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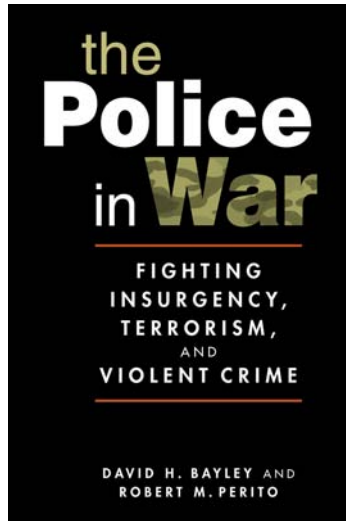
The Police in War:
Fighting Insurgency,
Terrorism, and
Violent Crime

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Introduction

A US Marine officer newly returned from fighting in Iraq asked us, “How should I have gone about training Iraqi police in a place where security had not been fully established, insurgent attacks were still common, and criminal gangs operated with impunity?” His unit had been faced with this task in Anbar Province after the insurgents had been suppressed through military action. He had asked for help from his chain of command, looked for information within the Department of Defense, talked to colleagues, and searched the Internet—all in vain.

This book tries to answer the marine’s question—which is not unique to the operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, although we will give particular attention to those. It has troubled US-led international interventions in Somalia (1992), Haiti (1995), Bosnia-Herzegovina (1996), and Kosovo (1999). It will likely challenge US and coalition forces in future peace and stability operations.

In order to answer the question, it is necessary to address several issues implicit within it:

1. Do local police have a role in controlling violence, specifically counterinsurgency and terrorism that may persist after a peace-keeping intervention? What activities are involved?
2. What is the division of labor between the military and the police in suppressing politically destabilizing violence?
3. How should local police be trained so as to support stable, sustainable self-government?
4. Are larger governmental reforms required in order to enable local police to become effective as an instrument of democratic development?

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5. Assuming that our analysis of these issues is correct, what does the US government need to do in order to improve its performance in security sector reform, police in particular, in postconflict environments?

We begin our analysis with a review of the unsuccessful US experience with police reconstruction in Iraq and Afghanistan (Chapter 1). In those operations, the dilemma of creating legitimate and effective indigenous police forces in the midst of insurgent violence has been brought sharply into focus. What went wrong? What were the problems that US forces encountered that couldn't be solved through conventional military means?

We then look back at pre-September 11 peace and stability operations since the end of the Cold War, where lessons might have been learned about appropriate training for indigenous police forces (Chapter 2). We focus on police-building in stability operations, the goal of which is to create a legitimate and effective government that can deliver essential services, including rule of law. These are missions in which the dilemma of developing effective and humane civil authority amid continuing violence is especially acute. Military-led missions of this sort have been a long-standing part of US military history, beginning in the Philippines after the Spanish-American War (1898), continuing in Central America (notably Nicaragua and Guatemala) in the early twentieth century, and culminating in the occupations of Germany and Japan following World War II. Between World War II and the end of the Cold War, Vietnam was the most protracted and difficult US counterinsurgency stabilization and reconstruction effort.

As a result of its experience in Iraq and Afghanistan, the US military recently developed a new counterinsurgency (COIN) doctrine for dealing with the sort of violence encountered in stabilization missions, whereby the ultimate objective is the establishment of an effective, sustainable local government (US Army/US Marine Corps 2006). Many of its principles had been developed in Vietnam but not incorporated into military planning and training. We review this doctrine, drawing out its implications for the development of local police (Chapter 3). In studying the role of the police in counterinsurgency, we discovered that it was remarkably similar to what has been recommended for police in coping with counterterrorism and the prevention of violent crime. In other words, across three categories of violence, we have found a strong consensus on the contribution that police can make to the control of violence.

In Chapter 4, we build on COIN doctrine by analyzing the security continuum along which peacebuilding missions are deployed, specifying the sort of police operations that are possible, as well as necessary, at different stages. We do this because, in order to determine the training that local police should receive in counterinsurgency, counterterrorism, and crime control, it is necessary to specify the functions they should perform. Roles determine training, not the other way around. This may seem blindingly obvious—but in mission after mission, whether performed under US or international leadership, training programs have been put in place like canned food that is presumed to be universally nourishing. In complex environments, however, one size doesn't fit all. Between the poles of total war and total peace, there are gradations in security that shape the police role.

Local police are not, of course, the only security force in the game. Foreign military is a given—sometimes supported by foreign police—while local military may also be present. The division of labor among all these forces also depends on a country's position along the security continuum.

Having specified what police should be trained to do in a variety of security contexts, we can answer the marine officer's question. In Chapter 5, we specify the nature, length, and modality of training that local police should receive during foreign stabilization and reconstruction. The key contribution of local police forces, we argue, is to legitimate self-government by responding under law to the security needs of individual citizens. As foreseen in contemporary COIN doctrine, police contribute uniquely in this way to winning the hearts and minds of a population for a new government. Theirs is a function that cannot be performed by military personnel, either local or foreign.

To the act of serving and protecting the local population in a manner consistent with democratic values we give the name *core policing*. Not only is it necessary for the development of stable self-government but, as shown in Chapter 3, it ensures the police are more effective in containing violence that arises variously from insurgency, terrorism, and violent crime. Core policing is an enhancer both of legitimacy and law-enforcement effectiveness. In controlling insurgency and terrorism, it is more effective to train and deploy local police to do core policing than to train them to become so-called little soldiers who support or supplement military forces in offensive counterinsurgency operations.

Unfortunately for the success of peacebuilding, officers from current police training programs in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere do not

develop the unique comparative advantage of local police in combating insurgency, terrorism and violent crime. In Chapter, 6 we examine the state of training in past and current peacemaking missions, comparing them to one another and against our own recommendations. Local police training in postconflict operations is debilitated by ad hoc planning, systemic lack of documentation, and weak accountability; it is also overly militarized, focusing on the technical skills of law enforcement rather than on community service and crime prevention.

Any sort of police training designed to contribute to the development of sustainable self-government via the protection of local populations needs to be facilitated by institutional reform. Reform within police forces cannot be achieved solely through the training of front-line personnel. Effective reconstruction does not bubble up; it percolates downward. In Chapter 7, we discuss the institutional prerequisites of successful police reconstruction and development. At the same time, we examine the requirements for planning and implementing programs of this sort within missions.

In the conclusion, Chapter 8, we summarize our analysis and draw out its implications for current US efforts at stabilization and reconstruction. What steps are being taken to meet the shortcomings we have highlighted? What does the US government need to do that isn't being done?

The cruel dilemma of peacebuilding is that just as security is necessary for the development of effective civil government, so civil government is necessary for security. Violence is both a cause and an effect of failed government. What local police do to minimize violence will determine whether new governments will be regarded as worth supporting—but what police can do will be determined reciprocally by the security environment. Balancing these considerations is the challenge of peacebuilding amid violence.