
THE U.S. APPROACH TO PEACEBUILDING

From a Whole-of-Government to a Whole-of-Alliance Approach with Japan

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This paper was first presented at a one-day bilateral workshop on April 29, 2011, held in conjunction with the Osaka School of International Public Policy (OSIPP) in Washington, D.C. In the papers, authors aim to assess each government's "whole of government" or interagency coordination of peacebuilding policies and to identify priorities, assets, and expertise as applied to Afghanistan and Sudan. The goal of the project is to explore the strengths and weaknesses of both the United States and Japan's respective initiatives with an eye toward how the two allies can best cooperate and work synergistically in a "whole of alliance" approach to peacebuilding operations in vulnerable or failing states.

Perhaps nothing speaks more about the challenges of post-conflict stabilization and rehabilitation than the fact that the United States remains deeply engaged in Afghanistan and Iraq roughly a decade after the Bush administration's decision to invade those two nations as part of its global war on terror. The experience of U.S. involvement in Afghanistan and Iraq underscores the complexities of modern-day military interventions and the subsequent challenges involved in stabilizing and rebuilding war-torn states. Similar challenges apply to the host of fragile or failed states that threaten to cause instability in neighboring countries and to have negative implications for global peace and security.

Indeed, since the end of the Cold War, failed states have multiplied at an alarming rate, requiring increased attention and action from the international community in general and from the United States (still the world's "global policeman") in particular. Today, struggling or failed states, many of which suffer from post-conflict devastation, range from Afghanistan to Somalia and from Haiti to Sudan. Their unstable polities leave them vulnerable to terrorist and extremist groups, insurgents, local militia forces, organized criminals, and other illicit networks.

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Disease, poverty, land disputes, religious conflict, and oppression of women and ethnic minorities often go hand in hand with their dire socioeconomic circumstances.

Over the past decade, the United States has tried to respond to these myriad challenges, but it has generally done so in an ad hoc manner, lacking consistent policies or strategies and a full appreciation of on-the-ground realities. This is despite the fact that successive U.S. administrations have highlighted weak or failed states as a top national security concern since Al Qaeda used Afghanistan as a safe haven to launch terrorist attacks on 9/11. In the wake of the 9/11 attacks, the Bush administration's 2002 national security strategy proclaimed that "America is now threatened less by conquering states than we are by failing ones."³ More recently, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates has argued that "Dealing with such fractured or failing states is, in many ways, the main security challenge of our time."⁴

Along with the recognition that failing states pose a direct threat to U.S. security interests, the United States has typically relied on a military-led approach to stabilizing and rebuilding fragile, post-conflict states. This is partly due to the fact that the entry point for reconstruction and rehabilitation operations in war-torn and fractured states has often involved combat-related missions to quell armed insurgents or to keep the peace between warring factions.

But another factor in the military-centric nature of these operations has been the preponderance of resources (human, financial, and material) available to the armed forces compared to civilian diplomatic and aid agencies. It is often said, for instance, that the U.S. government has fewer personnel in its diplomatic corps and foreign aid agencies than in its military marching bands. Additionally, the military generally has stronger organizational and planning capabilities compared to civilian agencies in the federal government.⁵

Given the heavy reliance on the military, it is perhaps not surprising that the U.S. approach to peacebuilding⁶ in post-conflict states has tended to emphasize what the military does best: that is, stabilization measures aimed at providing a basic level of security in fragile states where insurgents, warring factions, and other hostile elements threaten the peace. While stabilization is a critical element of post-conflict reconstruction, it is just one piece of a much larger puzzle. Stabilization operations must go hand in hand with a full range of development measures in order to create sustainable conditions for post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation.

The U.S. military has taken on development tasks — often effectively — but long-term success in the field will depend on leveraging the full resources and capabilities of the U.S. government.⁷ The U.S. experience in Afghanistan and Iraq has highlighted the fact that swift military victories over hostile regimes do not necessarily lead to

3 The White House, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, September 2002, <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/nsc/nss/2002/>, 1.

4 Robert M. Gates, "Helping Others Defend Themselves: The Future of U.S. Security Assistance," *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2010.

5 See Nina M. Serafino, "Peacekeeping/Stabilization and Conflict Transitions: Background and Congressional Action on the Civilian Response/Reserve Corps and Other Civilian Stabilization and Reconstruction Capabilities," Congressional Research Service, CRS Report to Congress, February 5, 2009.

6 Peacebuilding is closely associated with the United Nations, since the term was introduced in the UN's 1992 report "An Agenda for Peace" as a core post-Cold War UN mission (following peacemaking and peacekeeping). The report described peacebuilding broadly as "action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict." It was later defined by the UN and others to emphasize integrated and coordinated actions (by various groups) aimed at addressing the root causes of violence in a country, and to help restore order and resuscitate governing institutions, the rule of law, and the provision of public goods and services. The overarching task of all this coordinated humanitarian assistance, developmental and financial aid, technical assistance, security support and training, political dialogue, and other measures is to build up three key pillars of the nation-state, namely security, capacity, and legitimacy.

7 Secretary Gates has frequently warned of the "creeping militarization" of U.S. aid and development initiatives and has advocated a rebalancing of resources toward civilian agencies.

long-term success in stabilizing post-conflict states. While military-led stabilization operations can provide a requisite level of security for reconstruction efforts, long-term stability depends on a broader range of initiatives, such as institution building and civil society development, that are better suited for civilian agencies — provided they have the resources to carry them out.

Since the 1990s, there has been a growing consensus among U.S. policy makers for a “whole of government” approach to post-conflict peacebuilding operations. Yet this has proven to be an elusive goal. A major problem has been the lack of a lead agency for planning, coordinating, and implementing an integrated peacebuilding policy, despite the establishment in 2004 of the State Department’s Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS) mandated to fulfill such a role. Another is the ongoing imbalances in funding, manpower, and material resources that are allocated to the military as opposed to civilian agencies involved in peacebuilding operations.

The U.S. effort to bring about a comprehensive approach to peacebuilding therefore is a work in progress, with significant discrepancies remaining between the range of military and civilian resources deployed in the field. One way to make up for this discrepancy is for the United States to turn to its allies and partners for additional support. Partner nations can, in some cases, help compensate for areas where the U.S. peacebuilding effort is either under-resourced or comparatively weak. For instance, partner nations, not to mention partner international organizations such as the UN Department for Peacekeeping Operations (UNDPKO) or the UN Development Program (UNDP), can be stronger in the development side of peacebuilding operations and can fill critical roles in state building that the United States is either unwilling or unable to undertake on its own given other mission priorities.

Japan, for instance, is one of America’s closest allies and, as a major economy and international aid donor, is a nation that can bring unique assets to peacebuilding operations. A self-proclaimed “civilian power,” Japan has promoted comprehensive peacebuilding measures and is one of the more proficient of America’s allies in this field, making important contributions in both the theory and the practice of peacebuilding in countries such as Cambodia, Timor Leste, the Philippines, and Sri Lanka, among others.

In many ways, Japan’s approach to peacebuilding represents the flipside of the U.S. approach, stressing the development side of operations over security and stabilization. This is a reflection of Japan’s constitutional restrictions on the exercise of collective self-defense and its relatively limited military resources other than those strictly used for defending the homeland. Japan’s avoidance of “hard power” solutions to international disputes has led it to pursue and support alternative areas of international security. For that reason, it has been at the forefront of promoting “human security” as a new security paradigm,⁸ spearheading numerous high-level conferences on the subject and devoting considerable diplomatic and economic resources to human-security initiatives.

Thus, given their respective strengths and weaknesses, along with their foundational ties as strategic allies, there is enormous potential for enhanced cooperation between the United States and Japan in the peacebuilding field. At a time when the United States is struggling to fully implement a whole-of-government approach to peacebuilding — one that integrates military and civilian resources across multiple agencies — there could be opportunities to work more closely with Japan to develop a comprehensive whole-of-alliance approach to peacebuilding operations.

8 Hideaki Asahi writes that human security “... initially drawn from the 1994 Human Development Report by the UNDP, is composed of two functional elements: ‘freedom from fear’ and ‘freedom from want.’ It subsequently developed in two directions: while the ‘primary emphasis is on security in the face of political violence,’ another approach emphasizes, among other matters, ‘the interrelatedness of different types of security and the importance of development.’ In practice, the latter, steadfastly supported by Japan, is a valid approach to deal with the underlying problems of post-conflict peace-building through protection and empowerment.” See Hideaki Asahi, “Peace-Building in Practice: Lessons from the Ground: Forging Japan’s New Strategy for Peace Building,” a paper adapted from a chapter in *Human Security* (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 2008).

Both allies have made modest progress on this front. They have talked about increasing peacebuilding cooperation in the past, most notably in their February 2005 U.S.-Japan Security Consultative Committee (2+2) joint statement.⁹ In October 2009, the two allies launched the U.S.-Japan Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI) Senior Mission Leaders (SML) course, a training course for leaders of UN peacekeeping operations (PKO).¹⁰ Finally, the bilateral Peace Operations Working Group (POWG) has been established to plan and conceptualize bilateral collaboration in a range of humanitarian and reconstruction activities such as peacekeeping cooperation, maritime security, and disaster relief operations.

However, bilateral peacebuilding cooperation as a whole is a new field of endeavor and remains relatively underdeveloped. A more institutionalized and effective bilateral mechanism for peacebuilding cooperation in fragile states, such as Afghanistan and Sudan, could help demonstrate mutual alliance value while simultaneously contributing to global stability and national security. At the same time, a whole-of-alliance approach could fill existing gaps where the whole-of-government approach in U.S. policy making has as yet failed to materialize. Subsequent sections of this paper elaborate further on the U.S. peacebuilding approach to date, with an eye toward exploring how a U.S.-Japan whole-of-alliance initiative could complement U.S. attempts to forge a more comprehensive and integrated peacebuilding strategy for post-conflict states.

THE EVOLVING U.S. APPROACH TO PEACEBUILDING

The U.S. approach to peacebuilding has evolved over the past few decades as Washington has responded to the increasing incidence and rising security risk of failing and failed states, and as it has gained experience in the field from its attempts to stabilize and rebuild Iraq and Afghanistan. During the 1990s, most U.S. policy makers viewed fragile states as humanitarian concerns, not necessarily potential security risks to the United States or to international peace and security.¹¹ Washington was often reluctant to support armed intervention for humanitarian purposes, doing so only in to evacuate American civilians or to quickly stabilize the situation — avoiding deeper involvement in long-term challenges such as mediating civil wars and state building. For the U.S. policy community, vulnerable or failed states were of low geopolitical importance and, at best, “remote and third-tier security concerns.”¹²

However, Al Qaeda’s ability to launch devastating terrorist attacks on the United States from the safe haven of Taliban-controlled Afghanistan demonstrated the need to recognize weak or failed states as potentially significant threats to U.S. and global security interests. This, in turn, led to a dramatic shift in strategic thinking in Washington, as policy makers began to see failed states not simply as potential humanitarian crises but also as more complex security concerns.

The elevation of failed states to a higher national security priority allowed for greater attention and resources to be applied to state-building and reconstruction operations. Yet the relatively modest range of civilian personnel and resources at the U.S. government’s disposal meant that the military was increasingly relied upon to conduct

9 See Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, “Joint Statement: U.S.-Japan Security Consultative Committee,” paragraph 11, February 19, 2005, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/n-america/us/security/scc/pdfs/joint0502.pdf>.

10 According to the U.S. Department of State website, “The Global Peace Operations Initiative was established after the 2004 G8 Sea Island Summit to address growing gaps in international peace operations... The program aims to build and maintain capability, capacity, and effectiveness of peace operations,” <http://www.state.gov/t/pm/ppa/gpoi/>. See also G8 2004 Sea Island Summit Documents, “Action Plan on Expanding Global Capability for Peace Support,” June 10, 2004, <http://www.g8.utoronto.ca/summit/2004seaisland/peace.html>.

11 Pauline H. Baker, “Forging a U.S. Policy toward Fragile States,” *Prism* 1, no. 2 (March 2010).

12 Stewart Patrick and Kaysie Brown, “Greater Than the Sum of Its Parts: Assessing ‘Whole of Government’ Approaches to Fragile States,” International Peace Academy, 2007, 33.

not just security operations but also a broad range of civil and humanitarian reconstruction projects in affected areas.¹³ In Haiti, Somalia, Bosnia, and other trouble spots, military forces were deployed to undertake a variety of state-building missions, from police assistance to promoting the rule of law and governance.¹⁴

The military-centric approach to state building has of course been most prominent in Afghanistan and Iraq, partly because of the combat-oriented nature of the initial interventions in those nations and then the preponderance of military resources on hand to engage in stabilization and reconstruction efforts once a civilian on-the-ground U.S. presence was established. As the civil/humanitarian dimension of this mission expanded, it became clear that military expertise and resources were being stretched to the limit and that many of these tasks would be better suited for civilian aid and development agencies.¹⁵

This realization roughly corresponded with the Bush administration's heightened emphasis, following the inauguration of its second term, on promoting democratic institution building and the creation of strong centralized governments in post-conflict states.¹⁶ This strategy further stretched the limits of military expertise and engagement, and called for a far more robust involvement of civilian personnel (often referred to as a "civilian surge") with greater experience than the military in governance and institution building.

In an effort to build a more integrated civil-military approach to stabilization and reconstruction operations, the Department of State Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization was created by congressional authorization in July 2004. In December 2005, President George W. Bush issued National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD) 44, which formally tasked S/CRS with the duty to "coordinate and lead integrated United States Government efforts, involving all U.S. departments and agencies with relevant capabilities, to prepare, plan for, and consult stabilization and reconstruction activities."¹⁷

While the Bush administration created S/CRS as the lead coordinating office for a whole-of-government approach, the office was, from its inception, not given the resources or bureaucratic clout to coordinate and oversee policies and procedures across multiple agencies, as its original mandate had envisioned. The office was chronically underfunded and understaffed and struggled to assert its authority both within the State Department and with other competing bureaus, departments, and agencies.¹⁸ For instance, many regional desks were reluctant to cede decision-making authority to S/CRS given their traditional role in taking the lead in responding to overseas crises in their respective areas.¹⁹

That is not to say that S/CRS has been completely marginalized or made irrelevant. Instead, S/CRS has spearheaded important initiatives, such as the creation of a rapidly deployable civilian force known as the Civilian Response Corps (CRC), which now has nearly twelve hundred members operating across the globe and has been a catalyst for training multi-agency personnel in whole-of-government approaches to stabilization and reconstruction initiatives.²⁰ The CRC is a promising example of efforts to establish a civilian-surge component to peacebuilding that can respond quickly to conflicts, even in situations where combat has not necessarily ended,

13 Baker, 71.

14 Serafino, 1.

15 Ibid., 23.

16 Patrick and Brown, 50-51.

17 The White House, *National Security Presidential Directive/NSPD- 44*, December 7, 2005. <http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/nspd/nspd-44.html>.

18 Heather Price, "The Future of S/CRS – What's in a Name?" *Journal of International Peace Operations* 6, no. 5, (March/April 2011): 18.

19 Dane F. Smith, Jr., *U.S. Peacefare: Organizing American Peace-Building Operations* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies and Praeger Security International, 2010), 216.

20 Price, 18.

and has been able to make concrete contributions to operations in challenging failed states such as Chad, Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).²¹

Nonetheless, the inability to turn S/CRS into an effective coordinating body for an interagency response to post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation continues to persist, despite the Obama administration's stated commitment to a whole-of-government approach. Indeed, the much-heralded Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR), released by the State Department in late 2010, proposes subsuming S/CRS under a new Bureau for Conflict and Stabilization Operations (CSO), which would not only "build upon but go beyond the mandate and capabilities of S/CRS [and] serve as the institutional locus for policy and operational solutions for crisis, conflict, and instability."²² To date, though, the QDDR's proposals for empowering S/CRS as a viable coordinating body have yet to be implemented.

In light of the problems that S/CRS has faced in establishing bureaucratic authority over other agencies, some experts have advocated that a dedicated director for peacebuilding be established in the National Security Council (NSC). Ostensibly, such an office would have the automatic prestige of the White House, giving it the requisite institutional clout to effectively coordinate and implement interagency policies, plans, and strategies.²³ However, this too, has proven to be difficult to achieve and such an office within the NSC has not yet materialized.

The lack of a strong coordinating body to oversee peacebuilding efforts underscores the ongoing structural and institutional challenges facing the Obama administration as it tries to implement a whole-of-government approach to reconstruction and stabilization efforts in Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere. Among the changes advocated by the Obama administration is a renewed focus on domestic capacity building and sustainable economic development in post-conflict and failing states.²⁴ The focus is intended to shift to using existing human resources, boosting local procurement, and building capacity, while mitigating corruption and promoting governance at the local and provincial levels.²⁵

The military strategy in Iraq and Afghanistan has also changed in a way that mirrors the Obama administration's ongoing attempts at a whole-of-government approach to state building. The shift of military doctrine in Iraq and Afghanistan from counter-terrorist operations to counter-insurgency (COIN) operations requires more measured use of kinetic force and more outreach, dialogue, and restraint in winning the trust of local civilian populations and tribal leaders. As Pauline Baker writes, "The emphasis in COIN doctrine on protecting civilians has narrowed the gap between military and civilian needs on the ground, but it remains a gap nonetheless"²⁶

A crucial part of the increased focus on local populations will also be the development of host nation security forces' capacity. While security sector reform (SSR) was acknowledged even in the beginning of the peacebuilding process in Afghanistan, the Obama administration nevertheless stresses the importance of training local security forces so that they can take responsibility for the security of their people and the United States can begin to draw down its troop presence in the host country. With regard to Afghanistan, Obama stated that "We will shift

21 For more information on the Civilian Response Corps, see "Civilian Response Corps: Who We Are," <http://www.civilianresponsecorps.gov/who/index.htm>.

22 U.S. Department of State and U.S. Agency for International Development, *Leading through Civilian Power: The First Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review*, December 2010, <http://www.state.gov/s/dmr/qddr/>, 135.

23 Baker, 80.

24 William M. Frej and David Hatch, "A New Approach to the Delivery of U.S. Assistance to Afghanistan," *Prism* 1, no. 1 (December 2009): 91.

25 Ibid.

26 Baker, 71.

the emphasis of our mission to training and increasing the size of Afghan security forces, so they can eventually take the lead in securing their country.”²⁷

Clearly, the U.S. approach to peacebuilding has evolved over the past ten years of involvement in Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere. Yet, in many ways, the U.S. approach continues to face ongoing challenges and difficulties. These include:

- A tendency to react to failed states after the fact, rather than preventing state collapse through poverty alleviation and efforts to promote sustainable economic development and institution building. As the cases of Somalia and Afghanistan demonstrate, the United States has too often waited for fragile states to erupt into major crises before taking action, at which point they become either too big or too complicated to resolve without military intervention.²⁸
- The absence of a consistent peacebuilding strategy or framework that integrates a comprehensive use of resources and that clarifies goals and objectives with key international partners and allies. U.S. policy makers continue to approach peacebuilding in a piecemeal fashion, often without a full understanding of lessons learned from previous crises and lacking consistent and coherent policies. Moreover, U.S. policy makers have rarely harmonized their stabilization operations with key allies and international organizations, resulting in missed opportunities and sub-optimal performance.
- A general lack of understanding among lawmakers and top policy makers that peacebuilding is a long-term process, requiring a firm U.S. commitment over an extended time period. All too often, U.S. missions have been tied to domestic political timetables or unrealistic expectations that operations can be completed quickly and successfully if enough resources are applied.
- Emphasis on large infrastructure projects and strong, centralized governments, even in countries such as Afghanistan where such centralization of power has never previously existed. Trying to rebuild failed states in the image of the United States, by promoting democratic reforms in centralized governments, further runs the risk of alienating rural populations, weakening the state, and creating havens for insurgent groups that can turn to violence in response to their marginalization in the political process.²⁹
- A fragmented approach to the difficult task of implementing comprehensive SSR in failed states. Although the United States has stressed building the capacity of the police forces and armies of host nations, it has been hesitant to transfer too much responsibility to local forces before they are deemed ready and has instead turned to organizations outside the state apparatus such as private security firms and informal armed groups to guarantee the preservation of security.³⁰ Emphasizing both SSR and stabilization requires a careful balancing act, as the United States must build domestic institutions and respect local sovereignty while simultaneously mitigating corruption and ensuring sufficient stability to foster an environment conducive to economic development and other peacebuilding measures.
- An overemphasis on the security implications of failed states. Although the U.S. shift in viewing failed states primarily through a security lens rather than a humanitarian one post-9/11 has allowed for the dedication of greater resources to peacebuilding, some experts argue that the magnitude of this shift

27 The White House, “Remarks by the President on a New Strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan,” March 27, 2009, http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-by-the-President-on-a-New-Strategy-for-Afghanistan-and-Pakistan/.

28 Baker, 74.

29 James Stephenson, Richard McCall, and Alexandra Simonians, “Not in Our Image: The Challenges of Effective Peacebuilding,” *Prism* 1, no. 2.

30 For information on Afghanistan, see Mathieu Lefèvre, “Local Defense in Afghanistan: A Review of Government Backed Initiatives,” *Afghan Analysts Network*, Thematic Report, March 2010, <http://aan-afghanistan.com/index.asp?id=763>.

in view is inappropriate and overstates the danger that failed states pose to the United States and other developed nations.³¹ Too heavy an emphasis on security implications and a military-centric approach to peacebuilding risks overshadowing the pressing humanitarian needs of local populations in post-conflict states.

TOWARD WHOLE-OF-ALLIANCE PEACEBUILDING COOPERATION WITH JAPAN

While the United States has attempted in recent years to tackle many of its traditional shortcomings in the field of peacebuilding by working to implement a whole-of-government approach that fully coordinates existing resources across agencies, significant gaps remain. Japan, a strong ally of the United States and a country with expertise in promoting sustainable economic development and directing assistance to target local communities, could make an ideal international partner to fill in some of these gaps.

Indeed, a whole-of-alliance approach could integrate all aspects of the bilateral relationship including political, diplomatic, development, military, and non-governmental components (in cooperation with other countries and international organizations). The potential exists for the United States and Japan to come together and forge a more comprehensive and integrated peacebuilding strategy, but to date the two allies have lacked the political will to make peacebuilding a bilateral priority.

One conspicuous exception is the area of disaster relief missions. The allies have invested in these capabilities and collaborated closely, and disaster relief has benefited from improvements in bilateral and multilateral civil-military coordination. As two major players in the Asia-Pacific region, U.S.-Japan regional and global collaboration should not stop at disaster relief. The United States and Japan can do more to promote peacebuilding as a core alliance mission, both in the political process of strategy development and in field-oriented planning and operational activities. However, some signs are emerging that this situation might be changing.

An early example of this potential is the new U.S.-Japan Global Peace Operations Initiative Senior Mission Leaders (or GPOI SML) course launched in October 2009. Participants for the two-week course at Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) comprised twenty-six military, police, and civilian officials from thirteen Asia-Pacific countries who are potential senior mission leaders for future UN peacekeeping operations (PKO). The course included training in integrated planning; mediation; public affairs; disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR); peacebuilding; rule of law; protection of civilians; gender-based violence; security management; humanitarian affairs; and human rights in the context of peace operations.³²

The GPOI SML course presented an opportunity for the two allies to contribute to peacebuilding development and to add another dimension to the U.S.-Japan alliance, but the course has yet to receive additional funding and a new round of courses is not planned. The two allies should revitalize the GPOI SML course and make it an annual program. The United States and Japan should also work together with the UN to create stronger evaluation mechanisms to determine whether practitioners found the course training to be useful in the field.

The bilateral Peace Operations Working Group has also been established to explore potential synergies between the United States and Japan in humanitarian and reconstruction activities. The working group is a promising

31 See, for example, Stewart Patrick, "Why Failed States Shouldn't Be Our Biggest National Security Fear," *Washington Post*, April 15, 2011, http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/why-failed-states-shouldnt-be-our-biggest-national-security-fear/2011/04/11/AFqWmjkd_story.html.

32 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, "U.S.-Japan Global Peace Operations Initiative Senior Mission Leaders Course," October 15, 2009, http://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/event/2009/10/1196611_1168.html.

initiative spearheaded by U.S. and Japanese alliance managers that originated from subcabinet bilateral talks in 2009 and aims to create a new mechanism to identify and develop ideas for cooperation under the U.S.-Japan alliance. Members of the POWG include participants from the Ministry of Defense (MOD), Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF), and their U.S. counterparts, and they began discussions in December 2010. The purpose of the group is to identify shortfalls in the Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA) as well as to discuss further cooperation in areas such as PKO, maritime security, and humanitarian development.

While the POWG is still in its early stages, the group should be expanded so that policy makers and practitioners from across the interagency spectrum can be made aware of opportunities to cooperate with Japan in joint operations. As the U.S. government attempts to implement a whole-of-government approach, it needs to take into account the valuable contributions that Japan can make to peacebuilding. The U.S.-Japan POWG can be a catalyst for enhanced whole-of-alliance activities, but further efforts should be made to institutionalize bilateral peacebuilding cooperation.

Yet as Japan faces its largest crisis since the Second World War — the March 2011 earthquake, tsunami, and subsequent nuclear radiation crisis — it remains to be seen how this will affect Japan's commitment to international peace operations. On the one hand, the government has been severely tested by the magnitude of these challenges and has already decided to cut the fiscal year 2011 budget for official development assistance (ODA) by ¥50.1 billion (or 9 percent) to fund recovery efforts.

Conversely, the joint operational experience gained as a result of high levels of coordination between U.S. troops and their Japanese counterparts in the aftermath of the disaster could prove to be a useful building block for future peacebuilding operations. For instance, the POWG had fortuitously met to discuss humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HA/DR) operations just a week before the disaster and discovered through joint cooperation that even small changes in the decision-making process by both allies could bring about huge improvements in coordination at relatively low cost. Thus, even as Japan faces the budget crunch of massive internal reconstruction, the potential exists for a more comprehensive whole-of-alliance approach to facilitate Japan's participation in a range of humanitarian and reconstruction activities.

Greater interoperability between the United States and Japan should first be applied to existing areas of complementarity between the two allies in the field. Given its constitutional restrictions on the use of force as a means of settling international disputes, Japan has developed expertise in human security, which focuses on improving the livelihood of individual people in host countries.

Japan can play an important role, therefore, in complementing the military-centric approach of the United States, which stresses national security concerns and stabilization. Livelihood assistance and political stabilization are really two sides of the same coin; without stability, it is impossible to ensure that assistance will not be diverted to insurgent groups, while without economic development, job creation, and a host of other measures aimed at addressing conflict drivers, stabilization efforts can hardly hope to create an enduring peace.

In other words, the United States and Japan should not seek to replicate each other's activities in peacebuilding operations, nor should they force bilateral cooperation in every dimension of peacebuilding, as in cases where multilateral collaboration with other allies such as Australia might be more appropriate. A whole-of-alliance approach also cannot be a one-size-fits-all solution for every failed state. Instead, the United States and Japan need to recognize the specific tools that each ally has at its disposal and, when it makes sense given the on-the-ground political conditions, apply an integrated and complementary approach to achieve maximum effectiveness through joint peacebuilding activities.

For instance, although Japan may face limitations on its participation in global security, both Japan and the United States can work together to improve coordination of security sector reform measures in post-conflict states. In the case of Afghanistan, the United States and NATO have both placed a high priority on training and increasing the size of local forces (Afghan National Police) so that they can eventually take responsibility for their own security. Japan, for its part, has made significant contributions to SSR in areas such as DDR, as well as disbandment of illegal armed groups (DIAG).

While Japan-led DDR and DIAG programs have successfully demobilized large numbers of ex-combatants in the past, the missions have often suffered from the challenge of integrating program participants into either the military forces or back into civilian life. A whole-of-alliance approach could mitigate some of these shortcomings and ensure that participants do not rearm after being demobilized and returning home. Bilateral cooperation can also be further expanded to include other areas of SSR such as good-governance training, police training, and rule-of-law development. A fundamental aspect of this effort is that both allies should establish standard measures of success and work to jointly achieve the creation of a “professional security sector that is legitimate, impartial, and accountable to the population.”³³

Here, the term “legitimacy” refers not only to the degree to which the local population accepts the newly formed host-nation government, but also the extent to which the local population agrees with the mandate of the peacebuilding mission itself. While the United States is beginning to emphasize the need for decentralization and local ownership, an association with a strong ideological agenda and democracy promotion still largely taints its reputation in areas such as the Middle East. There may be some instances, therefore, where it will be easier for Japan to assure local communities of the legitimacy of the mission and the impartiality of America’s intentions. As a non-Western, non-NATO, non-Christian country, Japan enjoys a better reputation amongst many failed states, presenting an opportunity for it to play the role of honest broker in bilateral peacebuilding activities.³⁴

Another area where Japan and the United States could foster a whole-of-alliance approach is by cultivating opportunities for joint human resource development in response to a growing trend in both countries to increase the civilian presence in peacebuilding operations. The United States hopes to counter its overemphasis on the military by increasing the participation of civilians and the role of USAID and the Department of State, while Japan’s \$5 billion pledge in assistance for Afghanistan (the future of which may be under question in light of the March 11 earthquake/tsunami disaster) will necessitate greater numbers of civilians travelling abroad to non-permissive environments.

The problem with a so-called civilian surge is that these civilians often have little peacebuilding experience or knowledge of the local language and culture, yet can join provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs) in Afghanistan’s “most conflicted and deadly southern provinces.”³⁵ Building from the GPOI SML course, the United States and Japan could do more to train not only leaders for UN peacekeeping operations but also a broader range of civilian personnel dispatched to dangerous and complex field missions. The United States will need to increase the quality and not just quantity of its civilian response if it hopes to truly balance out its military-centric methods, and it can work with an ally like Japan to augment the civilian component of its peacebuilding operations.

Apart from training exercises, Japan and the United States could also encourage greater opportunities for civil society engagement in the peacebuilding process. By drawing in NGOs from both sides of the Pacific, the two allies could facilitate increased civil society cooperation against the backdrop of government-level support. A good example is Peace Winds America, which formed as a sister organization to Peace Winds Japan in 2008 to

33 United States Institute of Peace and United States Army Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, *Guiding Principles for Stabilization and Reconstruction*, 2009, http://www.usip.org/files/resources/guiding_principles_full.pdf, 3-21.

34 “International Meeting Stresses Japan’s Key Role in Afghan Peace Process,” *Kyodo News Agency*, November 25, 2009.

35 Stephenson, McCall, and Simonians, 130.

focus on “disaster preparedness and response in the Asia-Pacific.”³⁶ By working together, the two organizations have managed to encourage other NGOs, militaries, government officials, and the private sector to plan and respond to humanitarian crises, including the March 11 earthquake and tsunami.

As the United States and Japan pursue the implementation of a more coordinated bilateral approach, the two allies can also benefit from jointly expending greater intellectual capital to come up with creative solutions to peacebuilding problems. Peacebuilding remains an amorphous and evolving concept, as both the United States and Japan have discovered that creating durable peace is a much more formidable challenge than simply orchestrating an end to open conflict. The two allies should begin by holding regular meetings to ensure that both sides are aware of each other’s resources, to create mutual accountability, and to stimulate greater peacebuilding cooperation.

Institutional mechanisms can also be remolded to better reflect and facilitate a whole-of-alliance approach. Right now, bilateral cooperation is spearheaded at the desk level and in subcabinet-level dialogues. But as the United States moves toward a greater whole-of-government approach, it will need to diversify the range of interlocutors and agents who can interact with international partners like Japan. In other words, those who are charged with developing a whole-of-government approach should be aware of opportunities to work with Japan and other allies in order to maximize peacebuilding efforts in the field. One idea could be to create within S/CRS a dedicated liaison officer with a Japanese counterpart. Whatever the method, there needs to be a linkage between interagency harmonization and international coordination.

In many ways the ad hoc nature of U.S.-Japan peacebuilding cooperation reflects the haphazard nature of peacebuilding policies in general. Nevertheless, it is imperative that both allies clearly define their objectives before deploying on missions and plan joint operations with strategic goals in mind. By working together, the United States and Japan can avoid redundancy, coordinate their interventions in failed states, and introduce an appropriate division of labor to maximize the benefits of a whole-of-alliance approach.

36 Peace Winds America, “Who We Are,” <http://peacewindsamerica.org/who-we-are/>, accessed April 24, 2011.