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Backgrounder

Executive Summary

AFTER IRAQ: LEARNING THE WAR'S LESSONS

JAMES JAY CARAFANO, PH.D.

In the wake of the Iraq war, the Bush Administration and Congress are trying to learn what lessons this victory holds for preparing for future conflicts. There is an expectation that in short order they can digest the war's complex operations and determine sound policy insights.

But that is not likely to happen. Rather, in the near term, they would do well to focus on a few key strategic issues—refining national military strategy, restructuring U.S. alliances, reordering defense research and development priorities, rebalancing aviation acquisition programs, improving post-conflict planning, and enhancing the role of the U.S. Department of Defense in homeland security.

An analysis of the war and its impact on how the United States can best meet these core strategic challenges suggests that the following actions should be high on the list of Administration and congressional priorities in the months ahead.

- The Pentagon should publish a military strategy that establishes isolating potential enemies as a first principle. Keeping enemies in a small box—undercutting their alliances, sources of support, and the means to obtain and use weapons of mass destruction or advanced technologies—ought to be job one.

- As the purpose and utility of America's alliances is changing, the U.S. military force structure needs to keep pace. The Administration must align military forward presence and engagement to meet new strategic requirements. Getting the realignment of forces in Europe right should be a high priority. Congress should give strong and unqualified support to these efforts.

- The only way to bring about a further dramatic increase in the mobility and flexibility of U.S. forces is to develop the breakthrough technologies and new manufacturing methods that will significantly reduce the weight of the force while retaining its lethality and survivability. Congress should increase annual funding for the basic science and technology effort that might provide the leap-ahead capabilities needed for military transformation by about 10 percent.

- The United States military is on the cusp of a wave of acquisition that by mid-decade could account for a quarter or more of defense spending. The lion's share of this procurement will be

in modernizing the air fleet. This is an enormous investment that the Pentagon can ill-afford to get wrong. The Administration and Congress should fundamentally rethink short-range aircraft procurement. A less ambitious program would still allow the United States to maintain its competitive edge while turning its attention to other critical defense needs, particularly bomber modernization and transformation programs.

- Although it is too soon to judge the effectiveness of the occupation of Iraq, it does seem that preparations for the post-conflict period were inadequate. The U.S. needs to do better. The Department of Defense should assign the Army the mission of post-conflict operations (not peacekeeping or nation-building) as a core competency and build a supporting joint and interagency structure that is prepared to execute these missions rather than one that is created ad hoc.

- The United States is not adequately prepared to deal with catastrophic terrorist attacks that might occur while U.S. forces are engaged overseas. The Pentagon must rethink the organization, tasks, and forces assigned to the U.S. Northern Command (NORTHCOM) to ensure that they are adequate to support homeland security against the threat of catastrophic terrorist attacks, particularly during periods when U.S. forces are engaged in overseas conflicts.

Refining the national military strategy, restructuring U.S. alliances, reprioritizing defense research and development efforts, rebalancing aviation acquisition programs, improving post-conflict planning, and providing additional support to NORTHCOM are obvious and pressing problems that can be addressed right now—helping to ensure that the nation maintains its competitive advantages, brings overseas military campaigns to successful conclusions, and protects the homeland.

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AFTER IRAQ: LEARNING THE WAR'S LESSONS

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In a three-week campaign, the United States and its coalition allies deposed the regime of Iraqi strongman Saddam Hussein. In the wake of the war, the Bush Administration and Congress are trying to learn what lessons this victory holds for preparing for future conflicts.

It is not clear, however, that they are getting it right. There is an expectation that in short order they can digest the war's complex operations and determine sound policy insights. That is not likely to happen. A thorough review will need some historical perspective.

Rather, in the near term, they would do well to focus on a few key strategic issues—refining national military strategy, restructuring U.S. alliances, reordering defense research and development priorities, rebalancing aviation acquisition programs, improving post-conflict planning, and enhancing the role of the U.S. Department of Defense in homeland security. These are obvious and pressing problems that can be addressed right now—helping to ensure that the nation maintains its competitive advantages, brings overseas military campaigns to successful conclusions, and protects the homeland.

LESSONS LEARNED ABOUT LEARNING LESSONS

Success can be the handmaiden of future military defeats—if it breeds intellectual complacency. Learning the right lessons from past wars, espe-cially for the winners, is always problematic. What often passes for insights are more often code words for advancing particular agendas, avoiding tough issues, or ignoring the ambiguities, arguments, and evidence that do not fit the "right answer."

America's recent track record is not good. Official lessons-learned efforts after Operation Desert Storm were a failure. Service parochialisms dominated the Defense Department report, and Congress failed to ask the hard questions.[1] In addition, post–Desert Storm reviews focused largely on war-fighting issues and ignored the larger strategic, diplomatic, operational, and post-conflict challenges that ought to be reexamined in the wake of war.

There are only a few signs that this Administration and Congress will do better. The Pentagon tasked its Joint Forces Command in Norfolk, Virginia, to prepare the official "lessons learned" report. Preliminary results are due to be briefed shortly. The command has yet to prove it is up to

the task of providing sophisticated and insightful analysis or challenging service preconceptions.

Joint Forces Command has been collecting data since the onset of military operations. So far, a team of 35 military and civilian analysts has interviewed over 400 key leaders and collected about 4,000 files of various materials that will have to be evaluated.[2] The fact that they plan on assimilating this mass of information so quickly almost guarantees that the results will be fairly superficial and mostly laudatory.[3] Equally disappointing, the lessons-learned process has not been an interagency effort, which would include the participation of other organizations such as the Central Intelligence Agency and the Departments of State and Homeland Security. Other aspects of the war, including the broader strategic issues and the homeland security mission, are not being considered.

Meanwhile, even before the release of the Pentagon's report, the House mark-up of the Defense Authorization Bill claims already to have captured the lessons learned.[4] This mark-up, however, reflects little new thinking, seemingly content to add a few extra dollars to existing programs, upping the Pentagon's allowance for a job well done.

Divining a war's lessons is neither easy nor quick. Probably the single most successful project was the German *Reichswehr* appreciation of World War I combat gained after a half-decade of analysis, testing, experimentation, and debate.[5] Now computers and simulations make it easier to process informa-

tion much faster, but the intellectual investment and the real-world experimentation with real troops and systems that is needed to validate lessons learned still take time. It requires much effort to properly digest the lessons of even a short war and turn those insights into effective programs and meaningful initiatives.

The Administration and Congress should be more cautious. They need to take a measured pace that lets the analysis drive the agenda, rather than rush to claim that the next budget captures the lessons of the last war.

In addition, the military achievements in Iraq have to be placed in context. U.S. combat experiences after the Cold War have been incredibly diverse. Desert Storm, Haiti, Somalia, Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Operation Iraqi Freedom all required different combinations of military forces for different objectives. No one conflict will likely offer a cookie-cutter solution for how to fight future wars; therefore, the core strategic lessons from this latest battle need to be weighed against the experience of other operations to derive the common themes and trends that are important.

The Administration and Congress, however, do not have to stand passively by while Joint Forces Command struggles along. There are first-order questions on the use of military force to which the Iraq conflict offers some very clear insights. These can guide efforts while waiting for more detailed, and hopefully thoughtful and unbiased, analysis on

1. See, for example, U.S. Department of Defense, *Conduct of the Persian Gulf Conflict: An Interim Report to Congress* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, July 1991), and *Conduct of the Persian Gulf Conflict: Final Report to Congress* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, April 1992). For an example of service parochialism in interpreting the lessons of the conflict, see the analysis of contrasting U.S. Air Force and Army interpretations of the use of precision weapons in James Jay Carafano, "Myth of the Silver Bullet: Contrasting Air Force Perspectives on the 'Smart Weapons' After the 1973 Arab–Israeli War and the 1991 Gulf War," *National Security Studies Quarterly,* Vol. 4, No. 1 (Winter 1998), pp. 1–20.

2. Matthew French, "Lessons Learned: Information Gathering Process," *Federal Computer Week,* June 9, 2003, p. 24.

3. Problems frequently encountered in deducing lessons learned include such factors as accounting for incomplete and inaccurate information and addressing unique aspects of the campaign that might not have wider applications for other conflicts. See Ronald O'Rouke, "Iraq War: Defense Program Implications for Congress," Congressional Research Service, RL31946, June 4, 2003, pp. 1–3.

4. Press release, "House Armed Services Committee Approves Fiscal Year 2004 Defense Authorization Bill," Committee on Armed Services, U.S. House of Representatives, May 14, 2003, at *armedservices.house.gov/pressreleases/2003/03-05-14markupsummary.htm.* The House bill includes increased funding for heavy armor, deep strike capabilities, precision munitions, airlift, aerial refueling, and missile defense.

5. Bruce Condell and David T. Zabecki, eds., *On the German Art of War: Truppenführung* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 2001), pp. 2–3. For a fuller treatment, see Robert M. Citino, *The Path to Blitzkrieg: Doctrine and Training in the German Army, 1920–1939* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 1998).

the performance of individual units, tactics, and weapons.

Whether future conflicts involve fighting a global war on terrorism, dealing with rogue states, or meeting the challenges of a rising competitor, the United States will want to retain freedom of action and the unfettered ability to project military power. Lessons learned should focus on the key enablers that allow the United States to exploit its great-power status. The critical issues that need to be addressed include issues of strategy, alliance relationships, research and development priorities, aviation acquisition, post-conflict planning, and homeland security.

REFINING MILITARY STRATEGY

The Iraq conflict had a key attribute in common with other successful major U.S. military operations since World War II. In Operation Iraqi Freedom, Afghanistan, Kosovo, Desert Storm, and Panama, the enemy was denied sanctuary and support. In each case, an isolated foe was exposed to the brunt of American power. In contrast, in Korea and Vietnam (and in the Russian experience in Afghanistan), the enemy had sanctuaries where it could go to rest and resupply, as well as sources of support that could not be touched. Great states should fight wars where they can use their preponderance of power to their advantage and control the scope and pace of conflict.

In the most recent operation, the success of U.S. efforts needs be approached with some caution. Little is publicly known about the Iraqis' preparation for war.[6] In the end, their rapid defeat may be attributed as much to Saddam's strategic misjudgments as to the prowess of the American military. Still, the point should not be lost: Keeping the bad guys in a very small box both before and during a war is a very big deal.

This Administration has yet to publish a national military strategy.[7] When it does, recognition of the benefit of boxing the enemy should have a promi-

nent place in the Pentagon's thinking. Strategic isolation ought to be a priority in any confrontation.

In turn, the importance of strategic isolation should drive the Pentagon to augment capabilities that help constrain an enemy's options, like robust and persistent intelligence and reconnaissance assets that allow for monitoring cross-border activities. In this respect, the Pentagon's increasing emphasis on enhancing space-borne assets, converting *Ohio*-class submarines to improve their recon-strike means, fielding more long-range unmanned aerial vehicles, and robust special operations forces makes sense. A sharper strategy would place even more emphasis on such needs and push the armed forces toward developing the right set of capabilities for the future.

RETHINKING AMERICA'S ALLIANCES

During Operation Iraqi Freedom, alliances and international organizations that served well enough during the Cold War were largely irrelevant to the success in Iraq. The United States needed allies to win the war, but they were different in kind and character from those relied on in the past. Key allies (in particular, Qatar and Kuwait) offered staging grounds for U.S. forces. Meanwhile, European nations, outside the framework of NATO, provided facilities that made possible the transit of most of the material and troops that fought in the war.

Today, U.S. strategic needs, as operations in Iraq clearly reflect, are far more diverse. America requires partners that can help us dissuade, pre-empt, and defeat as well as deter threats—and it may not always be clear long beforehand which countries will be needed and when they will be needed.

In addition, as diplomatic wrangling before the war demonstrated, the United States appears increasingly at odds with many of its traditional allies regarding the seriousness of emerging security threats. Unlike the Cold War, there is no universal consensus on the nature of global dangers, particularly with respect to international terrorism and the

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6. Anthony H. Cordesman, *The "Instant Lessons" of the Iraq War: Main Report*, 8th working draft, May 14, 2003, pp. 9, 13, and 18–19.

7. There is some discussion of defense strategy in U.S. Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, September 30, 2001). The strategic tenets discussed in the report, however, focus overwhelmingly on developing new capabilities rather than on containing threats. It should be noted there is no formal requirement for a published national military strategy.

spread of weapons of mass destruction. Everyone agrees these are bad things, but the agreement ends on how to handle these problems, as illustrated by U.N. Security Council debates over inspections in Iraq.

Disagreements between strategic partners are nothing new. Many forget, for example, the intense strains that the decision to deploy U.S. ground-launched cruise missiles and Pershing II missiles placed on the NATO alliance in the late 1970s.[8] Differences between allies are a fact of life. Indeed, absent a clear common threat like the Soviet Union, and given the diminishing defense contribution of many the United States' traditional European allies,[9] it is likely that there will be even less collective decision-making and more frequent disagreements in the future.

What is more important to note is that the basic purpose of America's military alliances has changed. During the Cold War, forward-deployed military forces and multinational coalitions were a tripwire against Soviet expansionism. Now they serve a different role. In fact, in the future, the best military alliances may primarily be a wide range of bilateral arrangements that ensure options for U.S. access to different parts of the world. Multinational and international organizations might best serve primarily for diplomatic functions—focused more on ensuring the appropriate behavior of allies (such as supporting nonproliferation regimes, anti-terrorism measures, and humanitarian assistance) than on providing military forces for going after enemies.

The implications of these changes are significant. Maintaining forward-deployed forces and extensive overseas infrastructure has always been among the Pentagon's highest priorities. In contrast, Special Operations Forces training missions, National Guard state-to-state partnership programs, and other military-to-military activities, which are the real backbone of building trust and confidence between future allies, often get short shrift. That has to change, as does the notion that reducing overseas presence automatically equates to eliminating combat force structure.

Today, unlike the period of the Cold War, what forces do rather than where they are determines their strategic utility. Operations in Iraq, for example, drew on units from virtually every combat command.[10] In addition to regular forces, reservists and the National Guard played a major role as well. At the time of the war, there were 222,000 on active duty, many either serving in Iraq or performing homeland security duties. The increasingly frequent use of military forces for operational missions is straining the force. The U.S. needs to realign its forces to meet new alliance needs, not reduce capacity.

There are some signs that on this subject, Congress and the Pentagon understand the requirements. House proposals, for example, to increase active-duty and full-time reserve component end strength for some critical military specialties are sound.[11] Of even more long-term consequence is the Defense Department's decision to reposition forces in Korea and realign Pacific commands.[12]

The Pentagon is also considering restructuring the U.S. military footprint in Europe. Here they should be very bold. There is a lot that can be done.[13] Simply eliminating unnecessary commands and moving to the joint basing of Army, Navy, Marine, and Navy forces where it makes sense should reduce overseas troop requirements by 10–

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8. For the deployment debate, see Andrew J. Pierre, ed., *Nuclear Weapons in Europe* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1984).

9. For example, between 1990 and 1999, defense spending of all European members of NATO declined from $183 billion to $174 billion, a decline in the average rate of spending from 3 percent to 2.3 percent of gross national product. For a cogent discussion of the divergence of American and European military capabilities, see David Yost, "The NATO Capabilities Gap and the European Union," *Survival*, Winter 2000–2001, pp. 97–128.

10. See the list of units deployed in Cordesman, *Instant Lessons*, pp. 292–305.

11. H.R. 1588 recommends increasing active duty end strength by 6,240 and full-time reserve and guard end strength by 1,515 and 2,123, respectively, above the Administration's FY 2004 budget request, along with additional funding.

12. Esther Schrader, "U.S. to Realign Troops in Asia," *The Los Angeles Times*, May 29, 2003, p. 1.

13. See, for example, Jack Spencer and John C. Hulsman, "Restructuring America's European Base Structure for the New Era," Heritage Foundation *Backgrounder* No. 1648, April 28, 2003, at *www.heritage.org/Research/Europe/bg1648.cfm*.

20 percent. Much can be gained from moving quickly and decisively in restructuring the U.S. global military presence.

RESETTING RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

In modern conventional combat operations, as was seen again during Operation Iraqi Freedom, the military's main task has not been to overwhelm an enemy with manpower, but to outperform them with superior combat systems. The real challenge has become getting these forces into theater when they are needed. Today, issues of how much can be moved, in what way, and at what speed have become the key limiting factors in how and when the United States brings the preponderance of its military power to bear. It still takes a lot to move the military. The United States shipped over 81,000 tons of cargo to the Gulf. It took 2,000 rail cars and 1,000 trucks just to get the 4th Infantry Division, the Army's most modernized force, to port.

In the past, warfighting needs largely drove the decisions that prescribed how much and what kinds of forces generals need. In the future, as combat forces become more capable and lethal, how quickly troops can get "there from anywhere" may be the more important determinant of their value.

Right now, to move faster, the armed forces try to take less and increase the effectiveness of what they send by enhancing interoperability and efficiency. For instance, the Marines that fought in Iraq had too much equipment to be airlifted into theater, and it would not all fit in the Navy's amphibious warfare ships. Without the 11 Maritime Prepositioning Force ships in the Mediterranean, Diego Garcia, and Guam, which were stocked with most of the heavy equipment and supplies the Marines

needed, they would have never gotten to the fight at all.

Efforts like prepositioning equipment will take us only so far—but at present, there are few more attractive options. Buying new means of transport or slightly lighter equipment may only marginally improve deployability at a high cost. The only way to forge ahead is to develop the breakthrough technologies and new manufacturing methods that will dramatically reduce the weight of the force while retaining its lethality and survivability.

Currently, however, the biggest research and development (R&D) budget increases go to system development and demonstration, applying proven technologies.[14] While some of the development and demonstration effort will help provide critical new capabilities, such as missile defense, much of the future spending in this area is programmed to go to follow-on replacements for traditional platforms such as helicopters and fighter aircraft.

In contrast, funds for the basic scientific exploration needed to develop the innovations[15] that might challenge the tyranny of gravity are in sharp decline. In the Administration's FY 2004 budget request, basic research would fall 7.7 percent to $1.3 billion while applied research would decline 14.4 percent to $3.7 billion. Science and Technology programs overall, which also include early technology development, will drop 8.3 percent to $10.3 billion.[16]

This trend should be reversed. If the United States is serious about maintaining its overwhelming competitive advantages over the long term, it needs to invest for the long term. Funding should match the levels recommended in the 2001 *Quadrennial Defense Review*, which called for spending 3 percent of the defense budget on basic science and technology.[17]

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14. Steven Kosiak, "FY 2004 Defense R&D Request Raises Questions About Administration's Approach to Transformation," Center for Strategic Budgetary Assessment *Backgrounder*, February 7, 2003, p. 1.

15. For an example of promising technologies, see Shannon L. Callahan, "Nanotechnology in a New Era of Strategic Competition," *Joint Force Quarterly*, No. 26 (Autumn 2000), pp. 20–26.

16. Kei Koizumi, "R&D in the FY 2004 Department of Defense Budget," Chapter 6 in *AAAS Report XXVIII: Research and Development FY 2004* (Washington, D.C.: American Association for the Advancement of Science, 2003), at *www.aaas.org/spp/rd/04pch6.htm.*

17. According to this formula, the FY 2004 budget for science and technology should be $11.4 billion (an increase of about $1.1 billion over the FY 2004 budget request). See *Quadrennial Defense Review,* p. 63.

REBALANCING AVIATION ACQUISITION PRIORITIES

While the battles in the Iraqi desert and among crowded city streets may have implications for the future of many military platforms, no subject should receive more attention than armed forces' aviation needs. The United States military is on the cusp of a wave of acquisition that by mid-decade could account for a quarter or more of defense spending. The lion's share of this procurement will be in modernizing the air fleet of combat, transport, and support craft.[18] This is an enormous investment that the Pentagon can ill-afford to get wrong.

Perhaps the most cogent observation of the war in Iraq is that only 56 years after the passage of the National Security Act of 1947 that corralled the services under a single federal department, the armed forces fought its closest approximation to a truly "joint" campaign that united their capabilities into one integrated military operation. The military discovered that the quest for the "Holy Grail" was worth it. Jointness really works—the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

What matters most in joint warfare is overall systems performance, not individual platforms. In fact, given the right system, even old weapons can provide dramatic new capabilities. As Naval War College Professor Mackubin Owens points out, creating new ways of warfare is not an "all-or-nothing proposition"[19] that requires scrapping all the old weapons for new ones. The Joint Direct Attack Munition (JDAM), which turns a bomb built in the 1950s into a precision-guided 21st century weapon with the addition of a guidance kit that costs about $20,000, is a case in point.

That said, even in "systems-centric" warfare, platforms (e.g., tanks, ships, and planes) still matter. In war, systems do not always perform as expected. Sometimes they fail, leaving the military dependent on platforms. For example, it is unclear whether or not the military can yet achieve sufficient "situational awareness" of the battlefield to avoid all threats and completely give up the lethality and protection that some platforms provide in exchange for significantly lighter weight and greater speed. In close combat, robust platforms still matter: They are a hedge against the inevitable friction of battle that drags against any system in wartime.[20]

As a result, while thinking about future war should be driven by systems, platforms still must be considered. The lives of U.S. soldiers, sailors, marines, and airmen may depend on them. In addition, buying platforms consumes most of the defense acquisition budget. In no other area is learning the right lessons from the war more important.

In the months ahead, the future requirements for short-range tactical aircraft has to top the list of subjects for discussion for the simple reason that it comprises such an enormous wedge of Defense acquisition spending, as well as spending on operations and maintenance.

Clearly, combat in Iraq reinforced the results of other recent campaigns by demonstrating that responsive airpower and effective close air support is now a question of range, loiter time over the battle area, and payload. Bombers, naval strike forces, unmanned vehicles, helicopters, missiles, and artillery, as well as short-range aircraft, can provide much of this capability.

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18. Richard L. Kugler, "The Defense Budget: Meeting Requirements with Constrained Resources," in *QDR 2001: Strategy-Driven Choices for America's Security,* ed. Michéle A. Flournoy (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 2001), pp. 125–129.

19. Mackubin Thomas Owens, "Transforming Transformation: Defense-Planning Lessons from Iraq," *National Review,* April 23, 2003, at *www.nationalreview.com/owens/owens042303.asp.* See also Williamson Murray and Thomas O'Leary, "Military Transformation and Legacy Forces," *Joint Force Quarterly,* Spring 2002, pp. 20–27. The authors examine cases of effective military transformation during the years between World War I and World War II and prior to the Persian Gulf War to demonstrate that new concepts of war can be introduced with forces using mostly extant capabilities and only a modicum of new technologies and advanced equipment.

20. Another example of the danger of over-reliance on systems can be taken from the business world. The downfall of AT&T offers a case in point. The company had a brilliant vision to transform itself from a long-distance carrier to a full-service telecommunications provider, but every piece of their new system had to arrive on time and on budget for the whole thing to work: They did not, and the company's profits plummeted, costing AT&T its blue ship status. See Paul Bracken, "Corporate Disasters: Some Lessons for Transformation," *Joint Force Quarterly,* Autumn 2002, p. 84.

It is too soon to draw detailed lessons on the performance of any one weapon. For example, some pundits have been quick to consign U.S. Army attack helicopters to history's junk pile after an AH–64 Apache assault near Karbala that left one aircraft shot down and many damaged. But all this attack showed is that helicopters are vulnerable to very low-level air defense and small-arms fire. That is not news. Whether the battlefield role of rotary-wing attack aircraft is a technological dead end or just the victim of bad tactics deserves a closer look.

On the other hand, the real limitations of short-range tactical aircraft seem apparent. They cannot linger as long over the battlefield, nor can they carry as large a payload as a bomber. Unlike missiles, artillery, and unmanned aerial vehicles, they put a pilot at risk every time they fly over a target.

In addition, theater access, particularly for aircraft that could launch only from existing airfields or improved airstrips, was a problem. During the Iraq war, although military threats did not restrict access to airfields, political sensibilities did. According to one analysis, of the 58 regional airbases within optimal range of the battlefield, only three were available to bomb-dropping aircraft.[21] To increase the sortie rate, the Air Force made extensive use of older airframes such as the A–10 Thunderbolt, AV–8B Harrier, and AC–130 gunship that could operate from austere airfields. In future conflicts, restricted basing, as a result of either enemy action or diplomatic wrangling, could be a serious obstacle to the use of tactical fighter craft.[22]

Given the limitations of tactical aircraft and the menu of means available to the services, massive planned investments in the Defense Department's three major tactical aircraft modernization programs (the F/A–18E/F Super Hornet, the F/A–22 Raptor, and the F–35 Joint Strike Fighter)[23] seem out of balance. Buying all these aircraft in the numbers planned by the Pentagon will expand U.S. capabilities in an area where the American military already enjoys an enormous competitive advantage. At the same time, these efforts risk shortchanging bomber modernization and other defense requirements.

The House Armed Services Committee should be commended for recommending $100 million for the research and development of a next-generation bomber.[24] But this is only a small step in the right direction of looking at credible alternatives for the future.

IMPROVING THE PLANNING FOR PEACE

In Iraq, initial post-conflict activities should have focused on providing a safe and secure environment, searching for weapons of mass destruction programs and the infrastructure that supports terrorism, and securing Iraq's oil resources for the future reconstruction of the country.[25] With the exception of gaining quick control of the oil fields, in many respects, U.S. operations seem to have missed their mark. Of particular concern is that the coalition did not seem to have forces properly tailored to accomplish the main objective of the campaign: tracking down and rooting out the hidden elements of Iraq's illegal weapons programs.

Although occupation duties are never easy and it would be unrealistic to expect normalcy to return quickly to a country that has been mercilessly exploited by a ruthless dictator for decades, it does seem that preparations for the post-conflict period were inadequate. In part, this can be attributed to a lack of understanding over the military's appropriate role. Historically, the armed forces concentrate on warfighting and eschew the challenges of deal-

21. Michael Knights, "Iraqi Freedom Displays Transformation of US Air Power," *Jane's Intelligence Review,* May 1, 2003, at *www4.janes.com.*

22. For a cogent analysis, see Christopher J. Bowie, *The Anti-Access Threat and Theater Air Bases* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, 2002).

23. Christopher Bolkcom, "Tactical Aircraft Modernization: Issues for Congress," Congressional Research Service, IB92115, p. 15, updated periodically.

24. Jack Spencer, "Congress's Vital Role in Building a Strong National Defense," Heritage Foundation *Backgrounder* No. 1658, June 9, 2003, at *www.heritage.org/Research/NationalSecurity/BG1658.cfm.*

25. Baker Spring and Jack Spencer, "In Post-War Iraq, Use Military Forces to Secure Vital U.S. Interests, Not for Nation-Building," Heritage Foundation Backgrounder No. 1589, September 25, 2002.

ing with the battlefield after the battle.[26] That is a problem.

The military's role in post-conflict activities is limited but vital. Nation-building is a task for which military forces are neither well-suited nor appropriate. In addition, prolonged occupation ties up valuable military manpower that might be needed elsewhere. Yet, in any post-conflict operation, the United States will have moral and legal obligations to restore order, provide a safe and secure environment for the population, ensure that people are being fed, and prevent the spread of infectious disease. During World War II, they called it, appropriately, "the disease and unrest formula."

Implementing the formula is never easy. In the initial stages of any occupation, post-conflict activities have to be a primarily military-led effort. Only the occupation forces have the security and logistics needed to get the job done, and they can provide a focal point for the unity of effort required to make the troubled transition from war to peace.

Although the military should be in charge at the outset, even before the end of the conflict, they should work closely with allies, federal agencies, and nongovernmental agencies. Ensuring that the military does the right things after the war and works with the right people are skills that are not easily learned and quickly forgotten.

The U.S. needs to prepare more effectively for the post-conflict period. Someone must have clear responsibility for the doctrine, detailed coordination, force requirements, and technologies required to conduct these operations.[27] Today, in the halls of the Pentagon and the staff rooms at the combatant commands, roles and missions are dispersed too diffusely and only intermittently gain the attention of senior leaders. One of the services (the Army is probably the best candidate) needs to be tasked to develop a core competency in post-conflict operations, and there needs to be a standing joint and interagency structure for properly managing these missions.

PROTECTING THE HOMEFRONT

Operation Liberty Shield was a notable but fledgling effort by the new Department of Homeland Security to address attacks on the home front during the war in Iraq. This operation deserves as much scrutiny from the Administration and the Congress as Operation Iraqi Freedom. It would not be surprising to find that on close inspection, there is less there than meets the eye.

The lack of a strong homeland defense could be a problem in the future. Terrorism might not be the only threat to U.S. territory. Any regional conflict could result in threats to the homeland. An enemy unable to match American conventional military power might instead attack vulnerable targets on U.S. territory as an alternative means to coerce, deter, or defeat the United States.

There are important reasons for addressing these potential threats. A secure homeland not only protects U.S. citizens and properties, but also is a vital strategic enabler in allowing the United States greater freedom of action in applying its offensive power.

While there were some concerns about terrorism during the war, America's defenses were not greatly tested. That is probably fortunate. Key vulnerabilities remain, including maritime security and emergency response for catastrophic attacks. The military has an important role to play in addressing these and other vulnerabilities. In that light, the scope of cooperation between the Departments of Defense and Homeland Security should be subject of particular attention.

More specifically, it is not clear that the newly established U.S. Northern Command (NORTHCOM), which is responsible for the defense of the continental United States, is adequately organized or resourced to meet the nation's homeland security needs. NORTHCOM was created under the Pentagon's Unified Command Plan, which lays out the geographic boundaries and functions of the various U.S. commands worldwide.

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26. James Jay Carafano, *Waltzing into the Cold War: The Struggle for Occupied Austria* (College Station, Tex.: Texas A&M University Press, 2002), pp. 11–13 and 19–22. Typically, in post-conflict planning, the U.S. military fails to implement the lessons of previous operations, coordinates poorly with allies and nongovernmental organizations, and participates inadequately in interagency planning.

27. See, for example, John S. Haven *et al.*, "War Termination and Joint Planning," *Joint Force Quarterly,* No. 8 (Summer 1995), pp. 95–101.

In the wake of the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, the Joint Chiefs of Staff rushed out a new version of the Unified Command Plan; but since then, headquarters has done little more than set up shop. If the threats to the homeland were far more significant than those actually posed during Operation Iraqi Freedom, it is not clear what real value the command would have added to the security of the nation. NORTHCOM could be made much more effective.[28]

A NATIONAL ACTION PLAN

The war in Iraq underscored the core strategic issues that demand the immediate attention of the Administration and Congress. They can and should act now to refine the national military strategy, restructure U.S. alliances, reprioritize defense research and development efforts, rebalance aviation acquisition programs, improve post-conflict planning, and provide additional support to NORTHCOM.

The following actions should be high on their list of priorities in the months ahead.

- The Pentagon should publish a military strategy that establishes isolating potential enemies as a first principle. Keeping enemies in a small box—undercutting their alliances, sources of support, and the means to obtain and use weapons of mass destruction or advanced technologies—ought to be job one.

- As the purpose and utility of alliances change, the U.S. military force structure needs to keep pace. The Administration must align military forward presence and engagement to meet new strategic requirements. Getting the realignment of forces in Europe right should be a high priority. Congress should give strong and unqualified support to these efforts.

- Congress should increase annual funding for the basic science and technology that might provide the leap-ahead capabilities needed for military transformation by at least 10 percent.

- The Administration and Congress should fundamentally rethink short-range aircraft procurement. A less ambitious program would still allow the United States to maintain its competitive edge while turning its attention to other critical defense needs, particularly bomber modernization and transformation programs.

- The Department of Defense should assign the Army the mission of post-conflict operations (not peacekeeping or nation-building) as a core competency and build a supporting joint and interagency structure that is prepared to execute these missions rather than relying on an ad hoc structure.

- The Pentagon must rethink the organization, tasks, and forces assigned to NORTHCOM to ensure that they are adequate to support the security of the homeland against the threat of catastrophic terrorist attacks, particularly during periods when U.S. forces are engaged in overseas conflicts.

CONCLUSION

Americans can be justifiably proud of the U.S. military's performance during the war in Iraq, but victory is little more than a page in the history book once the war is over. What matters is securing an enduring peace and preparing for the next challenge. Learning the right lessons to prepare for the future is a difficult task that deserves serious effort.

Congress and the Administration should take the time to get it right. At the same time, they should not lose sight of the top strategic issues underscored by the conduct of the war. National military strategy, the structure of U.S. alliances, the order of precedence for defense research and development priorities, defense acquisition priorities, post-conflict planning, and the role of the Department of Defense in homeland security require prompt and sustained attention.

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28. For a list of recommendations, see James Jay Carafano, "Shaping the Future of Northern Command," Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments *Backgrounder*, April 4, 2003, at *www.csbaonline.org/4Publications/Archive/B.20030429.NORTHCOM/B.20030429.NORTHCOM.pdf.*

1. IRAQ WAR: Talk to your partner(s) about the history of your feelings about the Iraq War. What did you think before and after the invasion? What do you think now? Change partners often to exchange each other histories. Â I'm so sad we have to do this -- that we did not learn from the lessons of the Vietnam War." fraudulent invasion secure vented ratings option voiced depths. LISTENING. Listen and fill in the spaces. Iraq War protests in Washington DC. Anti-war protestors came _ Saturday all over the USA, protesting against the US governmentâ€™s policy in Iraq. Thousands of veterans and military families joined Hollywood celebrities and peace groups in making their opposition to Americaâ€™s _ to President George W. Bush. Iraq Anniversary 10 Lessons from America's 'Dumb War'. A decade on, polls suggest that a majority of Americans view the 2003 invasion of Iraq as a mistake. Right or wrong, the war has immensely influenced how America sees itself, is seen and conducts itself on the global stage. Von Sebastian Fischer. 20.03.2013, 18.18 Uhr. Â The United States fought in Iraq for nine years. With the exception of the war in Afghanistan, it was America's longest combat engagement ever: longer than the American Civil War, the two World Wars, the Korean War and the Vietnam War. Any country that enters into a war emerges from it changed. It is inevitable that there is a before and an after. There are the dead, the wounded, the survivors. But that's not all. Learning the Wrong Lessons From Iraq. Opinion. May 31, 2019. Share this article: Foreign Affairs. Earlier this year, the U.S. Army published two volumes that amount to the most comprehensive official history of the Iraq war. Â Or because some understandably prefer independent accounts to authorized after-action reports. Or because, compared with other major conflicts in U.S. history, so few Americans experienced this one firsthand. Or because the study declines to focus on more timely and contested questions, such as whether it was ever in the realm of possibility to invade a large and diverse Middle Eastern countryâ€"one that posed no direct threat to the United Statesâ€"at an acceptable cost. Before the war, advocates argued that democracy would be easy to install in Iraq because it had a highly literate population and a robust middle class, and because sectarianism was minimal. Of course, the people who said things like this apparently knew nothing about Iraq itself and even less about the difficulty of building democracy in a country like Iraq. Â This lesson seems obvious: Adversaries will pursue their own interests. But the architects of the Iraq war seem to have blindly assumed that other interested parties would simply roll over and cooperate with us after a little bit of "shock and awe." Instead, various actors took steps to defend their own interests or to take advantage of the evolving situation, often in ways that confounded U.S. efforts.