

# **Commander's Emergency Response Program: A Flawed Metric**

**A Monograph  
by  
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## Abstract

### COMMANDER'S EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROGRAM: A FLAWED METRIC MAJ

Michael J. Higgins, United States Army, 60 pages.

Throughout its military history, the United States has demonstrated poor institutional memory resulting in a tendency to reinvent the wheel. The development of counterinsurgency doctrine in Vietnam, for instance, yielded valuable knowledge about combating an irregular enemy. Regardless, the subsequent foray into a counterinsurgent environment during Operation Iraqi Freedom proved problematic as the U.S. scrambled to adapt to yet another asymmetric threat. Operationally, the selection of performance metrics by the U.S. in complex and adaptive battlefields has mirrored this argument. Throughout the entirety of Operation Iraqi Freedom, the U.S. spent over \$60 billion on reconstruction and stability of which the Commander's Emergency Response Program cost the U.S. taxpayer over \$4 billion. Reminiscent of the poor selection of performance measures in Vietnam, the metrics used to evaluate the effectiveness of the Commander's Emergency Response Program proved insufficient and resulted in the waste of time, money and resources.

Adopting a combination of qualitative and quantitative analysis, this paper examines various aspects of performance metrics and, ultimately, their affect on the Commander's Emergency Response Program. The paper uses select historical cases to compare and contrast the selection of performance metrics in a conventional versus an irregular conflict. Empirical evidence is also used to test the effectiveness of metrics and their affect on outcomes.

As a result of this analysis we learn that the selection of performance criteria is more difficult in asymmetric environments. As illustrated in the paper, the U.S. has wasted immense amounts of effort, and money, because poorly selected metrics are not always indicative of success. This fact, compounded by a lack of regulation and oversight, resulted in the Commander's Emergency Response Program providing questionable outcomes for military leaders.

The United States has experienced many hard lessons due to its inability to institute historically developed best practices. It is vital that military commanders develop and implement metrics that are measurable and provide an accurate assessment of progress. Also essential is the need for regulation and oversight for funding programs to ensure their most efficient and effective use.

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## Introduction

Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.

– George Santayana<sup>1</sup>

That we have had to spend several years relearning these lessons is a measure of the U.S. defense establishment's failure to take counterinsurgency seriously after the American retreat from Vietnam.

– James Dobbins<sup>2</sup>

The set of metrics used by the military to measure CERP progress placed too much emphasis on spending money and not enough on achieving the right effects.

– *SIGIR Report*<sup>3</sup>

Since 2003, the United States has appropriated over \$60 billion to the Iraqi reconstruction effort.<sup>4</sup> When compared to other historical endeavors, this rates among the largest for a single country to ever undertake. As of 2009, the reconstruction of Iraq had cost as much, in comparative dollars, as the post-World War II rebuilding efforts in Germany and Japan combined.<sup>5</sup> Between 2009 and today, though, the U.S. has added over \$10 billion to that figure thus firmly eclipsing the amount invested in those countries.

Beyond simple dollars, the above quotes illustrate that the U.S. has poor institutional memory when faced with similar circumstances. The resurrection of counterinsurgency operations, as learned in Vietnam, has proved a painful reinvention of the wheel for the U.S.

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<sup>1</sup>Wilfred M. McClay, "Remembering Santayana," *The Wilson Quarterly* 25 (Summer 2001): 48.

<sup>2</sup>"New Commander to Alter Iraq Focus, *Associated Press*, <http://www.military.com/NewsContent/0,13319,86768,00.html> (accessed 6 December 2012).

<sup>3</sup>U.S. Congress, Office for the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, *Hard Lessons: The Iraq Reconstruction Experience* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2009), 303.

<sup>4</sup>U.S. Congress, Office for the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, *Quarterly Report and Semi Annual Report to the United States Congress* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 30 July 2012), C-1.

<sup>5</sup>U.S. Congress, Office for the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, *Applying Iraq's Hard Lessons to the Reform of Stabilization and Reconstruction Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, February 2010), 4.

military. To further compound issues, the Iraqi counterinsurgency mission, and the subsequent reconstruction and stability mission, represented a gargantuan task for the U.S. and its coalition partners. Considering that the U.S. has a history of selecting ineffective performance metrics, it is no surprise, considering the size and scope of the reconstruction effort in Iraq, that the trend has continued.

Of the \$60 billion previously mentioned, the U.S. obligated almost \$4 billion on a reconstruction program known as CERP (Commander's Emergency Response Program).<sup>6</sup> This program was an integral ingredient in the methodology that became known as Money as a Weapon System (MAAWS). The money as a weapon system approach enabled ground commanders to quickly focus money on priority targets in order to realize a desired effect. In this regard, senior leaders held that CERP would prove useful in the counterinsurgency (COIN) environment as commanders attempted to win the hearts and minds of the population to reduce violence and defeat the insurgent threat.<sup>7</sup> Under the CERP program, commanders executed countless construction projects such as schools, medical clinics, roads, sewers, and water treatment facilities. In addition, they initiated numerous non-construction projects such as micro-grants and loans, and economic development initiatives. As the Iraqi conflict shifted from counterinsurgency to reconstruction, the emphasis on CERP utilization grew from a counter-violence, non-lethal weapon, into the stability and reconstruction tool of choice.

A number of commanders experienced notable success with using CERP to combat violence in the early stages of the conflict.<sup>8</sup> Within this context, the reduction of violence in a

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<sup>6</sup>U.S. Congress, *Quarterly Report*, C-1.

<sup>7</sup>Department of the Army, Center for Army Lessons Learned, *Commander's Guide to Money as a Weapons System* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Combined Arms Center, April 2009), 1.

<sup>8</sup>U.S. Congress, Office for the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, *Special Report Number 1: Reconstruction Leaders' perceptions of the Commander's Emergency Response Program in Iraq* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, April 2012), 10.

given province was one of the chief metrics to measure effectiveness and, based on the primacy of its support, CERP received accolades as well. However, as the conflict evolved from counterinsurgency to reconstruction, the emphasis on CERP grew exponentially and it myopically became tied to violence as the chief metric of its success. This practice made it enormously difficult to determine the effectiveness of CERP in capacity building during reconstruction, as originally intended.<sup>9</sup>

The expenditure of large amounts of cash in support of the insurgent and reconstruction missions presented several significant problems. From a lack of clearly defined goals with no structured link between strategic aims and tactical objectives, to minimal oversight and regulation, the program was plagued by charges of fraud, waste, and abuse, as well as disputed outcomes on the ground. In Baghdad, for example, an ePRT (embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team) leader noted that the city had a large number of unfinished, or finished and abandoned, projects that resulted from the military's emphasis on the input metric as opposed to the State Department's overly ambitious stress on output metrics.<sup>10</sup>

Reiterating this supposition, most American units and governmental organizations concurred that an absence of policy and no viable, long-term, metrics would result in a disjointed effort with no clear priority.<sup>11</sup> Through repeated testimony from personnel on the ground and exhaustive investigations by SIGIR (Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction), it is clear that the use of CERP usually failed to meet the desired outcomes, in part, because the lack of oversight, regulation and viable metrics proved inadequate for the use and scope of the

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 34.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 25-26.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 22.

program.<sup>12</sup> In an effort to minimize the fiscal risk associated with these issues, and to increase the effectiveness of the program and the stewardship of government funds, SIGIR recommended important and realistic reforms for CERP. For the purpose of this paper, key among these was the need to identify performance metrics beyond simply counting the number of CERP dollars spent on a project. According to SIGIR, these metrics must include outcome information such as the number of locals working on the project, number of locals benefitting from the project, and the immediate benefit to the local population.<sup>13</sup>

It is from this outcome, or results perspective, that the author will focus by arguing the thesis that performance metrics based on the amount of CERP funds expended or CERP projects completed provide inaccurate measures of performance. Considering this, then, what is a superior method to measuring CERP inputs to indicate success or failure in a stability and reconstruction environment? This paper is divided into three sections to present this discussion: 1) to provide an historical context of performance indicators in symmetric and asymmetric battlefields; 2) to discuss the establishment and regulation of CERP and the inherent strengths and the alleged weaknesses associated with it; and 3) to argue considerations concerning why CERP expenditures are poor indicators of success in a counterinsurgent environment.

The purpose of this monograph is to use the aforementioned discussions to answer three questions:

1. What is the historical context for the selection of performance indicators in asymmetric environments by the United States?
2. Did the systemic use of CERP directly contribute to lower levels of violence in Iraq?

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<sup>12</sup>U.S. Congress, Office for the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, *Hearing on Effective Counterinsurgency: How the Use and Misuse of Reconstruction Funding Affects the War Effort in Iraq and Afghanistan* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2009), 1.

<sup>13</sup>U.S. Congress, Office for the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, *Commander's Emergency Relief Program for 2011 Shows Increased Focus on Capacity Development* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2011), 14.

### 3. Why are CERP expenditures a poor metric of success in Iraq?

These questions originated during the author's latest deployment to the Salah ad Din province of Iraq in 2009-2010. During the deployment, units frequently received the guidance to "spend" when CERP monies became available. Unfortunately, there was little operational or tactical guidance that accompanied this guidance and virtually no regulatory requirements to manage the fund. This created inconsistent U.S. effort within the province, across the north of Iraq and, arguably, across the nation as a whole. In addition, while the outputs from CERP funded projects were easily accounted for through the contracting process, the outcome of the ventures proved less tangible.

This paper will present three case studies to support the argument that CERP, in itself, is a poor performance indicator. The first study analyzes the challenges inherent in the selection of performance indicators in different operational environments. Using select historical examples, the author compares and contrasts the methodologies of selecting metrics in conventional versus asymmetric battlefields. In the second case study, the author discusses the creation of CERP and the evolution of the regulation and oversight that managed it. Finally, the author analyzes the use of CERP as a performance measurement. Through a combination of quantitative and qualitative investigation, this section presents evidence regarding the lack of correlation of CERP as a tool to reduce violence as well as the unintended effects of CERP.

## Literature Review

The purpose for this paper is to support the thesis that performance metrics based on the amount of CERP funds expended or CERP projects completed provide inaccurate measures of performance. The following literature review is preliminary in nature. There are several pieces of work in the body of literature concerning CERP, but this paper will provide additional clarity relating to the misuse of CERP as a metric. The literature described in this review is divided into three categories. First, in order to provide adequate context on metrics, the author will present a theoretical discussion concerning performance metrics as well as an historical demonstration of the challenges experienced by commanders when selecting metrics for different operating environments. Second, the author will discuss the lack of regulation and oversight associated with CERP and the inherent dangers, and unintended consequences, that derived as a result. The final section of this review will analyze works that support and criticize the effectiveness of CERP as a non-kinetic tool for commanders.

From the author's point of view, CERP is a two-edged sword. When executed correctly, it provides the commander with an effective, non-kinetic, tool that is nested with the higher headquarters' intent. CERP enables an immediate desired effect and, when conducted jointly with the host nation, empowers them towards self-sufficiency. However, because of the lack of regulation and oversight, when CERP is not executed in accordance with best practices, the consequences are often counterproductive. Irresponsible use of CERP can result in an effort that is not nested within the commander's intent, creates a dependent and polarized local population, competes with other aid organizations and humanitarian efforts, and ultimately wastes money because projects that are not invested in by the host nation are habitually abandoned and/or unsustainable.

Compounding this observation is the fact that many commanders viewed CERP expenditures as a performance metric. To elaborate, the amount of CERP funds spent and the

number of projects initiated determined the success of the unit. This was a dubious methodology because, according to a SIGIR investigation report, “the set of metrics used by the military to measure CERP progress placed too much emphasis on spending money and not enough on achieving the right effects.”<sup>14</sup> Through qualitative and empirical study, the author will confirm this supposition through supporting arguments, as well as counterviews, which will ultimately prove the thesis.

It is under this premise that the author selected the appropriate and relevant literature for this paper. The works included in this paper present pertinent studies that argue both sides of the issue regarding the utilization of CERP. The primary works for this paper are U.S. government documents and other publications from reputable and refereed sources.

Finally, since the military effort in Iraq is over, there is a bonanza of historically focused scholarly and official work available. Many of these works present lessons learned in Iraq based on empirical data gained since the war began. Particularly since the military effort has shifted solely to Afghanistan, many of the works discuss incorporating valuable take-aways from Iraq in order to maximize the effectiveness of CERP in Afghanistan.

## **Theoretical Discussion on Performance Indicators and Metrics**

Performance indicators and metrics are critical to the success of virtually any organization. Metrics are the qualitative or quantitative measurements, data points or information needed to inform an indicator. In addition, metrics are measurable, discrete to avoid becoming unmanageable, unique to avoid duplication, relevant to the indicator and responsive in order to allow the commander/manager time to react to changing situations.<sup>15</sup> Performance indicators are

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<sup>14</sup>U.S. Congress, Office for the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, *Hard Lessons: The Iraq Reconstruction Experience* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2009), 303.

<sup>15</sup>Department of the Army, Center for Army Lessons Learned, *Measures of Effectiveness in Stability Operations*, No. 10-41 (Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Combined Arms Center, May 2010), 8.

nested within a higher-level objective and measure performance based on outcomes as opposed to outputs and activities. With that said, an indicator is always a metric but a metric is not always an indicator. These explanations are commonly accepted by most civilian disciplines but, as explained in the later section on “Body Count and other Failed Metric Systems”, the military uses a modified version of this methodology that divides performance indicators (outputs) from indicators of effectiveness (outcomes). Regardless of how they are organized, indicators are important because they provide management and leaders with the ability to track and verify progress, maintain situational awareness, and take action or make adjustments as necessary.<sup>16</sup>

## Literature on Metrics

There exists a reasonable amount of scholarly work on the subject of metrics and their application to the war efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan. Most of these works are critical of the performance metrics used in both theaters, citing their inability to satisfactorily capture success for the U.S. effort. Another widely held condemnation is the lack of nesting, or unit of effort, in the performance metrics, particularly during the reconstruction and stability phase of operations.

Using Vietnam as the impetus to demonstrate historic metrics in asymmetric environments, there are several literary works that explain the pitfalls that many commanders have fallen into. Graham Cosmas’ *MACV: The Joint Command in the Years of Escalation 1962-1967* provides great detail on the shortcomings of such metric systems as the “body count” and the HES (Hamlet Evaluation System).<sup>17</sup> The *Cambodian Campaign* elaborates that commanders realized the problems associated with the body count system and successfully, albeit temporarily,

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<sup>16</sup>Cosimo Cannalire, “Owners and Contractors: Key Metrics Improve Performance,” *Chemical Engineering*, (February 2011): 2, 46, 118.

<sup>17</sup>Graham A. Cosmas, *MACV: The Joint Command in the Years of Escalation 1962-1967* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 2006).

shifted to a metric system that focused on enemy logistical capabilities.<sup>18</sup> In the *Logic of Violence in Civil War*, Stathis Kalyvas presents a convincing argument for social phenomena that explains why the HES indicators were unsuccessful.<sup>19</sup>

Representing a wider timeline and broader scope, Fuhr and Pham's *Measuring What Right Looks Like* presents several key ideas to the preparation of this paper. While some of their concepts are agreeable to the author, others are not.<sup>20</sup> The author agrees with their theory on the need to adopt an outcome based metric system and that indicators should be nested at the tactical, operational and strategic levels. However, their ideas on renovating tactical unit metrics and some of their empirical analysis are lacking and need further refinement.

## **Literature on CERP Regulation**

The second group of publications concerns the regulation and oversight of CERP. Most literature on this subject is in agreement, criticizing that the amount of regulation and oversight of CERP is seriously lacking. However, the immense scope of the program is such that regulating it, without thwarting commander flexibility, is extremely difficult. Aside from fraud and corruption, this lack of control has created many side-effects that proved counterproductive to the Iraqi people, the U.S. mission, and other aid efforts.

Beginning with a selection from the SIGIR series of publications, *Applying Iraq's Hard Lessons to the Reform of Stabilization and Reconstruction Operations* presents quantitative data

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<sup>18</sup>John M. Shaw, *The Cambodian Campaign: The 1970 Offensive and America's Vietnam War*. (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2005).

<sup>19</sup>Stathis N. Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

<sup>20</sup>Daniel A. Fuhr and Hieu T. Pham, "Measuring What Right Looks Like: A System in Developing Metrics for Tactical Level Units" (Master's Thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2011).

supporting a wide range of concerns to include funding and regulation.<sup>21</sup> One of the more significant concepts is the perception that interagency responsibilities in reconstruction and stability operations are vague and result in a lack of unity of effort. SIGIR recommends that a “Goldwater-Nichols Act” like reform would result in a more unified approach and increase the effectiveness of U.S. efforts.<sup>22</sup>

Echoing these concerns in reference to CERP specifically, *No More Mad Money*<sup>23</sup> is a scholarly paper based on personal experience and expertise as well as the empirical review of historical federal documents. This historical review is especially helpful as it documents the creation and evolution of CERP and other Stability and Reconstruction Operations (SRO). Unfortunately, in the author’s effort for brevity, some important aspects of the federal documents are omitted. Acknowledging the utility of CERP, the paper’s author confirms that oversight for CERP is virtually nonexistent, regulation is poor, and the recommendations submitted by SIGIR are not implemented.

Possibly the most descriptive article presented in this section is a piece titled *Sheikh Down*<sup>24</sup> by Shane Bauer. Fluent in Arabic, Mr. Bauer is an investigative journalist who focuses on the Middle East and North Africa. His article discusses the negative effects of unregulated CERP in the host nation environment. He is especially critical of the U.S. “make-a-sheikh” program for several reasons. These include a have and have not atmosphere, the empowerment of

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<sup>21</sup>U.S. Congress, Office for the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, *Applying Iraq's Hard Lessons to the Reform of Stabilization and Reconstruction Operations* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, February 2010).

<sup>22</sup>The Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 caused the most comprehensive and extensive defense reorganization since the National Security Act of 1947. Among other significant reforms, it fundamentally changed the way in which the U.S. military fought, making joint military operations the norm.

<sup>23</sup>Heidi L. Osterhout, “No More ‘Mad Money’: Salvaging the Commander's Emergency Response Program,” *Public Contract Law Journal*, 40, no. 4 (Summer 2011).

<sup>24</sup>Shane Bauer, “The Sheikh Down,” *Mother Jones* (September/October 2009).

local citizens of questionable loyalty, and it ultimately creates resentment towards America. Agreeing with the *Mad Money* article, Bauer acknowledges that CERP could be an effective program, when executed smartly. However, he questions whether the power brokers that we put in place are worth the consequences and whether they will remain loyal to the Iraqi government after we have left.

## **Literature on CERP Effectiveness**

Finally, there are many publications both criticizing and lauding CERP effectiveness as a tool for commanders in Iraq and Afghanistan during stability and reconstruction operations. Some publications identify CERP as a critical asset in diminishing the level of violence in Iraq and, subsequently, for saving soldiers lives in the process. However, other articles present that there is no causal relationship between CERP expenditures and the levels of violence. Without questioning the scholarship of works on either side of the issue, the author will present the results from an empirical study that supports the supposition that no causal or correlative relationship exists between levels of violence and the amount of CERP expended.

The Center for Army Lessons Learned handbook, *The Commander's Guide to Money as a Weapons System*, provides commanders and CERP practitioners with specific guidance regarding the utilization of CERP.<sup>25</sup> The publication is informative in nature and is based on Department of Defense, Department of the Army, and U.S. Army Central Command regulations. Communicating the techniques, tactics, and procedures required for using CERP funds, the book details specific areas such as rules of engagement, regulation, fiscal law, contracting, and performance metrics. This book proved helpful to the creation of this paper by providing a broad-spectrum perspective on CERP through both a regulatory and best-practice lens.

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<sup>25</sup>Department of the Army, Center for Army Lessons Learned, *Commander's Guide to Money as a Weapons System* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Combined Arms Center, April 2009).

Another helpful book is *Hard Lessons: The Iraq Reconstruction Experience* by SIGIR.<sup>26</sup> In familiar fashion, SIGIR uses audits, investigations, inspections, interviews and other reports to identify and analyze the challenges faced by the U.S. in implementing a new post-conflict Iraqi government. The book highlights shortcomings in the Iraqi social environment, such as the delivery of essential services, and how interagency resource deficiencies, irresponsible aid expenditures, and poor metric selection compounded the issue. To address these concerns, SIGIR recommended significant reforms to reconstruction and stability efforts through additional interagency resources and unity of effort/unity of command initiatives.

*Testing the Surge*, by Stephen Biddle, Jeffrey Friedman and Jacob Shapiro, presents a unique perspective on the U.S. surge and its contributions to the reduction in violence.<sup>27</sup> These gentlemen theorize that the reduction in violence was actually an accidental synergistic occurrence between the Anbar Awakening, a result of sectarian unraveling, and the U.S. surge. This work is unique in that most writings on this subject matter have not considered the social and political aspects of systematic realignments, troop densities, or sectarian unmixing and how they interacted to create lower levels of violence.<sup>28</sup> This work corroborated the results of this author's empirical study into CERP and violence reduction by presenting a solution to the resulting meta-question – why did violence first increase then decline.

The most helpful work in this group of publications is a SIGIR report, *Special Report Number 1*.<sup>29</sup> This report resulted from a survey administered to Army, Marine, Department of State, United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) personnel. Benefiting from the combined wealth of knowledge of this

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<sup>26</sup>U.S. Congress, *Hard Lessons*.

<sup>27</sup>Stephen Biddle, Jeffrey A. Friedman, and Jacob N. Shapiro, "Testing the Surge," *International Security: Harvard*, 37, no. 1 (Summer 2012).

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>29</sup>U.S. Congress, *Special Report Number 1*.

diverse group, the report sought to find out such things as the extent that they used CERP, the relationship between intended and actual outcomes, measures of effectiveness for CERP and the degree of fraud and corruption in CERP projects. Underscoring the concept that inefficiencies limit the usefulness of CERP, the report makes vital recommendations and considerations for both military and civilian personnel.

## **Literature Review Conclusion**

Empirically speaking, the SIGIR series of reports provide the best researched data and analysis available regarding U.S. aid efforts in Iraq. These endeavors provide a significant wealth of knowledge and analysis to the body of works on the study of aid for stability and reconstruction operations. However, while it is an independent government entity, it is still limited by national interests and bureaucracies. Another work, *Testing the Surge*, provides a distinctive supposition on the synergistic relationship of social, political and military campaigns and how it relates to the level of violence in Iraq. While the thesis presented therein is entirely plausible, the complex interrelations involved preclude a clear-cut solution. Finally, the *Sheikh Down* article provides a unique perspective into the use of CERP funds for stability operations. It is through the causal effect of CERP expenditures and their negative consequences on the social environment that this work provides its greatest contribution to the subject.

The topic of this monograph is pertinent to future study. The analysis conducted in this paper befits the ongoing effort in Afghanistan and the likelihood of stability and reconstruction operations in the future. In addition, the subject matter of this paper contributes broadly across several disciplines of study to include international relations, military science, anthropology, and others. A more focused area where this paper has bearing is the study of performance measurement. The selection of suitable and measureable performance indicators perplexes

organizational culture in business, education, and manufacturing as well as governmental agencies and the military.

## **Methodology – The Use of Case Study to disprove CERP as a measure of success**

This monograph seeks to establish that CERP, in itself, is not a valid measure of performance during stability operations by answering the following three questions:

1. What is the historical context for performance indicator selection in asymmetric environments by the United States?
2. Did the systemic use of CERP directly contribute to lower levels of violence in Iraq?
3. Why are CERP expenditures a poor metric of success in Iraq?

This study will use a combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis to answer the above questions. But first, it is important to define doctrinally what is entailed during stability operations. As such, the definition of Stability Operations from ADP 3-0 is:

Stability operations are military missions, tasks, and activities conducted outside the United States to maintain or reestablish a safe and secure environment and to provide essential governmental services, emergency infrastructure reconstruction, and humanitarian relief.<sup>30</sup>

To elaborate, the goal of stability operations is to ensure a safe and secure environment which is defined as one where civilians can live their day-to-day lives without fear of being drawn into violent conflict and being victimized by criminals or by the forces there to protect them.<sup>31</sup> As part of this endeavor, the U.S. must provide essential services, critical infrastructure reconstruction, and humanitarian relief. To measure the success within these provisions, the U.S. must utilize metrics that accurately reflect the outcomes of their efforts.

The need for effective metrics is critical to the success of military, interagency and civilian aid organizations. Whether the metric measures success qualitatively or empirically, it is

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<sup>30</sup>Department of the Army, ADP 3-0, *Unified Land Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2011), 6.

<sup>31</sup>Department of the Army, ADRP 3-07, *Stability* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012), 1-14.

imperative to mission accomplishment that commanders, staffs, interagency partners and others select those metric(s) that best capture progress as defined by the commander's intent, the higher headquarters strategic guidance, or an aid organization's mission statement. In Iraq, the U.S. spent almost \$4 billion on CERP as part of the \$60 billion reconstruction and stability program.<sup>32</sup> Although figures aren't available for CERP specifically, it is estimated that over \$635 million of the reconstruction and stability effort was potentially lost to fraud and corruption.

The author's selection criteria for this monograph are as follows. First, the author has personal interest in this subject based on his experience with CERP during his most recent deployment. Second, having acted in a civil affairs capacity, as a CERP project purchasing officer (PPO)<sup>33</sup>, and as his brigade's representative to the Provincial Reconstruction Team, he is qualified to discuss CERP in detail. Third, there are a variety of scholarly works and official reports that discuss CERP and its role in the reconstruction and stability effort in Iraq making it a feasible research subject. Fourth, because CERP is still in use in Afghanistan and because the U.S. could find itself in another reconstruction and stability operation requiring a CERP-like fund source, it is important to highlight the issues and shortcomings of the program in order to ensure the same mistakes are not repeated.

This monograph will use a case study of select historical examples of performance metrics to highlight the difference in measuring success in a contemporary force-on-force conflict as opposed to counterinsurgency and stability missions in an asymmetric environment. Using the Normandy invasion for the former, the paper will analyze effective metrics used to measure Allied progress onto mainland Europe. For the latter, the paper looks at the Vietnam conflict and how ineffective performance indicators negatively affected the entire war effort.

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<sup>32</sup>U.S. Congress, *Quarterly Report*, C-1.

<sup>33</sup>According to the MNC-I MAAWS SOP, 26 Jan 09, p B-1-2: The PPO manages the individual CERP projects and maintains project files IAW this SOP. The PPO may be subject to pecuniary liability, and could face administrative actions or criminal prosecution for making any prohibited purchases.

In order to research the difficulty in selecting performance indicators in an asymmetric environment, this paper utilized a controlled-comparison method between metrics in a conventional versus unconventional wartime environment. For this qualitative assessment, success causes victory where success is the independent variable, and the study variable, and victory is the dependent variable. The original wisdom for the metrics used to determine success was that if the level of success is greater, the chance of victory is greater as well. The author's hypothesis, however, is that if the success metric is invalid or unrealistic, the relationship between success and victory will be nonexistent. As confirmed by the success metrics used in Normandy, the more troops on shore, the more phase lines passed, and the more enemy killed or captured, yielded corresponding progress towards victory. To contrast, the success reported through Vietnam-era metrics, such as body counts and hamlet evaluations, did not reflect progress towards victory.

Since its introduction, CERP has experienced tremendous growing pains. Using an illustrative case study, this section will announce some of the key legislative and directive actions that affected CERP. Due to the quickly mushrooming nature of its employment and the maximum flexibility afforded to commanders, the level of oversight, regulation and strategic direction systemically proved insufficient. Through this case study, some of the entrenched challenges that faced CERP will be discussed in order to illustrate the misuse that resulted from the lack of supervision, regulation and priorities.

Many commanders have lauded CERP as a primary component to the reduction in violence in Iraq. They felt that the original objective of CERP was to serve as stability expenditures to save their soldier's lives.<sup>34</sup> However, several literary articles exist that question the validity of this statement, particularly after the transition from a counterinsurgency to a

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<sup>34</sup>U.S. Congress, *Special Report Number 1*, 23.

stability and reconstruction focused mission. Operating under the logical assumption that the more CERP expenditures that are distributed, the lower the violence levels, this paper will use a quantitative case study to prove a lack of correlation between violence and CERP expenditures using a cross-section of provinces across a broad time spectrum.

For the first part of the final case study of this paper, the relationship between CERP expenditures and stability is assessed. The common assumption is that the more CERP dollars that were spent, the less amount of violence that should be observed. However, the author's hypothesis is that there is no congruent relationship between the amount of money spent on CERP and the amount of violence experienced. For this argument, CERP dollars are the independent and study variable, and violence is the dependent variable.

In an effort to quantitatively disprove a causal relationship, the author used a cross-sectional approach in selecting three provinces that represent high, moderate, and low success rates for U.S. counterinsurgent and stability efforts. Using data from CIDNE (Combined Information Data Network Exchange)-Iraq, the author compiled aggregate information that represented almost a decade of CERP expenditure and violence indicators. Because CIDNE was the primary reporting tool for all U.S. forces, and the preponderance of other government organizations in Iraq, it contains the most accurate and complete information on a wide range of data points. Do to security constraints, however, the data is not shown.

In the final part of the last case study, the author discusses further the misuse and unintended consequences of CERP. This case study is illustrative and attempts to communicate how CERP affected not only the U.S. government mission, but the mission of other non-governmental organizations as well. Whether by a product of its design, or by practice, the massive utilization of CERP resulted in many unexpected second and third order effects. The paper will look at the dependency created by CERP among the Iraqi people and how it proved inconsistent with the U.S. mission to responsibly withdraw. As well, the paper will present how

the lack of regulation, flexibility and quick turnover associated with CERP created a competitive environment with other international aid organizations.

## **Body Count and other Failed Metric Systems**

Measuring the success of military operations is a challenging endeavor. What is it that a commander must assess to determine if his or her plan is succeeding? In a simplified model of a civilian business enterprise, quantitative data such as the number of customers, the number of sales, the amount of sales, the cost of goods, and the cost of overhead determine if a business is making or losing money. If the business owner is making more money than they are spending then their business is a success. For military commanders, however, measuring success can be a daunting undertaking dependent on both quantitative and qualitative variables such as the type of mission, the national strategy, how many resources he or she has to dedicate to tracking metrics and a myriad of other variable factors.

This section will present information concerning how the U.S. military measures operational success using select historical examples. The U.S. has a history of losing institutional memory and having to relearn valuable lessons from the past. It is through this lens that the author will present how we have done things in the past. This study will provide current definitions on the tools and methodologies that commanders use to determine if their efforts are achieving the desired results. It will compare and contrast historical examples highlighting instances when leaders have gotten the measurements of success right and also when they have gotten them wrong. The paper will use Operation Overlord as the positive illustration and the Vietnam conflict as the contradiction.

According to Field Manual (FM) 3-07, Stability Operations, commanders have three tools at their disposal to assess the level of success that their efforts are yielding. The first are measures of performance (MOP) which are defined as assessing the proper completion of assigned tasks.<sup>35</sup> Translated, measures of performance answer the question of “are we doing

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<sup>35</sup>Department of the Army, ADRP 3-07, 4-11.

things correctly?” Second are measures of effectiveness (MOE) which assess progress towards changing the state of the operational environment envisioned in the commander's intent.<sup>36</sup> Put another way, the measures of effectiveness ask if we are doing the correct things. Finally, there are indicators which are subordinate measures that perform as a yardstick in order to provide supporting data into the measures of performance and measures of effectiveness.<sup>37</sup>

At the operational level, the type of mission that a commander is tasked to accomplish has incredible bearing on the manner with which success is measured. During major combat operations, for example, metrics are simpler to identify because of the straightforward nature of the mission. The definition for major combat operations below demonstrates how the U.S. uses all facets of national and military power to dominate the enemy thereby making the measurement of success fairly unsophisticated.

Major Combat Operations (MCOs) are the conduct of synergistic, high-tempo actions in multiple operating domains, including cyberspace, to shatter the coherence of the adversary's plans and dispositions and render him unable or unwilling to militarily oppose the achievement of U.S. strategic objectives.<sup>38</sup>

### Conventional versus Unconventional Metrics

Take the Normandy invasion as an historical example. On June 6, 1944, American, British and Canadian forces launched Operation Overlord against Hitler's Atlantic Wall in the largest amphibious operation in history. During the first day of the operation, military commanders coordinated a massive naval bombardment, launched over 10,000 aerial bombardment sorties, conducted a division-sized airborne operation, and managed over 5,000

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<sup>36</sup>Ibid., 4-12.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid.

<sup>38</sup>Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Roles and Missions Review Report* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2009), 5.

amphibious vessels tasked with landing 6 divisions on the occupied French coast.<sup>39</sup> The primary task for these soldiers consisted of overcoming the Nazi coastal defenses, which were comprised of mines and obstacles as well as direct and indirect fire. This undertaking supported the operational goal of establishing a foothold for, ultimately, the liberation of continental Europe. Remarkably, tracking the success of such a monumental undertaking proved much easier than in today's convoluted environments. In Normandy, commanders defined success as the number of troops or units ashore, the number of phase lines passed, and the number of Germans killed, wounded or captured.<sup>40</sup> These quantitative indicators provided the Allied leaders with the information required to make timely decisions that affected the success of the operation.

However, the spectrum of military operations is not always conducive to easily identifying effective measurements of success. General George Patton once declared that, "There is only one unchanging principle of warfare: that is, to inflict the greatest amount of death and destruction upon the enemy in the least time possible."<sup>41</sup> But the linear nature of the major combat operations of yore contrasts sharply with the ambiguity and non-linear environment of a contemporary insurgency and the resultant counterinsurgency (COIN) efforts. According to Joint Publication (JP) 3-24, an insurgency is defined as "the organized use of subversion and violence by a group or movement that seeks to overthrow or force change of a governing authority. Insurgency can also refer to the group itself."<sup>42</sup> With that clarified, a counterinsurgency is defined

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<sup>39</sup>Forrest C. Pogue, *The European Theater of Operations: The Supreme Command* (Washington, DC: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1954; reprint, 1989), 171.

<sup>40</sup>Gregory A. Daddis, *No Sure Victory: Measuring U.S. Army Effectiveness and Progress in the Vietnam War* (New York: Oxford Press, 2011), 5.

<sup>41</sup>Paul Clark, "The Body Count and the Pentagon," *Lew Rockwell* (2012), <http://lewrockwell.com/orig2/clark4.html> (accessed 20 February 2012).

<sup>42</sup>Department of Defense, Joint Publication (JP) 3-24, *Counterinsurgency Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2009), GL-6.

as the “comprehensive civilian and military efforts taken to defeat an insurgency and to address any core grievances.”<sup>43</sup>

Analyzing the above definition, a counterinsurgency exhibits some or all of the following criteria: it is not always an organized opposition; it can exist as an ideology; it is a non-state actor; and it typically uses violence or revolution to overthrow or influence the existing authorities. When compared to the relative linearity and familiarity of major combat operations, it is not surprising that the U.S. military is challenged by insurgencies. When determining the mission variables of an insurgency, several questions are asked such as who is the enemy, where are they located, what engagement methods are they using, are they supported by the population, and is the nation a failed, or weakened, state? When compared with the definition of major combat operations, an insurgency is infinitely more difficult to measure.

Herein lies the problem facing commanders when attempting to measure success in an insurgent environment. With no clear location or identity of the enemy; a population riding on the fence between pro-government and pro-insurgency; and a weakened host-nation authority, how is the counterinsurgent fight conducted? During the invasion of Normandy, Allied leaders possessed superior military mass, offensive capability, initiative, logistics and the other requisite capabilities needed to defeat an enemy in force on force combat. Applying the idea of requisite capabilities into a counterinsurgent conflict, leaders must combine all aspects of national power to include military, interagency, and non-government organization capabilities in order to defeat the insurgent threat.<sup>44</sup> They must also make every effort to address the core grievances of the populace that resulted in the political strife and instability that provided the impetus for the insurgency.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>43</sup>Ibid., GL-5.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., xvii.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., I-1.

As discussed thus far, measuring success during counterinsurgency operations is not as easy as calculating the amount of ground gained, the number of friendly troops ashore or the number of enemy killed. Most counterinsurgency efforts take place in non-contiguous areas which means that the battlefield has no clearly defined boundaries and, as such, no phase lines or other linear measurements for defining success. We can, however, measure the number of friendly troops in the area of operations but, in an asymmetrical environment, that figure is helpful only for force employment and not as an indicator of achievement. Finally, when combating a non-uniformed enemy who is not part of an organized military entity, it is impossible to identify them from the populace which makes it harder to estimate their strength. Much to the surprise of Vietnam-era planners and leaders, it is not helpful to count the enemy dead to indicate success in an asymmetric environment.

## **Vietnam Era Metrics**

The counterinsurgency fight known as the Vietnam conflict received highly publicized criticism for counting the number of enemy killed to provide the primary metric for measuring U.S. success. To the dismay of military historians, the body count system encountered new life for a short period in Iraq and Afghanistan as well. The following paragraphs will examine the metric systems used in Vietnam, why they failed to satisfactorily capture the level of U.S. success and provide details surrounding the brief resurrection of the body count system Iraq and Afghanistan.

### *Body Count*

The body count metric used in Vietnam provided U.S. commanders with a qualitative measurement of the number of enemy soldiers killed in combat. In the absence of a better method, the statistics initially offered by the body count method best represented the tactical and

operational trends in the war and supported the strategic ends.<sup>46</sup> In addition to indicating perceived military success, this methodology provided a strategic communication (STRATCOM) message to the citizens at home that the U.S. was inflicting heavy losses to the Viet Cong and People's Army of Vietnam (PAVN) personnel and that our troops would return stateside sooner rather than later. The body count metric did provide an accurate measure of the U.S. effort outputs and, as such, the applicability reflected a drastically different outcome.

The problem is exemplified in the following quote by Ho Chi Minh in reference to the earlier French efforts in Vietnam, "You can kill ten of our men for every one we kill of yours. But even at those odds, you will lose and we will win."<sup>47</sup> Considering this ideology, how many Vietnamese would the U.S. have had to kill to defeat the Communists threat? The unrealistic nature of the body count system as an actionable indicator of success endangered the U.S. effort militarily as well as at home because measuring the number of enemy killed indicated nothing more than the numbers themselves. That is, the numbers did not represent a reliable assessment of the enemy's strength and capability and, as such, did not indicate the U.S. level of success. To provide additional controversy, military historians have widely acknowledged that it was common practice to artificially inflate body count data. Oftentimes this was a product of pressure to produce results or an attempt to garner popular support. To illustrate the perceived inconsistency between the body-count and military success, a 1974 survey discovered that 55 percent of generals who served in Vietnam noted that the body count kill ratio was a "misleading device to estimate progress."<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>46</sup>Cosmas, 249.

<sup>47</sup>Ho Chih Minh, <http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/256828> (accessed 15 August 2012).

<sup>48</sup>Survey data taken from Douglas Kinnard, *The War Managers: American Generals Reflect on Vietnam* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1977; reprint DaCapo Press, 1991), 73-74.

The U.S. effort in Cambodia in 1970 substantiated the ineffectiveness of the body count system by relying on alternate indicators. Some field commanders realized the utility of targeting the enemies logistical units and capabilities instead of counting how many of their infantry that we killed. The net outcome of the Cambodian campaign revealed fewer U.S. and ARVN killed in action as well as a reduction in the number of enemy attacks inside South Vietnam.<sup>49</sup> But the reliance on the body count metric persevered and placed the U.S. mission at risk for two reasons: it contributed to the loss of popular support with the American people by providing them with a false impression of the progress made; and the lack of a functional metric to measure progress that undermined the American conduct of the war.<sup>50</sup>

### *Hamlet Evaluation System*

In addition to the body count system, the U.S. military also used the Hamlet Evaluation System (HES) as another type of metric in Vietnam. Introduced in 1967, the HES differed from the body-count system in that it endeavored to measure the allegiance and strength of influence between the government of Vietnam and the Viet Cong in each of the countries thousands of villages.<sup>51</sup> HES data fed directly into the Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS) directorate of MACV (Military Assistance Command, Vietnam), which was the civil/military element in charge of the U.S. effort in Vietnam. The HES methodology provided feedback on the effectiveness of the advisory effort in the villages and districts of Vietnam. The U.S. developed and implemented the HES methodology to gauge the security environment by identifying villages and districts that denied allegiance and access to the Vietcong. Through an evolutionary process, however, the HES became a procedural monstrosity

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<sup>49</sup>Shaw, 22.

<sup>50</sup>Daddis, 10.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., 291.

not just for the advisors attempting to fill out the questionnaires, but for the operational analysts who provided reports to the leadership in Vietnam and the White House.<sup>52</sup>

The Hamlet Evaluation System's utility as a performance metric is still questionable. According to a 1968 study made to U.S. Army Vietnam, investigators found that, in terms of a reporting method, the HES was reliable for communicating the level of pacification<sup>53</sup> and security trends at the village and district levels.<sup>54</sup> However, the validity of the information proved problematic. First, MACV expected the advisors to act as broad-spectrum experts in such fields as demographics, agriculture, economics, and military considerations. Since virtually none of the advisors possessed all of these diverse skill-sets, the reporting results failed to accurately capture the pertinent data needed for the accurate assessment of the indigenous village situation. Second, grade creep, or artificially inflating results, found widespread use by advisors in an effort to avoid drawing negative attention from superiors who were expecting constant improvements.<sup>55</sup> This proved troublesome because the perceived progress reported by the HES did not reflect reality and, as such, negatively affected military operations and strategic communication efforts.

An example that best reflects the "progress" being made [with pacification] involves several trips made to South Vietnam by Henry Kissinger, then a Harvard academic and adviser to New York governor Nelson Rockefeller. Upon visiting the province of Vinh Long in October 1965, Kissinger was told that 80 percent of the area had been pacified. When he returned to Vietnam the following July, Kissinger went again to Vinh Long and looked up the same official to check on how pacification was progressing. The man told Kissinger that "enormous progress had been made" since his earlier visit: the province was now 70 percent pacified!<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>52</sup>Ibid.

<sup>53</sup>Pacification. Denotes efforts both to recapture territory from insurgents and to win the allegiance of the territory's inhabitants.

<sup>54</sup>Department of the Army, Army Concept Team in Vietnam, *Hamlet Evaluation System Study* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, May 1968), 1.

<sup>55</sup>Daddis, 120.

<sup>56</sup>Henry Kissinger, *White House Years* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown & Co., 1979), 233.

This incongruence in the HES methodology was symptomatic across Vietnam. A possible explanation pertaining to the ineffectiveness of the HES, as witnessed by Mr. Kissinger, to satisfactorily capture accurate allegiance information is offered through Dr. Stathis Kalyvas. In his book, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*, Dr. Kalyvas argues that the defection and denunciation of a given village's allegiance is dependent on a cost and payoff methodology.<sup>57</sup> Applied to the Vietnam HES in a simplified manner, if a village was aligned with the GVN (Government of Vietnam) but came under pressure to join the Viet Cong, people in the village would conduct a survival assessment. If the payoff for staying loyal to the GVN exceeded the cost associated with resisting the Viet Cong, then the GVN would retain that village's loyalty. However, if the cost of resisting the Viet Cong exceeded the payoff of remaining loyal to the GVN, then the village's allegiance would shift. In retrospect, it was virtually impossible for the advisors and analysts to foresee the effect and depth of these survival assessments and their influence on village allegiance. Regardless, the application of Dr. Kalyvas' theory has a wide-scope of application, to include Iraq, and provides a degree of clarity to this particular phenomenon.

## **Resurgence of Body Count in Afghanistan**

Despite the lessons learned by the U.S. body count experience in Vietnam, the body count methodology experienced resurgence in both Iraq and Afghanistan. The decision to reinstitute the body count understandably reignited the old debate about whether it is a valid measurement of success, especially since the system had resolutely been discredited after the Vietnam disaster. Considering that the U.S. stability efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan was to win the hearts and minds of the indigenous people and not to defeat them and annex their territory, many civilian and military experts questioned the plausibility of this shift.

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<sup>57</sup>Kalyvas, 196-200.

In support of Operation Enduring Freedom, the body count was publicly reinstated by the 101st Airborne Division in 2008. The purpose was two-fold; to undermine insurgent propaganda claims and to strengthen the resolve of the American public.<sup>58</sup> The reintroduction brought criticism on U.S. forces from home and from coalition partners. “Recording an ongoing body count is hardly going to endear us to the people of Afghanistan,” said British Royal Navy Capt. Mark Durkin, spokesman for the 42-nation, NATO-led International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan (ISAF).<sup>59</sup> Coalition partners notwithstanding, dissension also existed within the Department of Defense. Lawrence Korb, a Pentagon personnel chief during the Reagan administration stated that “It [the body count] should be stopped, because at best it gives a false impression of what’s happening and at worst it can rally the other side.”<sup>60</sup>

While the reintroduction of the body count received wide criticism, the purpose in the contemporary environment differed significantly from the Vietnam-era version. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, the 101st Airborne Division instituted the body count to counter enemy strategic communication and to bolster support from U.S. citizens. Contrary to this, the Vietnam-era purpose of the body count was as a primary metric for measuring success. Of course, that difference makes these two comparisons apples and oranges. The moral implications are questionable in both incarnations but the current use is as an operational task and not a primary metric with which to formulate military campaign plans. While the former truly earned its negative reputation in the jungles of Vietnam, the merit of the body count in Afghanistan is still undecided.

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<sup>58</sup>Michael Phillips, “Army Deploys Old Tactic in PR War,” *Wall Street Journal* (1 June 2009): <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB124380078921270039.html> (accessed 3 October 2012).

<sup>59</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup>Mark Thompson, “Should the Military Return to Counting Bodies?” *Time* (2 June 2009): <http://www.time.com/time/printout/0,8816,1902274,00.html> (accessed 9 October 2012).

## **Conclusion**

This case study has discussed how the poor selection of performance metrics by the United States has remained a contemporary challenge. The United States' poor institutional memory keeps it from implementing the valuable lessons gained through past experiences. This is particularly true when dealing with the unfamiliar and complex problems associated with asymmetric warfare. But, as deliberated in the study, there is little that the U.S. has not already experienced in the past. As demonstrated in Normandy, successful metrics inform the commander and support his or her efforts for mission accomplishment. But as argued in Vietnam, poor metrics misinform military and civilian leaders and actually prove detrimental to military operations. As such, the selection of informative, realistic, measureable, and effective performance metrics are critical to mission success.

## The Creation and Regulation of CERP

Beginning in 1997, a series of National Defense Presidential and Department of Defense Directives guided U.S. efforts in regards to Stability and Reconstruction Operations (SROs). To reiterate, the modern definition of stability operations, according to Joint Publication 3-0 is “an overarching term encompassing various military missions, tasks, and activities conducted outside the United States in coordination with other instruments of national power to maintain or reestablish a safe and secure environment, provide essential governmental services, emergency infrastructure reconstruction, and humanitarian relief.”<sup>61</sup> Initially based on lessons learned from stability operations in Bosnia, Haiti and Somalia, these directives seek to enable the U.S. military, and interagency partners, to transform into a force capable of effectively operating fiscally and operationally in more convoluted and contemporary environments.

In May of 1997, President Bill Clinton issued Presidential Decision Directive 56 which addressed some of the management and operational challenges associated with complex contingency operations.<sup>62</sup> Principally, this directive attempted to establish an integral, multi-agency, planning process with which to focus U.S. efforts. This directive would have allowed the incorporation of lessons learned into national planning and encouraged interagency cooperation. However, the directive encountered resistance and did not possess the legal endurance necessary to implement a lasting change.

Days before the invasion of Iraq in January 2003, President George W. Bush signed National Security Presidential Directive 24 which attempted to establish clear responsibilities between managing and executing the U.S. reconstruction effort there.<sup>63</sup> The directive allowed the

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<sup>61</sup>U.S. Department of Defense, JP 3-0, *Joint Operations*, Change 1 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2008), GL-25.

<sup>62</sup>U.S. Congress, *Applying Iraq's Hard Lessons*, 4.

<sup>63</sup>*Ibid.*, 5.

Department of Defense to manage the post-war effort and established the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA) to execute relief and reconstruction efforts. Similar to President Clinton's 1997 directive, however, this iteration lacked the resources and funding oversight for effective implementation.

In the chronology of these regulatory events, CERP became a reality in 2004 as a Congressional brainchild to win the hearts and minds of the Iraqi people. The catalyst for this decision came about when U.S. troops discovered large sums of money hidden by Saddam Hussein and the Ba'ath Party during the invasion of 2003. Utilizing this money under the name of iCERP (Iraqi Commander's Emergency Response Program), commander's shifted basic reconstruction tasks to the Iraqi people. The program proved successful in northern Iraq and resulted in commanders advocating its widespread use. Securing the approval of the Government of Iraq (GoI), the United States and its allies received direction to utilize the funds nation-wide based on provincial population.<sup>64</sup>

Following the depletion of the original iCERP funds, Congress appropriated \$180 million for initial CERP funding in November 2003 for fiscal year 2004. The resulting 2004 Emergency Appropriations Act for Defense and Reconstruction of Iraq and Afghanistan established the administrator of the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) as the fund authority which provided basic oversight concerning the military use of the funds.<sup>65</sup> The act provided guidelines that CERP funds be utilized “for the purpose of enabling military commanders in Iraq to respond to urgent humanitarian relief and reconstruction requirements within their areas of responsibility by carrying out programs that will immediately assist the Iraqi people . . .”<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup>Osterhout, 937.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., 938.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid.

Because iCERP still existed, two funding sources, iCERP and CERP, were now available for military commanders to use in the stability and reconstruction effort. As one can deduce, this translated into funds using Iraqi money and U.S. money respectively. The primary difference between the two was that iCERP had to be used for urgent reconstruction efforts which simultaneously fostered Iraqi military and civil growth leading to self-sufficiency. Together, these funds provided commanders with the means to initiate reconstruction projects and programs and employ thousands of Iraqi citizens in rebuilding their own country.

Throughout the following years, more directives were enacted in an effort to streamline and coordinate stability and reconstruction efforts and to provide oversight for funding. While most of these were intended to address identified shortcomings, empower, and in some cases establish, requisite organizations, some had more lasting impact than others. In particular, the directives in July 2004, November 2005, December 2005, March 2007, and July 2008 established important precedence in U.S. stability efforts in Iraq.

In July 2004, the U.S. Department of State created the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS). The mission for this office was to create a “whole of government” approach to stabilization and reconstruction efforts.<sup>67</sup> While marking an important step in providing unity of effort for U.S. entities, a lack of manpower, resources and interagency acceptance hamstrung the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization from achieving its ultimate goal.

In that same year, Congress initially appropriated \$300 million for CERP and increased the amount to \$854 million through the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act.<sup>68</sup> The Act also provided more guidance on how CERP funds could be spent. Case in point, the Act stipulated that no more than \$10 million could be spent on the destruction of weapons and

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<sup>67</sup>U.S. Congress, *Applying Iraq's Hard Lessons*, 6.

<sup>68</sup>Osterhout, 938.

mandated that the Secretary of Defense present a quarterly report regarding said disposals. While this regulation provided a narrow bandwidth of control over the use of CERP funds, it largely omitted additional controls on how commanders could use the money.

Following the break-up of the CPA (Coalition Provisional Authority) in June, 2004, a congressional amendment to Public Law 108-106 created SIGIR (Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction) in October 2004.<sup>69</sup> In an effort to provide improved congressional oversight for the reconstruction effort, the amendment charged SIGIR with providing oversight of all reconstruction programs and operations, to include CERP, within Iraq. The SIGIR mission statement included the following four objectives: 1) oversight and review through comprehensive audits, inspections, and investigations; 2) advice and recommendations on policies to promote economy, efficiency, and effectiveness; 3) prevention, detection, and deterrence of fraud, waste, and abuse; and 4) information and analysis to Congress, the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, and the American people.<sup>70</sup> To facilitate unbiased reporting, congress created SIGIR independent of any department or agency. While a number of SIGIRs conclusions and recommendations were met with contention, SIGIRs efforts generally resulted in an increased level of efficiency and effectiveness for reconstruction and stability projects and operations.

The Department of Defense Directive 3000.5 was issued on November 2005. It established stability, security, transition and reconstruction efforts on the same plane as offensive and defensive operations.<sup>71</sup> Since its inception, Department of Defense capabilities, in terms of stability operations, has grown markedly. However, the integration of this growing capacity with interagency partners has lagged and remains a problem to this day.

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<sup>69</sup>SIGIR, "About SIGIR," <http://www.sigir.mil/about/index.html>, (accessed 24 October 2012).

<sup>70</sup>U.S. Congress, *Quarterly Report*, i.

<sup>71</sup>U.S. Congress, *Applying Iraq's Hard Lessons*, 7.

December 2005 saw the adoption of the National Security Presidential Directive 44 titled the Management of Interagency Efforts Concerning Reconstruction and Stabilization. This mandate marked a methodology shift in executing reconstruction and stabilization efforts by identifying these effort more closely with foreign policy leadership and diplomacy than with military power.<sup>72</sup> The intent of this directive was to shift planning and implementation of stabilization and reconstruction efforts under the umbrella of the State Department. To manage this effort for the State Department, a new National Security Council Policy Coordination Committee for Reconstruction and Stabilization Operations was created under the control of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization and a member of the National Security Council staff. Finally, in an effort to fully utilize the strengths of the military, guidance also included integrating State Department stabilization and reconstruction plans with applicable military contingency plans when possible.

Appropriating up to \$500 million to support the reconstruction effort, the Department of Defense Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2006 finally specified reporting guidance regarding the use of CERP funds. It stipulated that the Secretary of Defense report to Congress concerning the sourcing and allocation of CERP funds as well as the guidance issued to the combatant commanders. The Act did officially define CERP as a “program established by the Administrator of the Coalition Provisional Authority for the purpose of enabling U.S. military commanders in Iraq to respond to urgent humanitarian relief and reconstruction requirements within their areas of responsibility by carrying out programs that will immediately assist the Iraqi people.”<sup>73</sup> Surprisingly, the Appropriations Act contained a proviso that enabled the Secretary of Defense to waive any restrictions laid forth that interfered with his authority over CERP spending. This

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<sup>72</sup>Ibid.

<sup>73</sup>*National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2006*, Pub. Law No 109-163, 109<sup>th</sup> Congress, (January 6, 2006).

essentially enabled him to use appropriated funds free from Federal Accounting Regulation (FAR) limitations.

March of 2007 witnessed the National Security Council Deputies Committee approval of the Interagency Management System (IMS). This was an effort to implement a concerted interagency approach to U.S. stabilization and reconstruction operations. The initiative would allow policy-makers, chiefs of mission and military commanders to achieve synthesis in regards to strategic planning and prominently affect funding requests, joint interagency field deployments and joint operations capability.<sup>74</sup> The reality of this endeavor was somewhat different as the IMS process did not increase operational efficiency for funding or interagency planning and ultimately resulted in other agencies being reluctant to support the IMS effort.

For fiscal year 2008, Congress substantially increased CERP funding by appropriating \$1.7 billion for the program. Fiscal year 2009 received another significant appropriation in the amount of \$1.5 billion from the Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act.<sup>75</sup> Although the 2008 allocation did not provide noteworthy guidance on CERP spending, the Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act presented several important stipulations. First, the Act required that all CERP projects costing over \$500 thousand be reported to Congress.<sup>76</sup> Congress also made it clear that they expected Iraq to participate in cost sharing for projects and that they must sustain completed projects. Second, any endeavor costing in excess of \$1 million had to include a statement from the Secretary of Defense to Congress certifying that the project was vital to addressing urgent humanitarian relief and reconstruction efforts that would immediately affect

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<sup>74</sup>Department of State, “National Security Presidential Directive-44: Frequently Asked Questions,” S/CRS website, <[www.crs.state.gov/index.cfm?fuseaction=public.display&shortcut=49QT](http://www.crs.state.gov/index.cfm?fuseaction=public.display&shortcut=49QT)>, (accessed 23 June 2012).

<sup>75</sup>*Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009*, Pub. Law No. 110-417, 110<sup>th</sup> Congress (October 14, 2008).

<sup>76</sup>*Ibid.*, § 1214(b)(3)(A).

the Iraqi people.<sup>77</sup> Third, the Act prohibited any projects valued over \$2 million with an exception similar to the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2006. This exception allowed the Secretary of Defense to waive the restriction if he determined that the project was required to address the urgent humanitarian relief and reconstruction requirements that would immediately assist the Iraqi people.<sup>78</sup> Finally, the Act communicated that Congress felt that the Government of Iraq should assume increasing responsibility for funding and carrying out projects currently funded by the United States through CERP. In addition, Iraq should assume all costs associated with the Sons of Iraq program as expeditiously as possible.<sup>79</sup> The language contained in the Act represented the most Congressional control exhibited since the creation of the Commander's Emergency Response Program.

The Civilian-Military Cooperation Policy of July 2008 established a relationship between USAID and the Department of Defense in regards to stabilization and reconstruction joint planning.<sup>80</sup> The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is an independent government agency that reports to the President of the United States through the Secretary of State.<sup>81</sup> USAID manages developmental, humanitarian, and civic assistance programs for foreign countries like Iraq. The policy laid out a comprehensive and coordinated plan to address goals common to both organizations to include humanitarian relief efforts, counter-terrorism initiatives, civil affairs programs, and reconstruction and stabilization efforts.<sup>82</sup> In order to achieve these

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<sup>77</sup>Ibid., § 1214 (f)(1).

<sup>78</sup>Ibid., § 1214 (e)(2)(3).

<sup>79</sup>Ibid., § 1214 (e).

<sup>80</sup>USAID, *Civilian-Military Cooperation Policy* 2008:1, pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\_docs/PDACL777.pdf (accessed 15 August 2012).

<sup>81</sup>Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 3-07, *Stability Operations*, (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2008), A-6.

<sup>82</sup>USAID, 1.

goals, the plan directed that both organizations would cooperate in joint planning, assessment and evaluation, training, implementation, and strategic communication.<sup>83</sup>

In 2009, the author experienced the effective outcome of the policy first-hand as CERP spending in support of stabilization and reconstruction efforts improved in the Salah ad Din Province in Iraq. As a direct result of a unified common plan, USAID, the Department of State and the author's unit jointly developed a systemic framework through which to focus the multi-agency efforts towards the developmental issues in Salah ad Din. The policy proved a valuable tool in quantifying and focusing U.S. development and defense efforts along the governance, economic development, rule of law and essential services lines of effort. The result were projects, that for the most part, were outcomes that supported the brigade commander's intent, the Salah ad Din 5-year plan, USAID long-term efforts and proved sustainable under Iraqi management.

In the final audit report from SIGIR in July, 2012, several critical issues were identified that highlighted systemic failings with reconstruction and stability funding, to include CERP. Long-term audits, inspections and investigations revealed the potential risk to billions of dollars of taxpayer money through waste and misappropriation. As of 30 June, 2012, SIGIR had questioned over \$635 million in expenditures and had worked with other agencies to successfully prosecute over 70 entities and hand down over \$170 million in fines, forfeitures and other monetary results.<sup>84</sup> While many of these losses occurred with CERP funds, these results encompass the whole of reconstruction funding. Whereas SIGIR did not break down losses by fund type, however, the losses are indicative of an overall lack of oversight and regulation.

Considering the above testimony, it is clearly evident that CERP, and other programs funding and otherwise, experienced tremendous growing pains during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

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<sup>83</sup>Ibid., 1.

<sup>84</sup>U.S. Congress, Office for the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, *Final Forensic Audit Report of Iraq Reconstruction Funds* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012), i.

Among the many hurdles facing U.S. stability funding, the lack of regulation in regards to CERP funds proved the most problematic for the military. The very concept of a four billion dollar program with no accountability to the Government Accounting Office or Federal Accounting Regulations is nonsensical. Compounding the situation further, bestowing the ability to unilaterally exceed the mandated spending limits without committee approval is also an unheard-of practice. Acknowledging that the purpose of CERP was to provide the operational and tactical commander with quick access funds to directly support activity in their area of operation, smart controls and regulations would have ensured a more manageable and embedded effort. Regardless, the lack of control, sometimes irresponsible spending, and questionable outcomes supports the fact that CERP should never have been identified as a key metric with which to measure success.

## **CERP as a Flawed Metric**

The amount of money spent in an area of operation is an inaccurate metric for success in nation building endeavors. In the Iraq theater of operations, for instance, an indicator of many unit's success was measured by how much CERP money that unit spent during their deployment. Not only does this provide a flawed picture for strategic and operational-level commanders but wastes immense sums of money on projects with measureable outputs but questionable outcomes.

The following case study will provide a compelling argument to prove that CERP as a measure of performance is a flawed logic. It will analyze historical information from multiple provinces in Iraq to determine if there is correlation between violence and CERP expenditures. In addition, the study will also discuss unintended second and third order effects as a result of uncontrolled CERP spending.

### **Lack of Correlation between CERP and Violence Based on Data Analysis**

Considering the sizeable expenditures committed with CERP, the question remains if the program had a direct impact on the violence encountered by U.S. troops. Is it true that the more money a unit spent on CERP equated to a greater level of success through a reduction in violence? It is logical to assume that if this question were valid, then an increase in CERP spending should result in decreased levels of violence.

The following study studies the correlation between the number of CERP projects and their associated costs against the number of SIGACTS (Significant Activities) that occurred in three provinces within Iraq between September 2004 and May 2010. The author feels that certain criteria warrant an explanation before the analysis is presented. First, the author selected the timeframe because it provides a wide-angle account from roughly one year after the initial invasion through the beginning of Operation New Dawn. Second, the author selected the provinces of Baghdad, Ninewa and Salah ad Din because Baghdad is the national center of Iraq;

Ninewa because it is regarded as the last remaining area of resistance in Iraq; and Salah ad Din because of the authors experiences in the province and because of the success of U.S. efforts there.

Third, SIGACTS are comprised of many different levels and types of events. They include everything from direct and indirect action against U.S. and coalition forces to violence against Iraqi civilians and security forces. SIGACTS include, but are not limited to, such enemy-initiated incidents as small arms engagements, rocket and artillery fire, improvised explosive device detonations, extortion, murder, and many more. It must be noted, however, that SIGACTS undercount the actual number of violent events because they record only those events that are reported through coalition channels. As an example, they reflect only a portion of the events that occurred to Iraqi personnel because not all of them were reported to coalition units. In addition, aggregate SIGACTS do not capture the level of violence of an event; a kidnapping of an Iraqi official is counted in the same manner as a vehicle borne improvised explosive device that killed 15 people. However, according to the article, *Testing the Surge*, as a whole, “SIGACT sources provide an unusually objective and consistent base of information, both tracking changes in violence over time (which helps control the underreporting).”<sup>85</sup>

The primary source for the data used in this analysis came from the CIDNE (Combined Information Data Network Exchange) Iraq database.<sup>86</sup> The database serves as a repository for significant activity and other events throughout all of Iraq. It enables operators to capture operational and tactical-level data by entering, correlating, aggregating and managing data on a variety of operations to include CERP projects, SIGACTS, KLEs (Key Leader Engagements), and so on. The CIDNE-Iraq database is classified SECRET, however, the aggregate numbers

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<sup>85</sup>Biddle, Friedman, and Shapiro, 12-13.

<sup>86</sup>CIDNE, 2012, <http://issinc.com/programs/cidne.html> (accessed 1 July 2012).

used herein are classified as UNCLASSIFIED. However, due to security considerations, the data is not shown.

For the purpose of this data analysis, SIGACTS will be used to represent instability within the selected provinces. This will serve as a dependent variable to determine what affect the number of CERP projects and the amount of CERP expenditures have on violence levels. The type of projects and the scope of the projects are not considered in the aggregate.

In the province of Baghdad, there are spikes in CERP spending in 2004-2005 followed by a sharp increase in SIGACTS beginning in January 2006. The nature of the spending during these pinnacles is on larger projects as indicated by the relatively small project numbers compared to the much larger expenditures. In reference to the SIGACTS, the incidents of violence are operating independently of the amount of CERP funds spent. Throughout an elevated violence time period from November 2007 until July 2008, CERP projects and spending remains relatively constant until the violence begins to recede thereby indicating a lack of correlation. During the resolution of violence, a rise in CERP spending exhibits a close association to the number of projects indicating a more balanced reconstruction approach. Beginning in January 2008, there are a marked increase in the number of CERP projects in relation to the amount of CERP money spent indicating a rise in cheaper, more numerous, projects. Finally, from May 2009 until May 2010, there is a resolution of SIGACTS, CERP funding and projects as the United States began the withdrawal phase of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

In the Ninewa province from September 2004 until November 2006, there is little correlation between CERP spending, projects and SIGACTS. SIGACTS remain at an elevated level throughout the period regardless of CERP activity. There are sharp spikes followed by deep troughs for both CERP spending and projects during this time period with a larger number of projects in relation to expenditures. During elevated violence from November 2006 until January 2009, CERP activity actually decreased indicating an inverse relationship between violence and

spending. This also demonstrates a lack of emphasis on CERP in lieu of addressing the violence by use of force. In January 2009, there was a sharp increase in the number of smaller CERP projects as the SIGACTs continued to resolve. Interestingly, a drop in CERP expenditures in August 2009 corresponds to a trough in SIGACTs followed immediately by a sharp rise in both in October of that year. Following this anomaly, there is a resolution of CERP spending and a continued decline in significant activity.

From September 2004 to May 2010, CERP funding, and the number of projects, in the Salah ad Din province is in close correlation indicating a balance between the number and size of projects executed. From September 2004 until November 2005, Salah ad Din experienced the closest association between SIGACTs and CERP activity among the three provinces in this study. Spikes in violence correlated with spikes in CERP spending and projects indicating a possible relationship. However, between August 2006 and June 2008, the level of violence far exceeded the level of CERP monies and projects in a pattern similar to Baghdad and Ninewa provinces. Following this period, SIGACTs continued on a downward trend while CERP spending and projects continued a series of spikes and troughs indicating no discernible pattern between SIGACTS and CERP activity.

In summary, there is no direct correlation between CERP Projects/Expenditures and significant activities. During the time period, SIGACTS and CERP expenditures and projects occurred independently of each other with the early anomaly in Salah ad Din province. This would indicate that the cause of upward and downward trends in SIGACTS is not tied to the amount of money spent or the number of projects conducted in any of the studied provinces.

### *Meta-Questions Based on Results*

These results pose two meta-questions not directly tied to the thesis of this work. First, regarding the post-surge time period after December 2007, what caused such a consistent decline

over such a widespread area during an extended time period? Second, the Ninewa province proved an anomaly as violence continued to rise in frequency and severity independent of the provinces surrounding it. Therefore, why did Ninewa experience a longer and more pronounced period of violence than the remainder of the country?

For the first question, Biddle, Fieldman, and Shapiro credit the decline in violence to the symbiotic product of the success of the U.S. surge operation as well as the Anbar Awakening.<sup>87</sup> They submit that this created a unique situation where U.S. operations and local activities complemented each other and resulted in a dramatic decrease in sectarian and overall violence. The peculiarity of the situation highlighted a relationship between a social phenomena and coalition military operation of which, had either occurred independently, would not have proven as successful. To counter this proposition, however, other theorists identify different root causes responsible for the decline. In fact, the role of the surge in quelling the violence is largely absent from scholarly works of the day.<sup>88</sup> Whatever the actual cause or causes, it is indisputable that the effect, as evidenced on all three graphs, resulted in the continual decline in hostilities.

In regards to the second question, the Ninewa province is regarded as the last stronghold for violence in Iraq following the surge. It is this extended time frame and increased level of violence experienced in the Ninewa province that formed the basis for its inclusion in this study. But what made Ninewa different from the other 17 provinces in Iraq in regards to elevated hostilities? The following paragraphs will analyze the pertinent details in an effort to answer this difficult question.

For the Iraqi government, the U.S., and international groups, the situation in Ninewa posed an especially difficult problem as their efforts were concentrated towards Ninewa's neighbor, the resource-rich province of Kirkuk. According to a 2008 article in the Los Angeles

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<sup>87</sup>Biddle, 12-13.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid, 10.

Times, the U.S. blamed the chaos in Ninewa on Al Qaeda--Iraq (AQI), a Sunni Arab insurgent group, and their efforts to establish bases in the north of Iraq.<sup>89</sup> From the Iraqi perspective, however, the real nemesis was the Kurds. The Kurdish grievance debatably represented centuries of domination by Arab, Turkish and Iranian regimes.<sup>90</sup> In the current context, the Kurds believed that several districts within Ninewa and Mosul had been stolen from them during the Saddam regime and they intended to reestablish their sovereignty. Beyond the basic struggle for land, the nature of the details surrounding the sharp and extended periods of violence that occurred from March 2007 to September 2008 had become a complex fight for ethnic influence and identity. But how did this endeavor become such a violent stalemate?

First, not having another local-national force to depend on, the U.S. had utilized Kurdish forces to retake Mosul from insurgent fighters in late 2004. This utilization provided thousands of Kurds with access to the provincial capital. Second, the Kurds rose to political power in Ninewa as a result of the Sunni boycott of the 2005 national elections. The infusion and empowerment of Kurds within the province resulted in the displacement of many Sunni Arabs from the area. In fact, many former Sunni soldiers who had been disbanded following the 2003 coalition invasion were pushed to join the insurgent ranks. Following the incursion of the Kurds, allegations of Kurdish abuse against Sunni Arabs, and other minorities, became commonplace further stoking the fire of discontent. Considering the rise in Kurdish political power, security control, and alleged instances of abuse, Ninewa and Mosul became a violent hotbed of activity as the Sunni insurgency fought against the Kurds for power and influence.

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<sup>89</sup>Ned Parker, "In Iraq's North, a Battle for Land," *Los Angeles Times*, 5 April 2008, <http://articles.latimes.com/2008/apr/05/world/fg-mosul5> (accessed 1 September 2012).

<sup>90</sup>Ibid.

The International Crisis Group (ICG) acknowledged in a 2009 report that violence had abated in every province in Iraq with the exception of Ninewa.<sup>91</sup> Just as the U.S. began Operation New Dawn, transitioning from counterinsurgency to nation-building operations across the remainder of the country, violence levels continued to increase in Ninewa. A decline in violence was followed by a spike between August and September 2008 which was attributed to horrific, large-scale acts of violence directed against minority communities.<sup>92</sup> These atrocities renewed international efforts to stop the violence in an attempt to bring peace and stability to the troubled province. As part of this effort, the U.S. initiated Operation Ninewa Resolve to combat insurgent forces in Mosul and to spur economic development and employment.<sup>93</sup> In addition to the U.S. effort, however, there were significant recommendations for action by the Iraqi government.

The International Crisis Group's report recommended several initiatives that had to occur in order to bring a lasting peace in Ninewa. Among these were propositions that applied to various levels within the Iraqi government as well as for the U.S. government. For the Kurdish and Sunni political parties: a negotiated compromise between Sunni and Kurdish political parties; bilateral work to address the economic, infrastructural and agricultural impediments to the province; a compromise on which official language would be taught in the provinces schools; and the integration of Kurdish and Arab forces in the police and military forces. At the national level, these initiatives included: bilateral negotiations to address territory disputes; pressure Kurdish and Sunni political groups to reach negotiations; and the integration of Kurds and Arabs into the military. For the Ninewa provincial government: ensure protection of minorities; and more robust

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<sup>91</sup>International Crisis Group, *Iraq's New Battlefield: The Struggle Over Ninewa*, Middle East Report No. 90, 28 September 2009, < <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/middle-east-north-africa/iraq-iran-gulf/iraq/090-iraqs-new-battlefront-the-struggle-over-ninewa.aspx>> (accessed 1 September 2012).

<sup>92</sup>Ibid.

<sup>93</sup>Institute for the Study of War, *Operation Ninewa Resolve*, <http://www.understandingwar.org/operation/operation-ninewa-resolve>> (accessed 3 September 2012).

trading between Ninewa and Kurdistan. Also included were recommendations for the U.S. government to consider adding military personnel to joint Kurdish/Arab patrols and to leverage Iraq to: reintegrate former Baathists into civil and military positions; promote a power and security sharing agreement; and protect minority groups.<sup>94</sup>

Although the incorporation and effectiveness of these recommendations, and other initiatives, are outside the scope of this paper, the preceding narrative provides a context that establishes Ninewa as a unique example. The complexities associated with the struggle between the Kurds and the Sunni Arabs differed from the remainder of the country to a sufficient degree to explain the extended violence. The environment proved atypical to Biddle, Friedman and Shapiro's explanation that the sectarian violence had played itself out across the country since the driver of instability in Ninewa occurred between two ethnicities rather than two sects.<sup>95</sup> Beyond the capabilities of CERP, only after concerted efforts by the U.S. and the Iraqi government to create a bilateral security and governing environment did the violence recede.

### **CERP: Unintended Side-Effects**

Between 2003 and September, 2010, the U.S. spent over \$56.81 billion through 5 major funds for the reconstruction effort of Iraq.<sup>96</sup> Including in these major funds were such specialized coffers as the Economic Support Fund (ESF) and the Iraq Security Forces Fund (ISFF). One of the five, CERP, provided commanders with a timely and flexible alternative that made up \$3.79 billion of this total.<sup>97</sup> However, its inherent lack of regulation, flexibility and quick turnover came at a cost. Considering that Iraq posted a per capita GDP of \$3,700 in 2010 and that over 25% of

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<sup>94</sup>International Crisis Group, *Iraq's New Battlefield*.

<sup>95</sup>Biddle, 13.

<sup>96</sup>U.S. Congress, *U.S. Funding*, 25.

<sup>97</sup>*Ibid.*

Iraqis lived below the poverty line in 2008, this enormous influx of cash fostered a dependent effect and perpetuated corruption.<sup>98</sup> In addition, another accidental effect of CERP dollars was that they unintentionally endangered the efforts of international relief and other non-governmental organizations by undermining their projects and initiatives. In the following study, the author will discuss these two side-effects of CERP.

## **Relationships and Dependencies**

First, CERP unintentionally produced a dependency phenomenon that was counterproductive to the Iraqi self-reliance that U.S. and coalition leaders desired. The liberal disbursement of billions of U.S. tax dollars found its way directly into the hands of thousands of Iraqi sheikhs, government members, contractors, home owners, survivors, entrepreneurs, laborers, guards, and more. This monetary flood skewed Iraqi expectations by those who sought power and influence and those that wanted a better standard of living. Subsequently, this funding methodology also raised the stakes of external and internal corruption. This situation precipitated habitual relationships with Iraqi citizens and government leaders at the local, provincial, and national level. Through this lens, CERP gave rise to a large number of “fake sheikh” strongmen, increased dishonesty among the U.S. ranks and wasted CERP dollars.

As a representative illustration of these issues, Shane Bauer documented in his article titled “The Sheikh Down” the interactions between the U.S. military and an influential Sunni from Fallujah named al-Isawi.<sup>99</sup> Thanks in large part to the U.S. military, al-Isawi rose to power from a relatively unknown construction company proprietor in 2003 to the U.S. “go-to guy” in

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<sup>98</sup>Based on 2008 data, Central Intelligence Agency, *2012 World Fact Book: Iraq*, <<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/iz.html>> (accessed 4 September 2012).

<sup>99</sup>Bauer, 52.

Anbar in the later years of reconstruction. His narrative personifies many of the issues and side-effects plaguing the use of CERP.

When al-Islawi began his construction business, he had little money and no practical experience; however, through his dealings with the U.S. he is now a millionaire. One example from Bauer's article concerns how much money that al-Islawi makes on, what is implied, a standard contract. Al-Islawi regards an 80 percent return as a "pretty good profit margin". This is astronomical when compared with U.S. defense contractors KBR and Halliburton who, in 2008, cleared three percent and 14 percent respectively.<sup>100</sup> Waste such as this is exemplified by the alleged charge that contracts were inflated because the actual goods and services needed for reconstruction were secondary to making money.<sup>101</sup>

Contributing to this ridiculous return are the bribes that sheikh's, and other leaders such as al-Islawi, receive to support contracts in their area. To substantiate this allegation as a general business practice, the author recalls one story of an Iraqi-prepared scope of work that included specifications for a substantial miscellaneous cost. When queried about the nature of this item, the contractor unapologetically remarked that he needed the funds to pay off the local sheikh and government members in order for the contract to proceed. As a Rasheed district council chairman communicated to a Provincial Reconstruction member, "You will use my contractor, or your work will not get done."<sup>102</sup> These examples of corruption as a "cost of doing business" are unsurprising when examined in the context that Iraq ranks as the third most corrupt nation in the world.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>100</sup>Ibid., 54.

<sup>101</sup>Ibid.

<sup>102</sup>U.S. Congress, *Hard Lessons*, 302.

<sup>103</sup>Transparency International, *Annual Report 2010*, (2011): 80, [http://issuu.com/transparencyinternational/docs/annual\\_report\\_2010](http://issuu.com/transparencyinternational/docs/annual_report_2010) (accessed 15 August 2012).

Besides making al-Isawi a millionaire, CERP money has made him an extremely powerful and influential leader in the province. Al-Islawi, a provincial council member in Anbar, testified that his reason for assisting the United States was not only to fight Al Qaeda, but, to gain power and influence in order to protect his fellow Sunnis from Shiite repression.<sup>104</sup> But his quest for power did not have such noble intentions in the beginning. After the coalition invasion, existing sheikhs from Anbar maintained their own militias with which to conduct highway banditry. When Al Qaeda arrived to raise money for their efforts, it created a turf war that ultimately forced the legacy sheikhs to retreat into Syria. But in 2006, the sheikhs were enticed to join forces with the U.S. against their common enemy and reaped the monetary, political and *wasta* (Arabic for clout) benefits resulting from the relationship.<sup>105</sup>

Arising from the nature of these relationships was another unintended side-effect of the use of CERP that results in a “have and have-not” division. Because al-Islawi actively sought and expected U.S. CERP contracts, he created a monopoly that excluded many other qualified recipients. His thoughts categorize Iraqis into those who “played the game” and benefited from the U.S. and those that didn’t play and didn’t get anything.<sup>106</sup> From the general population viewpoint, however, this lack of equitable CERP contract distribution created the perception that the entire reconstruction effort was a deal between the Americans and their collaborators.<sup>107</sup>

Considering our labors to win the hearts and minds of the Iraqi people, the unfettered reliance on CERP proved problematic at best. This study may appear narrowly focused but it exemplifies the rampant corruption and inclusion/exclusion that occurred throughout the country. Our perpetuation of an already corrupt society isolated and empowered select individuals while

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<sup>104</sup>Bauer, 56.

<sup>105</sup>Ibid., 54-55.

<sup>106</sup>Ibid, 56.

<sup>107</sup>Ibid, 55.

leaving the majority without. The U.S. allied with people like al-Islawi through monetary manipulation and power redistribution in order to defeat the insurgent threat, although the use of CERP to develop these type of relationships was never authorized under the MAAWS (Money as a Weapons System) SOP (Standard Operating Procedure).<sup>108</sup> From this perspective, however, the reality was that the U.S. created new tribal “fake sheikh” strongmen with questionable loyalty that may use their American-gained power and influence to threaten the fledgling provincial and Iraqi governments after our departure. These allegations, coupled with the plight of the “have-nots”, likely resulted in jealousy and ill-will which resulted in the bruising, not winning, of the hearts and minds of the Iraqi people.

## **Reconstruction Fratricide**

Second, the wide-spread use of CERP threatened to undermine the efforts of national and international relief associations and governmental and non-government reconstruction organizations. Groups such as the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the American Red Cross and Red Crescent, the Local Governance Program (LGP), People in Need (PIN), and the United Nations (UN) all worked to provide reconstruction, development and humanitarian assistance. However, their efforts were threatened by the ease with which CERP money and projects found their way into the local environment. This section will clarify the nature of these unintended result of CERP and provide supporting examples.

In 2009, units received guidance from the Money as a Weapon System (MAAWS) handbook to “consider complementary programs provided by USAID and other nongovernmental agencies (NGO) operating in their areas of responsibility.”<sup>109</sup> For CERP in particular, due to its

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<sup>108</sup>Multi-National Corps Iraq, *Money as a Weapons System: MNC-I CJ8 SOP*, 29 January 2009: B-3, 4, <http://publicintelligence.net/money-as-a-weapon-system-maaws/> (accessed 15 August 2012).

<sup>109</sup>Department of the Army, *Commander’s Guide to Money as a Weapon System*, 13.

immediate nature and lack of guidance and oversight, this coordination was oftentimes nonexistent. There are innumerable instances of unit initiated projects and initiatives that were not nested with their USAID and NGO counterparts. Receiving commander's guidance from the Multi-National Forces--Iraq (MNF-I) commander, General David Petraeus, units were ordered to execute the following tasks in support of the employment of money as a weapon system: 1) treat money as "ammunition" as the security situation improved; 2) use targeting boards to ensure the greatest effect and to ensure the money contributed to the unit's overall objectives; 3) contracting activities should support the security effort; 4) employ locals when possible; and 5) employ a "matching fund" concept to ensure Iraqi involvement and commitment.<sup>110</sup> While this guidance communicated the commander's intent for the use of monies to include CERP, employment problems existed at many different levels both inside, and outside, of land-owning units. For example, nowhere inside the Modified Table of Organization and Equipment (MTOE) of any Brigade Combat Team (BCT) exists the requisite number of personnel trained and vetted to coordinate, plan, negotiate and execute municipal projects of this scope. But units were ordered to spend CERP and spend they did to the best of their ability.

In a report by the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction (SIGIR), Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) members, alongside a much wider unanimity, thought that the U.S. military metrics for measures of performance in Iraq gravitated too closely with the amount of money spent and not on achieving the right effects.<sup>111</sup> The Rasheed ePRT (embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team) team leader captured this problem succinctly by stating that:

They [the military] are being graded on how many projects are being carried out, how much money is flowing to the districts. They should be graded on how many projects are

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<sup>110</sup>David H. Petraeus, "Multi-National Force-Iraq Commander's Counterinsurgency Guidance," *Military Review* (September-October 2008): 3.

<sup>111</sup>U.S. Congress, *Hard Lessons*, 303.

being turned over to the Iraqis and how much less money they are spending. That would be a better indicator of success.<sup>112</sup>

The lack of direction and measureable outputs associated with CERP conflicted with what the PRTs, and more notably, USAID, NGOs and the Government of Iraq (GoI) were attempting to accomplish. Not having unity of effort created a major hurdle to the consistent and complementary application of reconstruction efforts between CERP funding and the fund sources managed by other aid organizations.

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<sup>112</sup>Ibid.

## Conclusion

The United States has a history of selecting poor performance indicators to capture success during asymmetric warfare. When compared to the metrics used during major combat operations, measuring success while involved in asymmetric warfare is an infinitely more challenging endeavor. Historical evidence supports this supposition as does contemporary conflicts. During a conventional campaign, such as the Normandy invasion, success is measured by such metrics as the amount of ground gained, the number of troops ashore and the quantity of enemy killed or captured. During an insurgent, or asymmetric, conflict, those same measures of performance do not represent forward progress. The battlefield is typically non-contiguous and does not lend itself to linear measurement. In addition, the enemy is not uniformed nor ordered into a recognized military organization which makes intelligible estimates of strength virtually impossible. In light of the challenges inherent with measuring success in asymmetric warfare, logical alternatives that support the strategic aims must provide accurate measurements of progress.

CERP was originally conceived to support commanders through funding for smaller, quick impact, projects that further supported larger and longer-term reconstruction efforts. In this way, it tied tactical actions with strategic aims in the endeavor to win the hearts and minds of the Iraqi populace. However, due to a lack of regulatory guidelines, inconsistent effort, and ambiguous guidance, much of CERPs \$3.89 billion resulted in questionable outputs and outcomes. To compound matters, CERP became the metric with which many commanders measured success. Instead of focusing on the results of CERPs efforts, emphasis was placed on the input of dollars. As demonstrated in the earlier statistical analysis, there is no correlation between the amount of money spent on CERP and the decrease in violence within Iraq. This methodology also proved problematic as non-governmental aid and reconstruction organizations

became confronted with competition from CERP due to its seemingly bottomless purse strings and quick turnaround.

In summary, CERP had the potential to be an effective fund source for stability and reconstruction had regulations and guidance provided a more concentrated effort. To reiterate this paper's thesis, that performance metrics based on the amount of CERP funds expended or CERP projects completed provide inaccurate measures of performance. As a realistic solution, CERP could have been a useful performance metric through an outcome based approach on projects and initiatives as opposed to the amount of dollar input. From an historical perspective, the use of CERP as a metric highlights the continuing U.S. practice of selecting inappropriate measures of success in asymmetric environments. Until the U.S. expends more effort in developing useful and logical performance metrics, the contemporary examples from today may resurface in future asymmetric conflicts.

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