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Planning post-conflict reconstruction in Iraq: what can we learn?

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Abstract

Efforts to improve national and international capabilities to plan and manage post-conflict reconstruction operations are underway in many

countries and are high on the agenda of several multilateral institutions. The international community has learned lessons from the numerous post-conflict reconstruction and nation-building operations that it has engaged in since the end of the Cold War but Iraq represented the most difficult and ambitious operation undertaken to date. Although the coalition effort in Iraq had many unique features, we can nonetheless draw lessons from the tenure of the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) both for the ongoing effort in Iraq and more broadly for future post-conflict reconstruction operations.

This article discusses the challenges of post-conflict reconstruction planning and mission management and assesses what happened under the CPA. It draws lessons for the future international effort in Iraq and for the international community as it considers how to plan and organize future such missions.

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