



Passing the BATON

*Foreign Policy Challenges and
Opportunities Facing the New Administration*

Morning Panel 3: “Stabilizing War-Torn States: Goals and Guidance for a New Administration”

Speakers: **Brigadier General Ed Cardon**, Deputy Commandant, Command and General Staff College, Combined Arms Center;
Beth Ellen Cole, Senior Program Officer, United States Institute of Peace;
Janine Davidson, Assistant Professor, George Mason University School of Public Policy

Main Issues

Seven years after entering Afghanistan, the United States is still in search of a winning strategy. In the absence of a basic framework to guide strategy and execution, civilian and military actors have stumbled through peace and stability operations time and again.

At the dawn of a new presidential administration, however, two new doctrinal manuals seek to fill that gap – the U.S. Army’s new *Field Manual 3-07 Stability Operations* and the U.S. Institute of Peace’s (USIP) draft *Guiding Principles for Peace Operations*. Both manuals are unprecedented in scope and provide a baseline set of principles for engaging in these missions – *FM 3-07* for the U.S. military and the *Guiding Principles* for U.S. civilians. The documents also embrace a common strategic framework resting on five common end states for peace and stability operations: a safe and secure environment, the rule of law, stable governance, sustainable economy and social well being.

Released in October 2008, *FM 3-07* represents a major milestone for Army doctrine. The manual provides the first practical roadmap from conflict to peace and describes the role of military forces in supporting broader U.S. efforts in these missions. The process of developing *FM 3-07* was notable for its unprecedented engagement of U.S. civilian agencies and non-governmental organizations, which enabled a healthy dialogue about the issues and helped get disparate actors on the same page, said Dr. Janine Davidson, session moderator and professor at George Mason University.

USIP’s *Guiding Principles*, meanwhile, provides the first-ever comprehensive set of strategic-level guidance for civilian decision makers and practitioners engaged in peace and stability operations. Built on the experience of multiple agencies involved in these missions, the manual extracts overarching principles and guidance from hundreds of doctrinal documents. “It is disturbing that 13 years after U.S. troops and agencies entered Bosnia and seven years after the U.S. went to Afghanistan, no official comprehensive guidance exists for civilians,” said Beth Cole, session panelist and director of the Civilian Doctrine Project at USIP. The manual also identifies key gaps that exist in current knowledge and doctrine, along with critical tradeoffs and



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linkages that must be considered in these missions. Like *FM 3-07, Guiding Principles* is now being vetted by a wide range of U.S. and international agencies with publication expected in the spring of 2009.

While the panelists recognized the two manuals as major achievements in the long path to increasing U.S. success in war-torn countries, they also cautioned that the manuals are not meant to be a panacea for the inordinate challenges that still exist. The common strategic framework provides direction but must always be carefully tailored to the cultural and historical context and needs of the local population.

The concept of doctrine often evokes apprehension from the civilian community as being overly prescriptive and neglecting local context. Looking to clarify misconceptions, Davidson described military doctrine as “fundamental principles that guide employment of military forces in coordinated action toward a common objective.” It is authoritative in its guidance, but not prescriptive. And even if the doctrine is not perfect, offering a baseline set of principles helps to coordinate the efforts of otherwise disparate actors and frees decision makers, planners and practitioners from ad hoc approaches.

Additionally, increased success in future missions will depend on improving U.S. civilian capacity to operate in these missions and allow the military to assume its support role. While many solid steps have been taken in this direction, more must be developed to create an enhanced foundation for civilian operations in these missions if a truly whole-of-government approach is to work, said Brig. Gen. Ed Cardon, session panelist and Deputy Commandant of the U.S. Army Command & General Staff College. Improvements in civilian response capabilities include the State Department’s new Civilian Response Corps (CRC) and new peace and education training initiatives.

Policy Conclusions*

1. The panelists suggested that the new administration should consider bolstering and elevating the current interagency structure for U.S. government agencies involved in peace and stability operations. Only then can a truly whole-of-government approach be effectively employed.
2. Planning expertise and numbers of experts available for these missions in critical U.S. civilian agencies is very weak. The panelists agreed that more funding should reside

* Policy Conclusions from Group Panel Discussions at Passing the Baton 2009 were not necessarily achieved by group consensus. In some instances, individual panel members may have been in disagreement with the larger group. For specific information on each panel’s contents, please see the comprehensive online archive at www.usip.org/baton2009.



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- with civilian agencies, rather than the military, to build more capacity and better train and equip civilians for these missions.
3. Rather than starting from scratch, the panelists suggested that the new administration build on current progress to conduct whole-of-government assessment, planning and training and deploy integrated teams to missions.
 4. It is imperative that the new strategic framework be contextualized to the specific needs and culture of local affected populations, rather than strictly applied or imposed. Essentially, the framework must “belong” to the local population.