency roles for nation-building missions.
- *Build mechanisms to ensure faster mobilization of personnel, funds, and equipment.* There is a significant need to improve U.S. government capabilities to rapidly mobilize, deliver, and manage police and justice resources. There is also a need to learn lessons from other actors, such as the United Nation's civilian police system and the European Union's policing and justice programs.
- *Focus on outcome measures to shape programs.* This entails developing and using outcome-based metrics—as opposed to outputs—to define program success and managerial performance.

Implications for Policymakers

The study has three key implications. First, establishing security during the “golden hour” after combat operations conclude is critical to prevent further unrest. The golden hour is the short time frame of several weeks to several months when external intervention may enjoy some popular support and international legitimacy and when potential opposition may not have enough time to organize.

Second, past cases demonstrate that creating a secure environment and protecting civil liberties requires not just reforming the police and security forces but also ensuring a functioning justice system.

Third, the case study analysis indicates some very rough guidelines for success. In the more successful cases examined, *international troop and police levels* were at least 1,000 soldiers and 150 police per 100,000 inhabitants, respectively; after five years, *domestic police levels* were more than 200 police per 100,000 inhabitants; *total financial assistance* was at least \$250 per capita for the first two years of reconstruction; and the *duration of security assistance* lasted at least five years. ■

This research brief describes work done for RAND Infrastructure, Safety, and Environment documented in *Establishing Law and Order After Conflict*, by Seth G. Jones, Jeremy M. Wilson, Andrew Rathmell, and K. Jack Riley, MG-374-RC, 2005, 292 pp., \$27.50, ISBN: 0-8330-3814-1, available at <http://www.rand.org/publications/MG/MG374>. MG-374 is also available from RAND Distribution Services (phone: 310.451.7002; toll free 877.584.8642; or email: order@rand.org). The RAND Corporation is a nonprofit research organization providing objective analysis and effective solutions that address the challenges facing the public and private sectors around the world. RAND's publications do not necessarily reflect the opinions of its research clients and sponsors. RAND® is a registered trademark.



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