

Introduction

In the emerging literature on the challenges of establishing sustainable security in fragile states and postconflict environments, much has been written about the role of the military, but there are few works on the role of nonmilitary security forces. This study examines the past roles and future potential of constabulary forces in peace and stability operations, looking at the issue of sustainable security from a U.S. perspective.

The United States has a unique and troubled history with foreign interventions, particularly since the end of the Cold War. It has developed and deployed the world's most effective military forces but has struggled to provide police and constabulary. Under the Clinton administration, the United States played a primary role in peace operations in Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, and Kosovo, but Congress, the U.S. military, and the George W. Bush administration had a deep aversion to peacekeeping. Perhaps for that reason, the United States was ill prepared to deal with the civilian mobs that looted Baghdad in 2003 and the demonstrators that threatened U.S. forces in Kabul in 2006. The United States did not have civilian constabulary forces trained in riot control; it used commercial contractors as police advisers and had no program to provide the operational constabulary, police, and judicial specialists that were required to establish the rule of law in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The need to create nonmilitary security forces for peace and stability operations was compelling. In the wake of the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, the United States could no longer afford the luxury of ignoring turmoil in war-torn societies. Weak and dysfunctional states had become the primary source of international instability. Washington recognized its strategic interest in preventing failed states from providing breeding grounds for extremists and safe havens for terrorist organizations. By the spring of 2003, the United States was involved in a global war on terrorism, fighting two ground wars against extremist-based insurgencies in Iraq and Afghanistan. In the Balkans, the United States had faced the need to control civilian mob violence and ethnic cleansing that threatened the viability of peace operations in Bosnia and Kosovo, and turned to its European allies for constabulary trained to deal with civil disorder. This required a prolonged diplomatic effort, and the forces took years to arrive. In Iraq and Afghanistan, allied

constabulary forces were not available, and the United States was forced to create indigenous constabulary forces to control urban rioting and assist in the battle against insurgents. This effort proved costly in battlefield reverses, casualties, and unintended consequences.

In future interventions, the United States needs to create the forces required to deal with civil disorder and counterinsurgencies in order to establish a safe and secure environment. To accomplish this mission, a U.S. stability force is required that includes civilian constabulary forces that can deal with violent demonstrations, armed gangs, and militias and assist military forces in countering insurgencies. Constabulary forces straddle the line between military and police and have characteristics and capabilities of both. Constabulary units can deploy rapidly in response to situations that require greater force and firepower than civil police can provide but do not need the firepower of infantry or armored units. Constabulary forces are trained to deal with civilians and are skilled at using the minimum amount of force necessary to control the situation. Constabulary can serve as a bridge between the military and civil police and can handle tasks that do not clearly fall within either camp. They have proven effective in the hold and build phases of counterinsurgency operations, working in areas that military forces have cleared of main force insurgent groups.

While soldiers and civil police have participated in peace operations since the early 1960s, constabulary forces have appeared only recently. This is surprising since the United States has turned to such forces repeatedly throughout its history. During the colonial period, English and Spanish settlers drew on their respective European traditions to organize local militias that performed both military and police functions. In the Civil War, the Grand Army of the Republic both preserved the Union and dealt with riots and sedition. On the American frontier, settlers banded together to defend their homes against marauders and provide a rough form of justice. The best-known example of an American constabulary was the Texas Rangers, which fought Native American tribes, patrolled the Mexican border, and brought law and order to the frontier; from the stories of the Texas Rangers, scriptwriters at a Detroit radio station in the 1930s created the Lone Ranger, a fictional character who, in hundreds of radio episodes and later television shows and motion pictures, always came to the rescue.

OVERVIEW

This study looks at the evolution of U.S. policy toward peace and stability operations through the prism of the U.S. experience with police and constabulary forces. Chapter 1 describes a riot in Brcko, Bosnia, on August 28,

1997, that had far-reaching implications for U.S. policy on creating sustainable security. After armed U.S. soldiers were nearly overrun by an unarmed mob, the Defense Department determined that European constabulary forces were needed to handle civil disorder in Bosnia. Chapter 2 examines the nature of constabulary forces, providing a working definition of such forces and detailing the early history of U.S. experience with constabularies. Chapter 3 returns to the story of the U.S. effort to create a European constabulary force for Bosnia. It describes the political and diplomatic process through which the United States reached a tacit understanding with its European allies to maintain troops in Bosnia in return for deployment of a European Multinational Specialized Unit (MSU) as part of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Stabilization Force (SFOR).

Chapter 4 recounts the checkered history of the MSU in Bosnia. Trained to provide crowd control, the MSU was misunderstood by SFOR commanders and improperly utilized. Chapter 5 details the use of both military and civilian constabulary forces in Kosovo, where they performed a variety of critical functions but were almost never used for crowd control. Chapter 6 chronicles the U.S. intervention in Iraq and the trial-and-error process of creating indigenous constabulary forces that assisted U.S. brigade combat teams in stabilizing Baghdad during the surge. Chapter 7 brings the story of the U.S. experience with constabularies to its most recent chapter in Afghanistan. In response to deadly rioting in Kabul, the United States created an Afghan constabulary that assisted U.S. military forces during some of the heaviest fighting of the war. Finally, chapter 8 summarizes the U.S. experience with constabulary forces in peace and stability operations and makes the argument for creating a permanent U.S. stability force that includes constabulary, police, and judicial teams. This force would give the United States the capacity it now lacks to control civil disorder, restore sustainable security, and establish the rule of law in future peace and stability operations.