



**REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP ON
RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT**

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The time has come to recognize foreign assistance for what it truly is: national security assistance. Before September 11 the American foreign policy community was divided on the question of whether reconstruction and development were essential to U.S. national security. The Bush administration came to office arguing that the Clinton team failed to adequately define America's national interest abroad or focus U.S. foreign policy on key security concerns. A significant strand of U.S. policy thought viewed nation-building, humanitarian intervention and foreign aid largely as distractions that were somehow separate from and of a lesser order than policies that more clearly pursued American national interests.

In the immediate aftermath of September 11, however, a strong consensus emerged that weak states and war-torn societies could be a direct threat to American national security, placing reconstruction and development at the center of the U.S. Government's response. Rather than serving as a distraction, reconstruction and development became fundamental elements of promoting America's national interest abroad. The ongoing U.S. commitment to rebuilding Afghanistan and forging a democratic Iraq has demonstrated that reconstruction and development are not a soft and altruistic misuse of American time, resources, and prestige, but critical components of a U.S. national security strategy.

This consensus has largely held across partisan lines despite the rancorous debate that continues over whether the United States and its coalition partners should have invaded Iraq and what they should now do to improve their chances of success. The Iraq debate, though, has not shifted America's attention away from the danger posed by rogue leaders and terrorism; war, transnational crime and disease; environmental catastrophe and human suffering. The collapse of a government in a truly large country vital to America's strategic interests such as Pakistan or Nigeria would present a new generation of challenges to the United States and the world well beyond what anyone has confronted to date.

Yet every threat also presents an opportunity. The steady resolution of today's twenty-five or so ongoing conflicts would produce a dramatically different and more prosperous world. Cease-fires bring people together to open markets and trade goods; citizens move about and reconnect with their loved ones; schools open, teachers return, and life's normal rhythms resume. When wars end, people are able to realize the peace dividend, restoring public order and other preconditions for participatory politics and economic growth.

People, in turn, can make better lives for themselves, their families, and their country.

The same is true when democratic, accountable governments replace corrupt and predatory power-holders, when basic health reaches the poorest citizens, when hunger is abated, and when literacy improves. America's effort in post-war Europe demonstrated that destruction, devastation, and stagnation can be replaced by expanding freedoms, trade, and economic growth if U.S. commitment exists. The effect is reinforcing: peaceful, democratic, and prosperous nations will ultimately prove stronger partners of the United States in managing risk—more willing and better able to take preventive action that is in America's national interest.

The United States will continue to face considerable challenges stemming from fragile states, war-torn societies, desperate poverty and disease. America's response must be based on a common vision of threats and opportunities that stands above partisan bickering. Reconstruction and development must be executed in a more strategic and more effective way. If a broad cross-section of the American policy community were to commit to engaging in fewer places and on fewer issues with greater intensity and efficacy, great strides would be made even in the absence of additional resources. At the end of the day, the American public's commitment to reconstruction and development will be only as great as our government's ability to demonstrate success.

This paper is based on four guiding principles:

- 1) Reconstruction and development are essential tools for promoting both U.S. national security interests and America's ability to maintain, expand, and exert leadership abroad.***
- 2) The U.S. Government should establish reconstruction and development priorities according to its national security interests and consistent with the best American traditions of self-governance, transparency, and local responsibility.***
- 3) U.S. leadership is most effective when it is focused, builds off of America's comparative advantage, and leverages multilateral, bilateral, and local partners to establish public order and promote economic growth.***
- 4) Dramatic change is required to address the broad range of today's reconstruction and development challenges. Dedicating greater resources to demonstrating success will increase the American public's commitment and support.***

A. Current Environment

- *The transnational and unpredictable nature of today's threats has created fresh challenges to U.S. national security, and at the same time, opportunities for U.S. leadership.*

Reconstruction and development have become first-tier national security issues. Principals' meetings once focused almost exclusively on managing relations with major powers and rivals, but today their agendas are dominated by reconstruction and development challenges: how to rebuild institutions and economies after war and in fragile states; how to make peace agreements stick; how to build public support for democratic and free-market values.

The reason for this shift is clear: the nature of the threats facing the United States has changed. The potential lethality of threats has increased as non-deterable networks of terrorists have sought weapons of mass destruction, and simultaneously, the cadence of threats has quickened as dangers arise with little or no warning. The costs of crisis response have increased as the spillover effects of civil war and state collapse have destabilized entire regions, providing safe harbor to extremists and organized crime. The risk of infectious disease such as SARS or avian flu killing millions of people, paralyzing societies, and spreading to the United States presents a formidable danger.

Since September 11th the United States has grown more willing to confront certain threats before they materialize. American civilians and military have been deployed globally with the intent of denying safe haven to terrorists, cutting off extremists' money supplies, and building local capacity to guard against future terrorist acts. Much of this effort has come via the military and has focused on Islamist terrorism. Both military and non-military programming today is often justified in terms of its utility to America's counter-terrorism effort.

Traditionally, reconstruction and development have been difficult to justify in national security terms, due in part to the difficulty of establishing direct causation between poverty, fragile states, and distant civil wars on the one hand and threats to American security on the other. Even today, for instance, some argue that eliminating poverty does not reduce the threat of terrorism. But while the leaders of criminal and terrorist networks are rarely drawn from the poor, they do take advantage of poverty and poor governance to expand their base of support and operate with impunity.

Poverty has been shown to be a good predictor of civil violence, state weakness or collapse, authoritarian leadership, environmental catastrophe, and the inability to deal effectively with infectious disease—all of which pose

significant and costly threats to U.S. national security interests. The linkages between reconstruction and development challenges and national security may be complex, but they are undeniable.

The United States thus needs a two-track approach—a willingness to take on, in some form, the difficult and more urgent reconstruction cases while at the same time committing to lower-profile and long-term development assistance. The United States simply cannot afford to ignore these factors due to the increased unpredictability of global threats. Not knowing which threats will move from latent to manifest or imminent to actual means that war, poverty, and state weakness must theoretically be addressed everywhere, either unilaterally or in partnership with bilateral and multilateral actors. As unlikely as it may seem, America could even be vulnerable closer to home: Haiti, for instance, could serve as a future breeding ground of communicable disease; Mexico could represent a future staging ground of terrorism directed at the United States.

Furthermore, reconstruction and development are vital elements of a U.S. national security strategy for reasons that go beyond their potential to mitigate threats. For one, reconstruction and development provide an opportunity to build goodwill and to counter growing anti-Americanism abroad. To do so, however, the strategy must be effective, and it must be consistent with the best American traditions of self-governance, transparency, and local responsibility. When foreign assistance misses its goals or is carried out in a heavy-handed manner, it has the opposite effect: furthering mistrust about U.S. motives and power.

Second, reconstruction and development are as much a form of crisis prevention as crisis response. If nearly half of all peace agreements break down within five years, then more needs to be done to make sure they succeed. Well-targeted development assistance can play a significant role in preventing conflict and instability. The United States must reject the near-sighted tendency to remain preoccupied with the crisis of the day and to distrust preventive action because of the difficulty of validating its success. Investing in prevention may become the only way to deliver successful outcomes as the costs of crisis response far outstrip the resources available.

In some sense, the need for resources to meet reconstruction and development challenges is almost unlimited. Meeting the Millennium Development Goals alone would cost an additional \$40-60 billion per year in foreign aid over 10 years in order to address only basic human needs such as universal primary education and eliminating extreme poverty and hunger. And yet, when we consider the costs of rebuilding fragile states or managing military interventions such as Iraq where the long-term costs have been estimated by some to approach \$1 trillion, such expenditures on development assistance are paltry by comparison.

But while some may look at the cost of America's engagement in Iraq as a sign of misplaced priorities, it also indicates a willingness to commit significant resources to reconstruction and development when vital interests are at stake and political capital has been expended. Efforts to raise money for the tsunami victims or more recently for the victims of Hurricane Katrina in this country have been resounding triumphs, generating billions of dollars in private donations alone in only a matter of weeks. Greater investments in reconstruction and development on a continual rather than strictly one-off basis could prove to be among the wisest investments the United States Government makes in our time.

Even in the absence of greater resource commitments, however, if the United States were to take a more strategic approach to reconstruction and development and to increase the effectiveness of its response, the lives of millions of people would be vastly improved.

B. American Imperative

- ***The United States—with its immense resources, unparalleled military capability, willingness to lead, and democratic values—has a unique responsibility to address today’s complex global challenges. The United States should lead in a pragmatic, reliable fashion that decreases resistance to U.S. engagement abroad and increases America’s ability to serve as a reliable partner.***

There are powerful reasons for the United States to contribute as a global leader in reconstruction and development. Chief among them is America’s unrivaled capability to marshal resources and project power. There are myriad recent examples of this value, including the tsunami recovery effort, the reconstruction of Afghanistan, the Sudanese peace process, as well as more historic initiatives such as the Marshall Plan, the Alliance for Progress, and smallpox eradication.

The complexity of today’s challenges is a major reason why U.S. leadership matters. In most cases, addressing emerging problems requires a richness of institutional and financial strength and human capacity that few countries can provide without American participation. Even if the African Union, for instance, is willing and able to deploy peacekeepers to a regional conflict, American logistical support will most likely be required to move the soldiers in theater and assist them with real-time intelligence.

Countries other than the United States have shown a reluctance in recent years to undertake significant effort in the absence of U.S. encouragement and contribution. There are exceptions of course, but generally when America drags its feet as it did during the Rwandan genocide or in Bosnia, others have struggled to fill the vacuum or been unwilling or incapable of moving independently. American prominence confers special responsibilities, and for this reason, the international community relies on and looks to American engagement, even if some have doubted the wisdom of specific interventions such as Iraq.

America’s democratic and open political system and its vibrant civil society further underscore a leading role for the United States in reconstruction and development efforts. Corrupt, predatory or incompetent leaders and institutions stand at the root of many of the global problems the United States is eager to address. The American model of expanding basic freedoms acts as a powerful lever for reaching oppressed and suffering people and reshaping governance abroad. When the United States promotes the core freedoms of movement, speech, assembly, and religion, the country

honors its best traditions, advancing peaceful democratic change and promoting human security.

America's culture of risk-taking, entrepreneurship, and problem-solving is another advantage in the world of reconstruction and development. Risk-taking is beneficial in situations where progress and breakthroughs can be infrequent events, such as when facing poverty, disease and conflict. America's innovative spirit helped to create the United Nations, develop frameworks for post-conflict reconstruction, and establish health clinics and immunization programs in the midst of despair.

On balance, the United States does not engage in reconstruction and development for solely moral or self-interested grounds. Many commentators are correct to point out that the idealist vs. realist dichotomy tends to be false. Our consciences, in fact, often demand action our interests warrant. America greatly benefits from UN peacekeeping, for instance: the United States contributes roughly \$1 billion, which is then leveraged into a \$4 billion UN operation in 17 countries. The United States would be unlikely to contribute soldiers to any of these countries itself or spend the time, resources, or effort to organize ad hoc coalitions to do so in the absence of a multilateral framework.

A further example of this synergy between America's interests and ideals are the norms and institutions that comprise the post-World War II international order that the United States played a lead role in creating. This international order provides public goods to many of the world's countries (including enhanced security), though it is also a system from which America greatly benefits. As the country often with the most to lose from violence, disorder, and broken economies, it is in America's enlightened self-interest to maintain this order, and to pursue its reconstruction and development goals in support of reciprocal relationships.

The security and well being of others is essential to America's own. Such a vision maximizes the chances of reciprocal cooperation for priority interests to the United States, and is likely to decrease resistance to American leadership and increase America's ability to expand its effectiveness by partnering with others.

C. Setting Priorities

- ***U.S. engagement in reconstruction and development should be focused on cases vital to U.S. national interests and evaluated in terms of what is necessary for success.***

Too often the American approach to reconstruction and development has been ad-hoc, reactive, ideological, and consequently limited in its success. In Iraq, where the U.S. Government made a strategic choice to intervene with military power, it failed to adequately prepare for post-war reconstruction. Accordingly, the United States was left to scramble to get the right skills and policies in place, losing important ground in the critical transition period. America's efforts to bolster fragile states have tended to come too late in the game (often after collapse, such as in Somalia), and its development assistance has tended to be fragmented and unconnected to overall strategic goals.

A more strategic approach to reconstruction and development should be guided by two principles:

- (1) Engage in fewer places and on fewer issues, but with greater intensity and efficacy;
- (2) Leverage the value of America's effort and resources by favoring regional burden-sharing arrangements and empowering local actors.

Rather than try to do many things poorly—covering the landscape with insufficient resources and attention—the United States should seek to build critical success in a few priority areas. The United States should also make its reconstruction and development money go farther by tapping into local capacity and working alongside bilateral partners and regional and multilateral institutions.

A set of screens would help the United States to determine where to focus its reconstruction and development assistance. These screens would not comprise a rigid, formulaic model for setting priorities, nor would they give decision makers the “right” answers. Rather, the screens would help to determine what is essential, and what combination of actors is best suited for success. In fact, parts of the reconstruction and development agenda may be best suited for others to carry out.

The first set of screens would help to determine whether a case is vital to U.S. national interest:

- Magnitude and urgency of threats to U.S. national security;
- Opportunities to demonstrate success;
- Moral imperatives or chances to support values consistent with American values.

The second set of screens would help to determine the manner in which the United States should engage:

- What does the United States do well and what do others do well;
- What degree of U.S. commitment is required to succeed in addressing the challenge;
- What are the likely immediate and long-term consequences of acting alone vs. acting through an existing multilateral framework such as a regional organization, NATO, or the United Nations.

Administrations should make their arguments for engagement explicit on the basis of these two sets of screens, making their assessments as open as possible to the American policy community and public, as well as allies and the people identified for potential U.S. assistance.

For instance, a strong case for reconstructing Iraq can be made on the basis of the first set of screens. A warring, unstable, or fractured Iraq provides a staging ground for terrorists that could threaten American lives and interests (although both the magnitude and urgency of the threat may be open to debate.) The possibility of creating the conditions necessary for a democratic government to grow in the Arab world is a tremendous opportunity to demonstrate success and to support American values. The United States may also have a particular responsibility to Iraq because of its military intervention to topple Hussein's government (i.e. the Pottery Barn rule of 'you break it, you fix it.')

However, the second set of screens could have anticipated some of the difficulties the Bush Administration is now facing. There was not a truly open debate in the United States on the degree of commitment required to achieve America's goals in Iraq, how the United States tends to fare in nation-building without significant outside support, nor the unintended consequences that may result from a sustained massive American troop presence (such as battle-hardened Islamists eventually returning to their countries in the Middle East and Europe or making their way to the United States.) If the commitment to succeed is not possible because it outstrips America's capacity or the public's willingness to engage, or if the costs of trying to succeed are greater than the prospective benefits, the United States would be wise to reconsider its policy.

These screens could also be applied to cases such as Darfur or retroactively to the case of Rwanda. There may be instances where moral imperatives to stop the worst forms of human suffering at minimal commitment may be called for, despite the absence of a significant threat to U.S. national security. The same is true for fighting AIDS, for instance, where the possibility to show that HIV rates in certain countries could be curbed (and people living with AIDS better cared for) may be a compelling reason in its

own right to engage, rather than trying to make an indirect connection between AIDS, state collapse, and terrorism. Again, the questions must be asked: what is America's comparative advantage, and where can it impel others to take the required action?

The screens could also be applied to decisions to prevent economic collapse or to help integrate countries in dire financial straits back into the international economy. Financial crises such as what occurred in Asia in 1997 have the potential to lead to major political and humanitarian upheaval in countries of critical importance to U.S. national interests, such as Indonesia. Opportunities to support the world's largest Islamic country and revitalize Asian economies are likely to require active U.S. leadership despite the short-term costs.

American engagement will take different forms in different instances, depending on the willingness of allies to participate and the openness of the local government and population to American help. The United States must find ways to make strategic choices in reconstruction and development that attract the international cooperation America requires without subjecting American decision making to an international test. The United States should lead in areas where it is most effective and seek to share burdens with allies who may hold comparative advantages in other realms.

The United States should recognize that certain types of assistance are best provided through a multilateral framework, while others are not. The United States does certain things well, while multilateral and regional organizations hold their own comparative advantages. The U.S. Government should consider who does what best. U.S. democracy promotion efforts, for instance, are often regarded with suspicion abroad because of their inherent political quality and concerns of interference in domestic politics. The recently established UN Democracy Fund could support President Bush's notion of advancing freedom in a multilateral setting, but is unlikely to do so with the small amount of money allocated to date.

One further way to leverage outside help is to take a regional approach that views threats and opportunities through a regional lens and supports regional networks and organizations that back American priorities. Conflict, disease, and disorder consistently spill over national borders. One can see this most clearly in West Africa, the Great Lakes, and the Horn of Africa, as well as Central Asia. In all of these "bad neighborhoods," millions of people share or are likely to soon share each other's problems.

A regional approach means that model countries could be lifted up to demonstrate success. Those dragging the region down and posing potential threats to American security could be targeted for intervention. Those in the middle could be closely watched and their transitional gains consolidated. Regional organizations—both intergovernmental and civil society—have an important role to play here, and must be strengthened. Aid packages should

create incentives for recipient governments to think in terms of regional advancement. These could be targeted for demonstration purposes—focused on countries with the greatest chance of democratic stability and economic growth in order to yield a positive demonstration effect throughout the region.

At the end of the day, the United States must choose certain issues to prioritize in the countries it provides assistance. It cannot do everything everywhere, despite America's immense capacities. Three areas that could use greater attention are: (1) strengthening rule of law and democratic governance after war, in fragile states, and in aid recipient nations; (2) expanding educational opportunities for women and youth; and (3) building public health capacity to respond to disaster and disease.

Establishing rule of law and democratic governance after conflict, in fragile states, or in the developing world more generally is one of the great challenges of our time. In post-conflict settings the focus is often on holding elections, training police or vetting judges, rather than on creating the necessary political space and establishing public order. In more traditional development settings, corruption remains a major impediment to economic growth, whether in a centralized or decentralized form. The United States must work to create incentives and disincentives to help countries move toward a more ordered, reliable, and just society. Economic development and growth are impossible to achieve without good governance and rule of law because predictable environments with established rules are necessary to attract investment.

Women and youth are underrepresented populations in decision-making worldwide. This is the case even though investments in women are investments in their families, and that youth make up the largest demographic bulge in developing countries today. In post-conflict settings, youth are the cheap labor market for warlords and rebel leaders. Illiterate mothers are more likely to raise poor and illiterate children. The United States should work to expand the education and job opportunities available to women and youth in order to increase their participation in political and economic life.

Public health institutions are the first line of defense for identifying and containing infectious disease and responding to environmental disaster. The spread of infectious disease such as SARS or avian flu is a potentially grave threat to the United States and its citizens, and particularly for the developing world. An outbreak anywhere in the world could spread, if not properly contained, and would have the potential to overwhelm countries' public health systems leaving millions of people vulnerable. Hurricane Katrina has shown how difficult it is even for a prosperous country like the United States with considerable public health infrastructure to respond to disaster. The United States should make significant long-term investment in building early warning systems and reactive capacity of public health systems worldwide.

D. Increasing Effectiveness

- *The United States must make dramatic changes to its current approach to reconstruction and development. Specifically, it must address the three greatest obstacles to increased effectiveness: (1) determining who is in charge; (2) streamlining sources of funding; and (3) building integrated teams to establish public order so that democracy and economic growth can take hold.*

Reconstruction and development success requires far-reaching changes to America's approach and institutional readiness. Numerous commission studies and reports have highlighted the various deficiencies for years. These include:

- The need for greater jointness of action between civilians and the military and various departments and agencies of the U.S. Government;
- Clearer mandates and lines of authority;
- Better informed leadership and strategic planning;
- Increased rapid response capability;
- Better access to local information and increased local participation in planning and implementation; and
- A greater and more sustained commitment of resources and flexibility in spending funds.

Incremental progress has been made in some areas, but current reform efforts are unlikely to meet the requirements of the coming decades so long as they accommodate current practices more than they address future needs.

The question of who is charge of reconstruction and development efforts by the U.S. Government continues to defy easy answer. This is the case even though the success of reconstruction and development are vital to America's national interests.

It is clear that neither the Department of Defense, the State Department, nor USAID is able to carry out successful reconstruction and development activities entirely on their own. In Iraq it was not always clear whether civilian or military leadership called the shots. In Washington the Department of Defense took charge of Iraqi reconstruction, even though the military is not well-suited to perform certain vital post-conflict tasks outside of the security arena. America's development programs stretch across numerous independent agencies, each with their own chiefs. Contractors and NGOs operate to large degree according to their own volition.

Efforts to coordinate the various U.S. Government mechanisms, including the creation of the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS) within the Department of State, are important steps, but S/CRS's power to coordinate mammoth organizations like DOD remains uncertain, particularly with State's lack of operational capacity and inability to rapidly deploy large numbers of trained civilians to the field. The lack of a centralized leadership model works against the development of a single coherent strategy and true jointness of effort.

The United States must create a second National Security Advisor in order to establish a center of gravity within the government for reconstruction and development. Developing a true center of gravity is the only way to ensure that an office responsible for reconstruction and development finds the ear of the President, can give current challenges the constant attention required, is given the authority to coordinate the various agencies and departments critical to success, and receives a budget and career rewards commensurate with its central authority.

The second key challenge facing the United States is the need to streamline sources of funding and to raise necessary and timely money for critical reconstruction and development needs. The asymmetry of resources between DOD and other government agencies must be addressed at the outset. The U.S. Government spends \$21 on military programming for every dollar of development assistance it provides. In Afghanistan, \$13 billion of the roughly \$15 billion per year allocated has gone to U.S. soldiers and training the Afghan army. The military may believe the remaining \$2 billion per year for "everything else" is essential to winning the peace and consolidating the gains of military victory, but the Secretary of Defense will never go before Congress demanding that money for civilian agencies.

True jointness will mean that one day DOD will fight for reconstruction and development funding as hard as it fights for funding for military hardware. This will only happen if civilian agencies can do more than staff Provisional Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan with retirees, young professionals, or those who lack the necessary experience and skills in conflict settings. DOS and USAID must improve their capacity to offer tactical, on-the-ground assistance to the military in reconstruction settings in order provide a better balance of skills that will yield better outcomes.

Funding sources for reconstruction and development also suffer from bureaucratic redundancies and competing planning processes, which hinder coherence and coordination. Funding is often delayed, and there is a lack of accurate financial information and contract management oversight.

The result is that the promises America makes do not always compare with its results on the ground. Former Afghan Finance Minister Ashraf Ghani, for instance, has pointed out that out of the 286 schools the U.S. Government promised to restore in 2004 in Afghanistan, only 8 were completed by

September of that year; and out of a promised 253 health clinics, only 15 were built in that same time. In Iraq, an independent assessment by CSIS argued that out of the \$18.5 billion of U.S. Government expenditure in 2004, less than 30% of the committed funds were available for direct services or investments, with the bulk of the money going toward security costs, mismanagement and corruption, and international salaries and overhead.

Anyone who has worked in the field in reconstruction and development operations knows that it is difficult to argue with the broader picture these numbers paint: too often the money does not reach the people. There is too much incompetence, incoherence, and murky accounting procedures. Too much aid is lost to handling costs and international overhead, including private security. This is not merely an issue of increasing effectiveness, but of U.S. credibility. Enhanced delivery has a very positive potential spin-off in terms of a greater appreciation of U.S. assistance. The United States must ensure that the percentage of funds that flows directly to individual recipients dramatically increases.

A further problem is the lack of a broader picture of which money is going where, and from which institutions and accounts. More thorough reviews could help to avoid redundancies and improve coherence. Additionally, most donors are oblivious to the impact of remittances. Direct money flows from emigrant populations to relatives back home greatly exceed all foreign aid. Families in Haiti, for example, receive an estimated \$1 billion per year from the Haitian diaspora, dwarfing international assistance efforts. Creating innovative ways to harness this potential such as reducing transaction costs in return for a percentage donated toward community loan funds could expand the reach of these resource streams.

The United States must also leverage the value of its financial commitments. It must seek out local contributions in the form of labor and materials in order to foster a sense of ownership. Citizens must be participants in rebuilding their own societies if progress is to last.

Finally, the United States must build integrated teams to establish public order so that democracy and economic growth can take hold. Such teams could include sufficient numbers of Special Forces, Marines, and regular soldiers; police, sheriffs, and constabulary; community mobilizers; judges, prosecutors, defense lawyers, prison wardens and jailers. Such integrated teams could help increase the incentive for DOD to direct a larger percentage of their \$450 billion budget to reconstruction and development, State to provide trained personnel to direct political issues on the ground, USAID to not shy away from national security issues or post-conflict settings, Treasury to build its expertise in transitions and conflict, and intelligence to deliver better on-the-ground analysis. More flexible funding would allow such teams the maneuverability they require.

For all of this work, the United States should take parallel steps to encourage regional and multilateral institutions and bilateral partners to make similar efforts. Supporting the creation of a Peacebuilding Commission within the United Nations, for instance, or enhancing regional peacekeeping capacity could work toward this end. The United States must see the Peacebuilding Commission as critical to its overall reconstruction and development agenda, and not let it languish due to lack of political support or funds.

Such steps could better align global capacity toward the challenges at hand and provide a more balanced approach to burden sharing. A standing capacity of 25,000 peacekeepers and rule of law specialists at the United Nations, for instance, would have been invaluable in every one of the twelve reconstruction cases the United States has participated in over the last twelve years.

One final caveat, however, which the U.S. Government must keep in mind: too often the United States and international partners undermine state and local capacity in the process of trying to build it. International donors compete with domestic systems, create parallel systems of rules, steal the best talent away, and in the process make governments less able and accountable to their citizens. Various bilateral and multilateral organizations work at cross-purposes. Greater coherence of donor policy within a regional framework and a greater respect for local decision-making is essential to accomplishing reconstruction and development goals.

E. Building Support

- ***Effective policy rests on public support, and nothing breeds success like success.***

Ultimately, the American taxpayer foots the bill for U.S. reconstruction and development efforts. If the taxpayer is unhappy, he or she will balk. As Henry Kissinger noted, “A doctrine of intervention, universal or otherwise, can be sustained only if the public is convinced that the interests at stake justify the cost.”

Critics argue that the political will does not exist to do reconstruction and development work at the level it takes to succeed. They claim that the American attention span is too short, Americans do not care what happens in far-off lands, and the American ideal of self-reliance works against charitable giving overseas. One need not be in Washington long to hear Senator Taft’s famous reference to foreign assistance as “pouring money down a rat hole.”

We must remember, however, that Senator Taft was referring to the creation of the Bretton Woods Institutions, which most Americans today would consider a resounding achievement of American foreign policy in the post-war years. The high-water mark of U.S. reconstruction and development efforts occurred in the aftermath of the Second World War. The fear of Soviet expansion along with America’s unique economic position after the war led the United States to help Germany and Japan get on their feet, rebuild post-war Europe through the Marshall Plan, and establish a world order based on international institutions and shared norms. Success was a consequence of a common vision of progress, sustained domestic commitment at home, a large financial promise, and a pragmatic approach to setting priorities that relied heavily upon input from local actors.

Although the United States and Americans currently give billions in foreign assistance, the American public remains suspicious. There are three primary reasons why this is so. First, U.S. officials have failed to make a convincing argument in favor of reconstruction and development efforts. The rationale is often muddled, the national security implications unclear, and the vision lacking in inspiration. Second, the public has misperceptions about the actual amounts being spent. Pew has demonstrated that the American public believes the U.S. government spends 18% of its budget on foreign aid rather than the 0.16% of GDP America currently spends. Third, and perhaps most importantly, it is difficult to tell if reconstruction and development assistance is actually working.

The U.S. Government must do a better job of creating a constituency for reconstruction and development assistance rather than relying on charitable

giving for one-off crises. The bipartisan Bush-Clinton team that has been so successful at raising awareness for tsunami relief and assistance to the victims of Hurricane Katrina could take the lead on a broad-based campaign to convince the American public of the importance of carefully targeted reconstruction and development priorities. Politicians, civic leaders and those involved in the reconstruction and development community should speak out on a regular basis about the importance of reconstruction and development to U.S. national security. So long as Americans cannot connect reconstruction and development work with its impact on their own lives, there will be no lasting commitment.

Second, the United States requires a more effective means of demonstrating success through reliable measurements and benchmarks. If Americans believe there is a chance of success and they can see progress being made, they will be more likely to lend the effort political and financial support. The U.S. Government should develop innovative ways to show larger countrywide progress rather than micro-level project success, which is the current practice. Americans distrust hearing about 1,000 successful projects that add up to one giant failure.

Americans are driven by results, and they want to see problems solved. If the U.S. Government seeks to build a lasting constituency for reconstruction and development, it must: (1) develop a clear rationale for why reconstruction is fundamental to U.S. national security interests; (2) make a compelling argument for why America is uniquely suited to lead this effort; (3) develop clearer goals and strategies for making engagement more focused and effective; (4) increase effectiveness by improving leadership, coordination, and financial readiness; and (5) actively pursue a campaign to inform the American public of the benefits of reconstruction and development efforts.

This paper is one step toward shaping such a policy.