

up by dozens of more concrete recommendations in this work.

The readers of this book—expert and novice alike—will find it nicely written, carefully thought out, and forcefully argued. It will spur lots of criticism, especially from the neorealists who will not hold back their fire. The Big Stick is both an enduring principle and a superb book, one that will inspire imitators and critics alike. **PRISM**

Notes

¹ For example, Ben Barry, *Harsh Lessons: Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Changing Character of War* (London: Routledge for IISS, 2017), 75–84. See also: Richard Hooker and Joseph Collins, eds., *Lessons Encountered: Learning from the Long War* (Washington, DC: National Defense University, 2015), 71–4.

² Eliot A. Cohen and John Gooch, *Military Misfortunes: the Anatomy of Failure in War* (New York: Free Press, 1990, reissued 2006).

War and the Art of Governance: Consolidating Combat Success into Political Victory

By Nadia Schadlow
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REVIEWED BY RONALD E. NEUMANN

W*ar and the Art of Governance* is an important book for looking beyond the frequently cited mistakes of Afghanistan and Iraq to put the very serious problems of stabilization and governance into a larger historical framework. The book is somewhat weakened by an almost total focus on the military and organizational aspects of the problems without adequately exploring the political dimensions of the many case studies it focuses on. Nevertheless, its concentration on the need to radically alter certain deeply ingrained habits of both the Army and of policymakers is an important contribution to policy and doctrine.

Ms. Schadlow's primary thesis is that from the Mexican War to the war in Iraq, America has consistently grappled with:

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the problem of reconstituting political order during and following combat. U.S. political and military leaders resisted taking the steps needed to institutionalize the lessons of governance operations. The army remained reluctant to embrace these operations as an integral part of war. And U.S. political leaders reinforced that reluctance and remained hesitant to allow military forces to serve as the main instrument for political consolidation. [This] has resulted in a denial syndrome that precludes effective war planning and perpetuates unpreparedness for this aspect of war.¹

Throughout 170 years of war, a consistent lack of adequate political guidance or clear formulation of war goals from Washington often left the army to improvise. The improvisation was frequently brilliant, particularly early although less so later on. Civilians repeatedly resisted military control and yet, when the military sought assistance from the State Department and other agencies, the resources to provide the assistance were lacking. Schadlow argues that in these situations only the army has the resources to tackle the immediate problems.

However, the Army has just as consistently failed to recognize that governance is a part of war. It resists political interference and demands full control during combat but relegates civil affairs work and professionals to a separate career that is always secondary to the Army's war fighting focus. One result is the artificial division of war into phases where stabilization, phase IV, is seen as coming after combat operations end—something Schadlow calls a "basic fallacy." Another result is the repeated attempt of the

Army to turn over reconstruction to civilians before the civilian staff, resources, or policy has been adequately developed to assume the work. The shift from unity of command to unity of effort in Afghanistan and Iraq is clearly shown to have major problems that are unlikely to be fixed without altering basic doctrine and policy guidance. I agree with these conclusions, based on personal experience in our most recent wars as well as extensive work in the broad area of stabilization.

The military focus of the book precludes exploration of the many political issues that would expand the discussion of what needs to change. In post-World War II Germany Schadlow notes that the military "created new political authorities, organized and held elections, and encouraged the development of more democratic ideals through the reform of Germany's judicial and educational system" but she provides almost no detail on the nature of the reforms or evaluation of their effectiveness. In the case of Korea there is an important discussion of the tension between civil affairs as playing a combat support role versus shaping a political outcome. However, the discussion of structure largely overshadows the analysis of how the differences were settled or whether military decisions forwarded the desired political outcome. The Army did a commendable job in Korea of rebuilding, but there is no analysis of how effective their projects were in restarting the economy or introducing economic reform. We are told that there was "fierce fighting and diplomatic sparring with the UN over control" of political and economic reconstruction, but we know nothing of what the issues were or whether the military's demand for control

had important political ramifications. Did it make a difference? We don't know.

In the case of Panama there is a tantalizing reference to General Maxwell Thurman's placing the U.S. Embassy in charge of a civil-military task force. It would have been useful to have some analysis of how this interesting experiment actually worked. Also, there was a functioning embassy in places throughout the operation with, one assumes, some political knowledge of Panama. We are told that the Army had to make a major effort to develop its own political understanding of the country. But did they not receive support from the embassy? Was the support inadequate? We do not know whether there were lessons to be learned. These questions are important because if, as Schadlow recommends, more control for governance is to be turned over to the military then it is important to examine the record in terms of success in meeting policy goals as well as actions taken to meet challenges.

One example of the need for deeper analysis comes from Iraq. There, after the turnover of sovereignty to an Iraqi government, control over American economic reconstruction was split between the Iraq Reconstruction Management Office (IRMO), which reported to the embassy, and the Project and Contracting Office, which was directed by the Department of Defense (DOD). Schadlow is correct that this was a flawed arrangement. However, there is no discussion of some of the politically complicating factors that led to this decision including ongoing projects funded by other donors who were willing to continue work under IRMO but not under DOD direction. I was only peripherally involved in this

decision but enough so to know that it was more complicated than the book's presentation of civilian resistance to military oversight.

While this list could be expanded, and more consideration of how civil and military authorities actually worked together in several cases would have strengthened the book, the problem does not detract from the basic soundness of the analysis.

Schadlow concludes with five recommendations for reform. The first of these is that the political purpose that the war is to achieve must become far more central to both planning and the initiation of combat. She repeatedly demonstrates that even when political objectives were declared they were unable to significantly enter war planning or early operations. In this she is clearly correct.

Her second recommendation is for unity of command. This is as much a recommendation about how Washington needs to overcome the obstacles imposed by our large and diverse bureaucracy as it is about field command. It echoes themes developed at length in many other studies of Iraq and Afghanistan.

The third recommendation is that while civilians formulate policy they must "acknowledge that civilian organizations are not capable of operating in conflict zones in sufficient scale over time." Because the military has all the advantages of "scale, logistics, communications and experience in managing large institutions" the Army must be given "operational control over governance operations in war." There is a logic to this recommendation that is undeniable. But it is also fraught with problems that are not explored.

Sometimes the military's ability to improvise without guidance produces brilliant results. Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs Lieutenant General H. R. McMaster's earlier work in the Iraqi city of Tel Afar is a well-known example, which the book cites; however, not all initiatives work out this well. In the early days in Iraq division commanders moved on their own to set up local security forces. In southern Iraq, these often led to the strengthening of local Shia militias that dominated the local forces. Some of them turned against us in the April 2004 Shia revolt (I was shot at in Najaf by troops still wearing the uniforms we had provided and using the arms we had supplied). Later some of the forces so organized were merged into the Iraqi national security forces and became involved in sectarian cleansing, torture, and executions.

Military funding—mostly from the Commander's Emergency Response Program—built many projects, but while some were extremely good, many others were constructed without reference to how the Iraqi government would maintain or supply the schools and clinics and fell into disuse.² This was even truer in Afghanistan, where the government had no financial resources to pick up the schools and clinics that were built without being incorporated into ministerial budgets. In my many visits to Afghanistan since I retired, I have found a pronounced lack of understanding about local power dynamics in our military commands. This problem was extensively covered in 2010 by then Major General Michael Flynn, Captain Matt Pottinger, and Paul D. Batchelor in a paper on "Fixing Intelligence: A Blueprint for Making Intelligence Relevant in Afghanistan"

published by a Washington think tank.³ Six years later the issue has not been fixed in any organizational way.

None of these problems refute the absolutely correct conclusion that the civilians lack the scale of resources to do the job themselves. But they do point out that if the military is to take over all governance functions, there are serious issues of how the military will acquire the local understanding and political guidance to take on the governance function effectively.

A related issue, but not one explored in the book, is the difference between operating when the military has control, as in Germany or the early occupation of Iraq, and operating alongside a sovereign state government. The latter situation adds enormous political complexity to an already difficult problem. To the extent that anyone has training for managing such issues it is the diplomats, not the soldiers. And that brings us back to the starting problem of resources, or their lack of management. An alternative solution, to empower the ambassador in combination with the military was offered in an article on "Fixing Fragile States" that I co-authored with admirals Dennis Blair and Eric Olson in 2014.⁴

The fourth recommendation, that civilian policy leaders "not be seduced by the idea that they can achieve policy objectives from afar by kinetic means alone," is undoubtedly correct. Unfortunately, we often seem to be going in the opposite direction, defining objectives in military terms alone in Syria and Iraq. One can only hope that when we know more of the new strategies for combatting the Islamic State this impression will prove too dour.

The fifth, and final recommendation is extremely important and is at the heart of many of the lessons that could and should be learned from the case studies. This is a call for the military to develop the capabilities and organizations that are prepared to conduct key governance tasks. Military interventions with a requirement for governance have been a recurring phenomenon for nearly 170 years. Every post–World War II administration since Truman has had such an experience. It is hubris to assume that we will not repeat the experience. Accordingly, Schadlow calls on the Army to “reject the narrowly circumscribed view of the profession of arms as the management of violence.”

The army has and is making progress in developing new concepts. Consolidation is a term that has been added to doctrine and expanded the concept of combined arms according to the author. But there remains a need to fully overcome what Schadlow calls the “denial syndrome” and recognize that the planning for how to achieve political objectives must be fully integrated into both war planning and operations. What might be added, and is probably even more difficult, is the need for both military and civilian professionals to insist that political leaders properly and fully define such objectives before launching military operations. This requirement goes well beyond either the book or what can be achieved by doctrine and training alone. Yet without clear political policy goals it will be difficult to make use of the lessons of the past. **PRISM**

Notes

¹ Nadia Schadlow, *War and the Art of Governance: Consolidating Success into Political Victory* (Georgetown University Press: March 2017).

² The CERP program was designed to allow local commanders in Iraq and Afghanistan access to additional financial assets to respond to urgent humanitarian and reconstruction requirements on behalf of locals.

³ Michael T. Flynn, Matt Pottinger, and Paul D. Batchelor, “Fixing Intelligence: A Blueprint for Making Intelligence Relevant in Iraq,” *Center for New American Security*, January 4, 2010, available at <<https://www.cnas.org/publications/reports/fixing-intel-a-blueprint-for-making-intelligence-relevant-in-afghanistan#.VBcy7S5dXCl>>.

⁴ Dennis Blair, Ronald Neumann, Eric Olson, “Fixing Fragile States,” *The National Interest*, August 27, 2014, available at <<http://nationalinterest.org/feature/fixing-fragile-states-11125>>.