



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

In the aftermath of 9/11, a strong, largely cross-party consensus emerged in the United States that weak states and war-torn societies could represent direct threats to American national security, thus placing reconstruction and development at the center of the U.S. response. The many challenges of the ongoing reconstruction efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan underscore the importance of applying lessons from those experiences to reformulate U.S. reconstruction and development approaches. More effective reconstruction and development initiatives will also win new friends for the United States and strengthen America's capacity to influence events abroad.

The United States must recognize foreign aid for what it truly is: national security assistance. Poverty increases the likelihood of civil conflict, state collapse, authoritarian leadership, environmental catastrophe, and pandemic diseases—all of which can threaten American security. The linkages between reconstruction and development challenges and national security are logical.

Reconstruction and development are essential tools for bolstering America's ability to lead overseas. Their potential to mitigate threats that marinate in poverty and fragile states and to generate goodwill and counter anti-Americanism make them vital elements of U.S. national security. When conducted effectively, they serve as crisis prevention efforts as much as crisis response activities.

With its immense resources, unparalleled military capability, and democratic values, the United States has a unique responsibility to lead reconstruction and development initiatives. Addressing many emerging problems requires a richness of institutional and financial strength and human capacity that few countries can provide without American participation.

Setting priorities

American engagement in reconstruction and development should focus on cases vital to U.S. national interests and should be evaluated based on what is necessary for success. Too often, the American approach to reconstruction and development has been ad-hoc, reactive, and ideological, all of which limit its effectiveness.

A more strategic approach should be guided by two principles. First, the United States should engage in fewer places and on fewer issues but with greater intensity and efficacy. It should focus its resources in places that represent major threats to American security, provide opportunities to demonstrate success, or present moral imperatives for action consistent with American values. Within those places, the United States should focus on: strengthening the rule of law, personal freedoms, and democratic governance; expanding educational opportunities for women and youth; and building public health capacity to respond to disaster and disease. This tighter focus should be accompanied by stepped-up efforts to measure the impact of U.S. initiatives so that dollars only get allocated to programs with proven results.

Second, the United States should leverage its efforts and resources by favoring regional burden-sharing arrangements and empowering local actors. American policymakers should consider carefully in each case the likely consequences of acting alone or acting through a multilateral framework with partners who possess valuable resources and expertise, such as the European Union, Japan, and the United Nations.

Increasing effectiveness

The United States can increase the effectiveness of its reconstruction and development efforts by establishing greater integration between civilians and the military as well as among various government agencies. Multidimensional challenges require integrated responses. To improve collaboration, create clearer lines of authority, and foster better strategic planning, the government should establish a second national security advisor dedicated to reconstruction and development. The huge reconstruction and development portfolio will only grow more complex, and it requires high-level, full-time, and focused attention.

The United States should also streamline funding sources while giving policymakers the flexibility to transfer funds rapidly from one program to another. The government should use some of this funding to build integrated and deployable teams of well-trained military and civilian personnel, including soldiers, police, judges, defense lawyers, prison wardens, and community organizers.

Building public support

Dedicating greater resources to the demonstration of success will increase the American public's support for reconstruction and development. To build a lasting domestic constituency, the government must: articulate clearly the importance of reconstruction and development for U.S. national security interests; develop goals and strategies for making U.S. involvement more focused and effective; improve government leadership, coordination, and financial readiness; and inform the American people of the positive results of reconstruction and development efforts.