

## *Book Review*

### **PERITO R. M. (2013). WHERE IS THE LONE RANGER? AMERICA'S SEARCH FOR A STABILITY FORCE. WASHINGTON, DC: UNITED STATES INSTITUTE OF PEACE PRESS.**

Joshua H. Snoke

Robert M. Perito draws on a wealth of experience as the director of the Security Sector Governance Center of Innovation at the US Institute of Peace, serving as a Foreign Area Officer for the Department of State as well as the Deputy Executive Secretary of the National Security Council. He has authored at least two other books on the subject of building stable police and governmental forces in today's environment of instability. This one, *Where is the Lone Ranger?*, focuses primarily on lessons learned during military nation-building and contingency operations.

Perito's main argument is that the United States needs to learn from our previous engagements and establish a true federalized constabulary force under the Department of Defense. In today's environment, the international community, and by default the United States, needs to train, maintain and equip this constabulary force. It must be capable of filling the gap between the initial blunt force of military action to establish overall security, and rebuilding the local national police force of a failed-state. As Perito aptly points out, in such a scenario, local law enforcement often become part of the problem, either becoming trained insurgents or simply being ineffective in suppressing a large indigenous resistance greater than the modest criminal activities they are trained to combat.

As someone who has deployed all over the world, including in some of the operations Perito uses as his case studies, I concur with Army Lieutenant General James Dubik's assessment that sending in "too light a footprint is as unhelpful as one that is too heavy." The military must follow established the Rules of Engagement (ROE) designed to ensure the safety of civilians caught in a war zone. But these same rules tie our hands as insurgents know and use them against us. Perito claims that the military is ill-equipped to handle angry yet "unarmed" mobs, with women and children present. As an Embedded Training Team Leader in Afghanistan, working for NATO Combined Security Transition Command – Afghanistan, I led Afghan National Army and Police throughout the country, including Operation Moshtarak in Helmand Province.

**Copyright:** © 2014 Joshua H. Snoke. Copyright for this article is retained by the authors, with first publication rights granted to the International Public Management Review (IPMR). All journal content, except where otherwise noted, is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 Unported License. By virtue of their appearance in this open-access journal, articles are free to use, with proper attribution, in educational and other non-commercial settings.

**Corresponding Author:** [jhsnoke@nps.edu](mailto:jhsnoke@nps.edu)

Personally experiencing several of these missions and mob scenes, I concur that we are ill-equipped for constabulary aspects of the mission. Although these people often have pipes, rocks, glass and things set ablaze as weapons, they are deemed “unarmed” as they are without firearms. This creates a dangerous situation as military forces assigned to maintain peace and stability have firearms, but are not permitted to use this level of force against an unequal force. This imbalance brought by exploiting our measured use of proportionality often leads to unwelcome circumstances for the US and other NATO forces.

This book brings to light the need for such a constabulary force, and explains how and why it is necessary, as we will inevitably continue to operate in such environments that need police and military functions simultaneously in order to maintain security while rebuilding the rule of law.

Perito uses several case studies as examples of how a gap in security must be filled by the presence of a well-trained constabulary force. From Bosnia-Herzegovina in the late 1990s to the rebuilding of Iraq and Afghanistan, each presented unique landscapes, cultures, and security threats. Yet, the argument holds up for all of these situations. Having a reliable police force to maintain order of civilian threats, as well as train and place trustworthy local police forces, is invaluable to operations of nation-building and restoration.

Perito covers all the aspects of his argument in a well-balanced fashion. He does this not only via historical US forces, such as the Texas Rangers, but also by citing European constabulary forces, such as the Spanish Guardia Civil, that have a traditional background in both local police functions and military operations. He begins with the case study of NATO Stability Forces in Bkro, from a fresh, almost first-person perspective.

His approach is as factual as a textbook, littered with source references, but written in a way that keeps the reader interested, looking for the next piece. Even if you have no previous background knowledge of his case studies, Perito eventually comes back around to ensure you understand his jargon. He mentions acronyms that many may not be familiar with, such as SFOR and OHR in the Bkro case, but then explains that they are NATO Stability Forces sent in to secure the area while the Office of the High Representative took an advisory role for civilian affairs and Non-Governmental Agencies. Perito uses several different articles written by reputable news media outlets during the times of the case studies as sources. Additionally, he uses interviews from actual people involved in these operations, providing legitimacy to his writing, as well as giving the men on the ground the opportunity to offer vital perspective from their own eyes. This is invaluable to people who want to know not only the large scale strategic viewpoint of an argument, but also the *ground truth*. Perito also uses peer reviewed writings to back his theory, which lends credibility to his argument and makes it a book useful for college students to cite.

My only wish is that he would have used more enlisted sources for Iraq and Afghanistan in order to see the point of view of the front line warfighter. The perspective of a Commanding General, like General Caldwell or McChrystal, would have been excellent

for strategic insights But their perception may not be the same as the convoy leader who took his people into the villages daily. A truly well balanced approach requires both perspectives.

From my own perspective being embedded with the Afghan National Security Forces, I saw that our problem was not so much lack of funding, but in the misuse of funds by corrupt Afghan generals. These men were taking *ghost pay* from soldiers who had enlisted and then abandoned their position to go back to harvest poppies or be with family. Additionally, the entire process was overwhelmed, as soldiers like communications officers were indiscriminately thrust into contracting officer billets from a lack of any financial officers in the area creating an unacceptable vacuum. This lack of training or knowledge, coupled with only a six month turnover, often caused situations to slip through the budget that could have otherwise been avoided. By the time someone learned the processes of how to ensure US money was properly funneled to worthy Afghan sources, it was time for them to rotate home and the burden fell on the shoulders of a new untrained contracting officer.

Overall, Perito's argument makes sense and is quite persuasive. My one reservation is that in America today, such a force would be hard for the American public to comprehend as it would be seen as Big Brother enforcing Martial Law. People would see this as another step toward a New World Order, in which an international police force could come in to a country and enforce a law that was not native to the territory. For this force to work there needs to be major oversight with rules emplaced to ensure the objective is balanced, safeguarding the rights of citizens. Even during the Dayton Accord negotiations, there was hesitation from many allies fearing these forces being viewed as, or turning into an "occupation regime."

In fact, as Perito astutely points out, the US has actually used nation-building constabulary police forces in the past on foreign soil. The US went in to many countries in Latin America to help establish the peace and continuity of governmental rule of law. Unfortunately, the fears of those during the Dayton Accord were based in history and, "in every case except Cuba, the indigenous constabularies evolved into antidemocratic armies, providing a vehicle for local dictators to gain power."

These aren't the only problems, as even Perito admits. In Japan after WWII, it led to a terrible situation during the Korean War, as non-combat proven soldiers doing police and administration functions in Japan were sent to fight in Korea as the closest forces. This led the US military to say, "'never again' would US military forces be converted to other purposes that would result in their losing their 'readiness' and combat effectiveness."

There would have to be an obvious capstone in place to ensure history does not repeat itself. I agree with his idea of using Military Police as a starting point for such a constabulary force as MPs are already trained both in military and police functions. In

**LTJG Joshua H. Snoke** is former Navy Senior Chief turned Naval Intelligence Officer, with nineteen years experience in the field of communications and intelligence activities that range from duty at the White House to service in Afghanistan, who is currently earning a Master's Degree from the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, CA. Email: [jhsnoke@nps.edu](mailto:jhsnoke@nps.edu)

Afghanistan, they were not in a constabulary role, but were often very helpful, within the restrictions of the aforementioned ROE.

Anyone desiring background knowledge of how constabulary forces work and how they have been used in the past should read this book. Although I knew from experience there was a security gap presented in nation-building operations, especially within constricted NATO and US ROE, I had never drawn the conclusion or connected the dots myself that our brothers in combat, such as the Gendarmerie or Carabinieri, could more effectively be used in such a deployable constabulary force if trained and mobilized correctly. I can't stress enough the value of this book to any college student, law enforcement agent, or military service member who may deploy.

#### **About IPMR**

**IPMR** The International Public Management Review (IPMR) is the electronic journal of the International Public Management Network (IPMN). All work published in IPMR is double blind reviewed according to standard academic journal procedures.

The purpose of the International Public Management Review is to publish manuscripts reporting original, creative research in the field of public management. Theoretical, empirical and applied work including case studies of individual nations and governments, and comparative studies are given equal weight for publication consideration.

**IPMN** The mission of the International Public Management Network is to provide a forum for sharing ideas, concepts and results of research and practice in the field of public management, and to stimulate critical thinking about alternative approaches to problem solving and decision making in the public sector.

IPMN includes over 1300 members representing about one hundred different countries, both practitioners and scholars, working in all aspects of public management. IPMN is a voluntary non-profit network and membership is free.

**ISSN** 1662-1387