

RAND Study on US Approach to Stabilization and Application to Afghanistan Strategy

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Presentation Outline

- DoD-sponsored RAND Study on Stabilization to support revision of DoD Policy (including 2009 DoD Instruction 3000.05)
- Evolution of USG Approach to Stabilization Based on 16 Years of Wartime Experience
- Application to Afghanistan / South Asia Strategy



RAND Study: “Finding the Right Balance: DoD Roles in Stabilization”

https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2441.html

Study Approach:

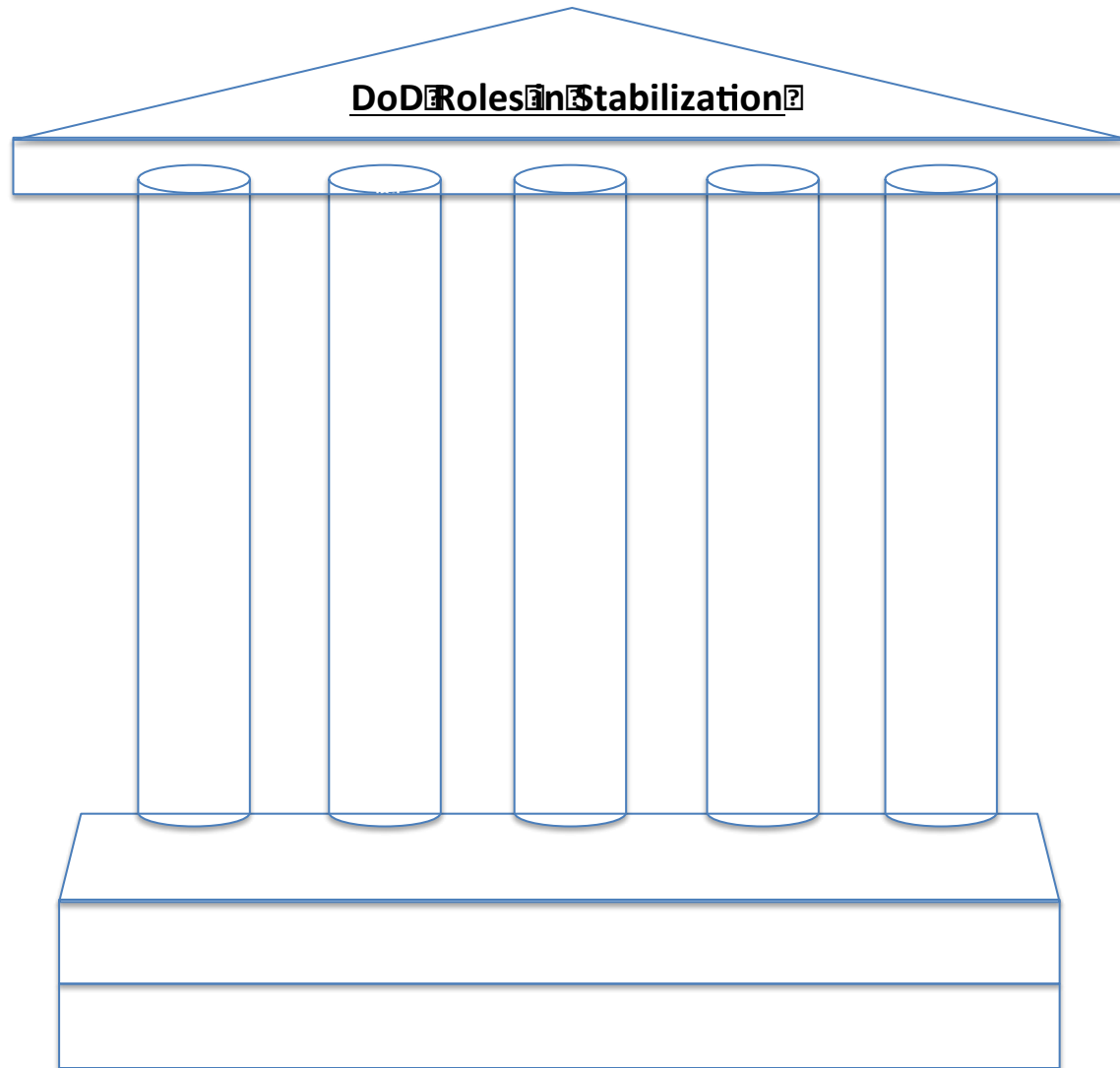
1. Review of stabilization experience in 2001-2016 to derive key lessons learned (via official reports and investigations, academic studies, 60 key senior stakeholder interviews across USG and key allies)
2. Identify what worked/did not work
3. Assess current capacity and capability in joint force to perform needed tasks
4. Recommend revisions to DoD policy

RAND evaluation of past experience and current capability and capacity concluded that DoD should prioritize stabilization as a mission but focus on and improve its performance in three areas. Namely, DoD should:

- 1) prioritize security stability function,**
- 2) provide support to other stability functions,**
- 3) perform cross-cutting informational, coordination and physical support roles**



RAND Proposal for DoD Roles in Stabilization



Key Findings

1. **Stabilization activities and objectives are inherently political.** Non-DoD entities including civilian agencies and international partners and entities possess greater competency in most activities.
2. **Security is a foundational activity in stabilization and a core DoD competency.**
3. **DoD possesses key enabling capabilities to support the other four joint stability functions** (public order/rule of law, immediate human needs/FHA, governance and economic stability)
 - Key DoD enabling capabilities, including Civil Affairs, Military Police, JAGs and Construction Engineers play critical roles across the stability functions in both conflict and pre-conflict environments.
4. **Coordination mechanisms to achieve unity of effort (in both planning and execution) among military and civilian partners have been a chronic weakness.**
5. **Stabilization conducted “by, with and through” indigenous actors fosters local buy-in, avoids dependency and exit strategy dilemmas, and provides for lasting stabilization.**



Recommended revisions to DoD stabilization policy

1. **DoD should prioritize the establishment of security in both pre-conflict and post-conflict environments**, to include building capacity of the host nation security forces ultimately responsible for maintaining stability.
2. **DoD should scope its role in the other four stability functions to the DoD-specific capabilities needed** to perform required tasks at a high level in support of civilians.
3. **The U.S. military should increase its ability to perform supporting functions** to civilian interagency and international stability providers, rather than providing duplicative capabilities.
4. **DoD should improve coordination mechanisms** to improve unity of effort among military and civilian partners. Gaps have been identified before, but progress in eliminating friction should continue.
5. **A new model for stabilization should adopted** to place civilians in the lead for both planning and execution. Civil-military teams should operate “by, with and through” indigenous and international actors; spend less, build less, and focus on political conflict drivers.
6. **Force reductions and reorganization merit review and possible revision.** Security force assistance capacity and capability is inadequate and should be accelerated. Civil Affairs and Engineering are two key enablers that face organizational, capability and capacity shortfalls – they may need additional resources to adequately perform joint stability functions in doctrine.



DoD Policy Evolution

New Policy Documents:

- DoD Directive 3000.05 (forthcoming)
- Stabilization Assistance Review (signed March 2018 by DoS, USAID, DoD)
- Defense Support to Stabilization White Paper

New Conceptual Foundation for Stabilization:

DoS, USAID, and DoD “define stabilization as a ***political endeavor involving an integrated civilian military process to create conditions where locally legitimate authorities and systems can peaceably manage conflict and prevent a resurgence of violence.***”

- Stabilization activities are necessary to consolidate military gains into lasting strategic success, and may include efforts to establish civil security, provide access to dispute resolution mechanisms, deliver targeted basic services, and establish a foundation for the voluntary return of displaced people. These activities are separate from, but complementary to, humanitarian assistance.



South Asia Strategy

- US Policy recognizes that political outcome is needed; no military solution exists
 - “The objective of the campaign is to convince the Taliban that they cannot win on the battlefield. The war will end in a comprehensive, Afghan-led political settlement that will include all parties, including the Taliban.” (1225 Report, December 2017)
 - Kabul Compact: governance, economic development, security, and the peace process.
 - Principal US Military Ways: Employ CT and TAA in order to cripple Taliban will to fight and enable GIROA provision of security
 - Strategy gap is connecting all four elements of Kabul Compact to energize the peace process



Connecting Ways and Means to the Political End

- Past experience of Reconciliation (negotiations) and Reintegration (APRP)
- Key Tasks:
 - Initiate a process that will address Taliban/Pashtun demands while protecting minorities (at local/subregional/national level)
 - Account for potential spoilers including regional powerbrokers and Pakistan
 - *Avoid perverse incentives*
 - *Provide US support to process without undermining GIROA*
 - *Neutral facilitation likely required*



Stabilization is a “political endeavor involving an integrated civilian military process to create conditions where locally legitimate authorities and systems can manage conflict peacefully and prevent a resurgence of violence”