

# Executive Memorandum

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## The Pentagon and Postwar Contractor Support: Rethinking the Future

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Postwar duties are not optional operations. They are part of the military's mission to fight and win wars. Operations in Iraq are no exception. There are important lessons to be learned from the occupation of Iraq. One of the most vital is understanding the private sector's potential to address critical security needs. Learning this lesson will require bold rethinking by the Department of Defense.

**What Is to Be Done?** Nation building is a task for which military forces are neither well-suited nor appropriate. In addition, prolonged occupation ties up valuable military manpower that might be needed elsewhere. Yet, in any post-conflict operation, the United States will have moral and legal obligations to restore order, provide a safe and secure environment for the population, ensure that people are being fed, and prevent the spread of infectious diseases. During World War II, this was appropriately called "the disease and unrest formula."

Implementing the formula is never easy. Predicting the requirements for implementing "the disease and unrest formula" is the often the greatest challenge. Iraq has proven a case in point, which is why private sector efforts are so important. They can supply the means to rapidly expand the military's capacity, provide unanticipated services, and assist in reconstruction. Most important, contract sup-

port can free up military forces to focus on their core missions and speed the transition to normalcy.

Among the many tasks that the private sector can perform, security assistance is the most essential. Establishing security is a precondition for implementing the disease and unrest formula. In particular, establishing effective domestic security forces must be the highest priority. Private sector firms have a demonstrated capacity to provide essential services including logistical support, training, equipping, and mentoring, as well as to augment indigenous police and military units. In particular, private sector assets can assist in providing an important bridging capability during the period when American military forces withdraw and domestic forces take over.

Marrying the private sector's capacity to innovate and respond rapidly to changing demands with the government's need to be responsible and accountable for the conduct of operations is not an easy task. Improving on the occupation of Iraq

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will require the Pentagon to think differently about how best to integrate the private sector into public wars. However, the Pentagon cannot do this thinking in isolation. Post-conflict operations are an interagency activity that requires the support of many branches of the federal government. Congress has a significant role to play as well. Operations need to be conducted in a manner that informs the appropriations process and strengthens congressional ability to provide oversight of Defense Department activities.

Changing the status quo will mean learning the war's lessons. The United States needs to prepare more effectively for the post-conflict period. Someone must have clear responsibility for the doctrine, detailed coordination, force requirements, and technologies needed to conduct these operations. Today, in the halls of the Pentagon and the staff rooms of the combatant commands, roles and missions are dispersed too diffusely and only intermittently gain the attention of senior leaders. One of the services needs to be tasked with developing a core competency in post-conflict operations. (The Army is probably the best candidate.) In addition, a standing joint and interagency structure needs to be created for properly managing these missions. Part of this new competency must be the judicious use of contractor support. Specifically, the military needs to learn and apply three lessons:

**Lesson #1: Rewrite Doctrine.** The American military has an innate prejudice against contracting security operations, which it comes by honestly. The modern state was built on transforming military activities from a private enterprise to a public responsibility. Civil supremacy and control of the military is the hallmark of 20th century Western democracy. Yet the 21st century is a different place. The private sector of the 21st century has the means to compete with the military. The Pentagon needs to become more comfortable with the idea that companies can provide security ser-

vices without threatening democratic institutions. The doctrine of the armed forces needs to acknowledge the importance of getting post-conflict activities right, including integrating the role of the private sector. This is a prerequisite for getting the military to make companies part of the plan rather than an afterthought.

**Lesson #2: Gain the Confidence of Congress.** The Pentagon will be unable to exploit the capacity of the private sector if doubts persist about the efficacy and legitimacy of contractor support. In any private sector activity, people understand the marketplace and make smart decisions when there is transparency. Security services are no different. Companies providing contractor support must help build trust and confidence in their services. They must establish best practices and professional standards—measures by which their actions should be judged.

**Lesson #3: Restructure the Military.** Contracting in Iraq was on a scale and complexity never imagined by Pentagon planners. Simply having the capacity to manage the contracts being let could have solved many of the most perplexing challenges. The military needs to build into its force structure the means to rapidly expand its ability to oversee private sector support. This might be done through building additional force structure in the National Guard or a reserve civilian contracting corps.

**Conclusion.** Learning these lessons will not be easy. They require thinking very differently about how to fight wars and win the peace. However, they are lessons that the Pentagon must learn if it truly wishes to leverage the advantages of the private sector.

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