

**COPING WITH OVERSTRETCH:
Realigning Capacities to Fit Peace and Security Challenges
In a Time of Political Fatigue**

Friedrich Ebert Stiftung
The Century Foundation
Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs

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Participation BY INVITATION ONLY

Day 1, Friday, February 27, 2009

9:30 a.m.

Welcoming Remarks

10:00 – 11:30 a.m.

Session 1: Twenty-first Century Challenges to Peace and Stability:

Is anyone in charge?

Focus: While many nations' military doctrine and procurement remain focused on preparedness for traditional interstate war, the challenges that now most commonly threaten their security recur in seemingly low-grade conflicts arising within fragile states. When the threat is so distant and indirect, domestic support for bearing the costs of peace and stability operations is feeble and the political will to follow through with effective responses is weak, undermining the current and future feasibility of such operations. With a burgeoning economic crisis worldwide threatening to distract political attention and undermine even further the appetite for external engagements, how and where will attention be most effectively marshaled to deal effectively with threatening situations? What are the constituencies within leading states and the United Nations that can best frame the debate in a manner that engenders domestic political support for preparedness for and engagement in needed peace and stability operations?

11:45 a.m. – 1:15 p.m.

Session 2: Mobilizing Militaries for Peace and Stability Operations:

What can and can't they do?

Focus: The spectrum of missions engaging military force contributors, from traditional peacekeeping to complex peace operations to outright counterinsurgency, has come close to exhausting the ready pool of troops in nations' militaries that are trained and capable for those engagements. In some states, military leaders resist involvement for fear that more pacific operations negatively affect the military readiness of their forces for dealing with more direct threats; in others, the fear is of taking casualties where there is no peace to keep. The burden of providing troops often falls on militaries that are ill-equipped to undertake such missions. Have past efforts to improve force-contributor readiness yielded enough improvement to give hope that renewed cross-national pressure can result in more reliable troop provision? What more can be expected of rising powers such as China in force contributions? Is the establishment of standing peacekeeping forces on a national, regional or international level a realistic option? If not, are there alternatives to reliance exclusively on military forces from member states? Might private security contractors play a useful role in future operations?

1:30 p.m.

Lunch

2:30 – 4:00 p.m.

Session 3: The Civilian Partnership in Peace Operations: Parallel or Interwoven with the Security Side?

Focus: In contrast to their militaries, governments rarely keep in reserve the civilian capabilities that may be needed for "peace-building" or "nation-building." Nor can policymakers take for granted that the civilian components in a complex peace operation will seamlessly interface with the international security presence. Why, in situations where police, legal and judicial practitioners, and public administrators across all disciplines are needed to assist in rebuilding war-ravaged indigenous capacities, have efforts by governments and the United Nations to develop civilian peace-building capacity been so faltering? And when the civilian side is finally in the field, can it effectively work in parallel with the security force—

separate and rarely equal—or is more unified authority and coordination needed to ensure that peace “keeping” better converges with its “building”?

4:30 – 6:00 p.m.

Session 4: Multi-Tasking in Nation-Building:

What divisions of labor?

Focus: Recent experience in organizing international peace or stability operations has run the gamut from integrated international teams, both civilian and military, under U.N. sponsorship and administration (e.g., Haiti) to parallel structures of different international organizations (Kosovo) to division of labor among individual nations (Afghanistan). Some states see their comparative advantage in a single area (e.g., the U.S. in war-fighting; India in peacekeeping) while others may be readily engaged at multiple levels. Is the notion of a division of labor among countries, each cultivating its particular specialty, and among international organizations, both regional and global, one that should be sharpened and formalized, and if so, how? What investment is needed to ensure availability of security forces and administrative personnel compatible with a conflict zone’s cultural sensibilities? How might leading governments, in particular those of the United States and Europe, better organize themselves functionally for successful deployment when needed?

7:00 p.m.

Dinner and discussion program

Day 2, Saturday, February 28, 2009

9:00 – 10:30 a.m.

Session 5: Building a Stable Peace in Fractured Nations:

An Operator’s Manual

Focus: Surveying recent history, to what extent have peace-building operations faltered because they deployed an insufficient foreign military presence, made insufficient investment in rebuilding civil administration, paid insufficient attention to nurturing a culture of democracy and human rights, or

provided insufficient resources to jump-start economic recovery? To what extent have these and other factors in complex operations been the critical key to success? How should an agenda of priorities be established in a peace operation, and how can these most effectively be sorted out in the most adverse situations of insecurity or insurgency? With the involvement of multiple national, regional, and international actors and non-governmental organizations in such efforts, how can a leading state or leading international organization most effectively coordinate such complex operations? How have new political structures like the U.N.'s Peace-Building Commission performed in achieving results on the ground?

10:45 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.

Session 6: The Most Urgent Case: Salvaging Afghanistan

Focus: Perhaps the most complex peace-building operation – and even in the narrowest sense, “nation-building” out of a pastiche of different ethnic and linguistic groups – is the flagging mission in Afghanistan, which raises profound questions of security sufficiency, seemingly irremediable state failure, travails of economic and political reconstruction in a security environment of counterinsurgency, pushback on human rights, and difficult coordination of military structures with the state’s political structures—and of either with the international civilian operations. In a situation widely understood to be deteriorating, what can best stabilize the situation in Afghanistan and achieve the core desiderata of both the international community and of most Afghans?

12:15 – 12:45 p.m.

Conclusions and Adjournment

1:00 p.m.

Lunch and dispersal