



THE HENRY L. STIMSON CENTER

Security for a New Century: A Study Group Report

Study Group: Engineering Peace: The Military Role in Post-conflict Reconstruction

Speakers: Colonel Garland H. Williams, Ph.D.
Garrison Commander
US Army Garrison Japan

Location: Russell Senate Office Building, Room 385

Date: Monday, 2 May 2005 (3:15 pm)

Colonel Garland H. Williams, former military assistant to the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works discussed the findings of his recent book *Engineering Peace: The Military Role in Post-Conflict Reconstruction*.

In this timely work, Colonel Williams analyzes the post-conflict reconstruction gaps experienced in Bosnia, Kosovo, and Afghanistan, and demonstrates the crucial role military engineering brigades accompanying peacekeeping contingents can play in restoring vital infrastructure and key institutions after conflict ends. He looks at how post-conflict military operations are planned, the cultural differences between military and aid agencies, the state of inter-agency planning for immediate reconstruction needs, and recommended a reconstruction template. This reconstruction template includes a four-level phase: pre-conflict planning and strategy, emergency response, project management, and transition to local capacity.

Colonel Williams believes it is important to consider improvements to how the military approaches post-conflict operations because of (1) bottom line up front (or BLUF); (2) the proliferation of inter-state conflict; (3) the current overuse of military forces; (4) the critical state of countries after hostilities end; and (4) the limited capacity of civilian agencies to quickly provide on-the-ground assistance in the rebuilding process. In addition, the success of near-term post-conflict reconstruction will help determine the possibility of long-term peace and stability.

A lively discussion followed Colonel Williams' presentation. When asked about the receptiveness of the military to these ideas, Colonel Williams explained that after Bosnia

the military services learned that post-conflict operations do not degrade war-time “readiness” capabilities unlike previously feared. The military had the chance to see first hand the immediate needs resulting from the conflict (e.g., clean water, cholera outbreaks) to prevent further disasters. He also noted the shift in the present administration’s views regarding nation building as a result of its experience in Afghanistan and Iraq. When asked about the civilian counterpart on the field in a nation-building mission, he explained that first priority must be to establish security, then to tackle infrastructure needs and remobilize the commercial sectors. He stressed the need to find sufficient civilians with needed expertise who are willing to be deployed in the same way as the military, i.e., quickly and anywhere needed. When asked about the lack of political and operational clarity on who’s in charge in post-conflict operations that involve various government and non-government agencies, Colonel Williams cautioned that inter-agency divisions are fatal. An inter-agency working group is needed to operationalize and standardize the inter-agency process.

Click [here](#) to learn more about *Engineering Peace* or to order a copy.

Security for a New Century is a bipartisan study group for Congress. Please direct any inquiries to Ms. Yna Moore by telephone (202.223.5956 x3489) or electronic mail (amoore@stimson.org).