

# *The Role of Joint Air Power - JAPCC Conference 2007*

## *PANEL 4*

### *“The Role of Joint Air Power in Reconstruction and Development*

There is not a one-size-fits-all to reconstruction and re-building. Iraqi Air Force had to get into counter-insurgency, but had no initial capability. However, they provided practical level support in surveillance and reconnaissance; boarder control; and sea-control.

Challenges: Fight for a separate air force. Establish the coalition goals/limits in regard to create the Iraqi Air Force. Support to maritime operations.

We are not talking about building kinder gardens, hospitals, etc.; we're talking about building a new state. Military has a small part in this re-building effort. It's up to the civil governments to rebuild. It is not about money spent, it is the feeling of the native civilian population. Military involvement should be limited to security assistance and bridging specially gaps either not available, to expensive, to dangerous for the civilian sector (i.e. running airports). ISR and transportation are the primary aspects the air force can provide in reconstruction and development efforts.

There are three constraints/limitations in reconstruction: 1. You must know 'who is who'! There are more than 2000 players within Afghanistan. It's very important to have a 'program guide' for the players. 2. You must get an agreement from the host nation for whatever you want to do. 3. Political sensitivity.

Contracting in reconstruction is finally being accepted in nations and NATO. The main benefit of contracting services in reconstruction is that hires of local civilians happen. This infuses money and pride in the economy and people. The other benefit is that contracting allows national militaries to withdraw and allows an easier transition to national or local civilians to run the operation.

## **Q&A**

### **Q**

*Why didn't we exploit the humanitarian success we had in Pakistan? Why don't we expand the ISR role in Darfur?*

### **A**

The press is simply presenting the bad news. We need to get the good news out there.

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**A**

It takes political will to expand the Darfur involvement. History will blame us for not getting more involved.

**Comment**

We need to get an Air HQ forward deployed (with the proper CC structure) to get the 'ear' of the Joint CC.

**Comment**

We need to be more effective in transitioning air power back to the nation. We have been reluctant in our training/mentoring to give control/authority back to the nation.

**Q**

*Should (and if so, how) do we influence the political arm to expand our role in reconstruction?*

**A**

We should stick to the military roles.

**A**

Politicians often make promises that can't be met. We need to be careful of 'mission creep.'

**Q**

*The military is not responsible to support NGOs and IOs. How to get overarching guidance for military/NGO cooperation?*

**A**

We can't! This is a political and diplomatic issue. We need to articulate the military position and operate under the political guidance.

**A**

We need to ensure politicians know what the military realities are.

**Q**

*Is NAMSA or other NATO agencies prepared for the increased role in contracted operations?*

**A**

The main problem is protecting the contractors. We are keeping good contractors safe 'behind-the-wire'. We are not capable of protecting, nor do we want to protect outside of the wire. The thing we really lack is a plan, when everything goes wrong in the country. We have to find a way to get everyone out, but that falls still to the military.

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**Q**

*What lessons learned are there for the transition of airfields? Also, are we encouraging the country to develop their airfields?*

**A**

Initially, the operations were completely a coalition military run. The civilian integration and civil transition were fairly easy, because most of the airfields we controlled were previously civil. We just split the airfields and slowly added the necessary civilian personnel. There was some difficulty in establishing the Iraqi Air Force control, because the Iraqi Air Force had been completely demolished.

**Q**

*Our role is to be the security power, while other organizations carry out the reconstruction roles. As soon as security is established, should we be able to withdraw?*

**A**

Afghanistan offers a unique problem in many of their provinces: there is no real government/authority in the region. In fact, in these regions, the term re-construction is not appropriate, it is construction. We have to stay until we build the police, local government and authority for those regions.

**A**

When do you reach the point that we have become a problem rather than a solution? It's a fine line.