

## **Post-conquest Civil Affairs:**

### **Comparing War's End in Iraq and in Germany**

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## About the Author

**Correlli Barnett** is a distinguished author and historian. His books range from military and naval history (*The Desert Generals*, *The Swordbearers*, *Britain and Her Army*, *Engage the Enemy More Closely: The Royal Navy in the Second World War*) to the 'Pride and Fall' sequence (*The Collapse of British Power*, *The Audit of War*, *The Lost Victory*, *The Verdict of Peace*) analysing Britain's decline as a great power. He has written many articles on the Anglo-American invasion of Iraq and its present aftermath. As early as August 2002 he accurately predicted that the invaders could well find themselves entangled in protracted guerrilla warfare.

He is a Fellow of Churchill College, and a former Keeper of the Churchill Archives Centre. In 1997 he was appointed a Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE).

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Civility was formally launched at a high-level conference in London on 1 March 2004 by the Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw. Speakers at this event included Marc Otte, Emma Bonino MEP, Edward Macmillan-Scott MEP, Fred Halliday, Rosemary Hollis, Gilles Kepel and senior representatives from several European foreign ministries. The Advisory Board of Civility includes Benjamin Barber, renowned political theorist and former advisor to President Clinton; Fareed Zakaria, editor of *Newsweek International* and widely acclaimed author on democratisation; Reinhard Hesse, speechwriter and adviser to the Chancellor of Germany, Gerhard Schroder; Rosemary Hollis and Larry Diamond.

## **Executive Summary**

The paper contrasts the success of Allied military government in Germany in 1945-6 in tackling the human and material problems of a country whose industry and infrastructure had been comprehensively wrecked by strategic bombing and land battles, with the relative failure of the Americans in Iraq in 2003-4 after taking over a country little damaged by war itself.

In particular, the paper contrasts the swift and successful establishment of the basic necessity, law and order, in Germany with the still-continuing widespread violence and insecurity in Iraq today.

In seeking an explanation for these contrasts, the paper points out that in Germany the occupiers and the occupied alike shared a common European history, culture, and religion. In Iraq the American conquest signified the forcible intrusion of Western power and culture into an Arab Islamic country with its own proud cultural and religious history – a fundamental handicap to the occupier, though one unappreciated beforehand in Washington.

The handicap was worsened by the pre-war American neglect of thorough planning and preparation for the post-war governance of Iraq. Outline policy was not discussed before August 2002, and an executive agency ('the Office of Economic Reconstruction and Humanitarian Aid') was only created on 20 January 2003, a mere two months before the planned launch of the war.

In contrast, during the Second World War the British General Staff set up a new branch to study the question of civil-affairs in occupied countries as early as in March 1941 (four years before the eventual end of the war in Europe). By 1943 its work had been taken over by a top-level interdepartmental committee, with overall policy in the hands of a committee of the War Cabinet itself, with special reference to North-west Europe.

Thanks to such thoroughness, solutions had been devised in regard to practical problems of liaison between civil-affairs teams and military units in the field, and between those teams and German

local government. Meanwhile, civil-affairs personnel were being batch-trained in special centres. 'Public Safety Officers' were being recruited from Britain's police forces. As a result of such preparation, civil-affairs (now dubbed 'military government') teams moved into German towns in 1945 along with the leading troops, occupied local government offices, and swiftly established their authority. No vacuum of anarchy ensued as in Iraq in 2003.

The establishment of military government in Germany was backed by the ubiquitous presence of a mass army, whereas in Iraq the 'light' hi-tech American army proved far too small for the comparable task.

Before and after 1945, the Allies accepted that the occupation of Germany would continue *sine die* in order to prevent any revival of Nazism and ensure the creation of a stable German democracy. In the event, Allied forces still remain on German soil 60 years after the end of the Second World War, just as American forces still remain today on Japanese soil.

Politically, it took four years after 1945 to create the self-governing Federal Republic of Germany, even in the special conditions of the Cold War.

These historical lessons, as well as those of Bosnia and Kosovo in the late 1990s, were ignored by Washington when in 2002-3 it assumed that, after the conquest of Iraq, 'democracy' would be swiftly ushered in, and the American occupation forces just as swiftly reduced.

### **Lessons for the Future**

- a. Post-war 'civil affairs' is a vital part of invasion strategy, and requires as much careful preparation as military operations.
- b. The military strength allotted to an invasion must be adequate not merely to defeat the enemy in battle, but also to ensure law and order afterwards.



- c. Estimates of the time-span needed to create a stable post-war regime in an occupied country and reconstruct its economy must be realistic rather than optimistic: a matter of years, if not decades.
- d. The failure of the Americans to meet all these requirements before and during their attack on Iraq in 2003 has led to their present, and possibly irremediable, predicament. Either they reconcile themselves to garrisoning Iraq *en masse* for at least five years, or they announce a firm date for withdrawal, as the British did in India in 1947.



## Post-conquest Civil Affairs:

### Comparing War's End in Iraq and in Germany

With the unconditional surrender of the German armed forces on 7 May 1945, the British and American high commands became responsible for the governance and welfare of their own occupation zones of a Germany now utterly devastated by strategic bombing and by ferocious land battles. The population literally faced famine as well as a swelling tide of diseases such as typhus and typhoid, with malnourished children especially vulnerable to diphtheria. In the British zone of occupation, which included the Ruhr, Germany's largest industrial area, more than half the houses were damaged, while close on two-fifths of these were beyond repair. The transport system had been comprehensively smashed by bombardment, with only 656 miles of rail track operable in the British zone out of nearly 8,000 miles. All seven rail bridges across the Rhine in the British zone had been dropped. The canal system also had suffered comparable disruption. No fewer than 1500 road bridges had been demolished, while there were desperate shortages of civilian motor vehicles and fuel. Essential ports like Hamburg and Lubeck were encumbered by wrecks and other obstructions. The German telecommunications net had been reduced to chaos. There was a desperate shortage of coal, the energy source for electric power, industry, and the remaining operational 'petrol-from-coal' plants. And in the British zone alone some 2.4 million displaced persons had to be sheltered, fed, sorted out, and eventually repatriated to various parts of Europe and to Russia - to say nothing of some 2.5 million German prisoners of war to be disarmed and demobilised.

But no such gigantic problems existed in Iraq at the moment of America's lightning conquest of Iraq in April-May 2003. Certainly Iraq's infrastructure, electric-power supply, and oil industry were all decrepit and obsolete because of ten years of UN sanctions, but

nevertheless they were functioning. Thanks to accurate targeting by 21st-century military technology, America's 'shock and awe' aerial bombardment during the brief war inflicted no widespread general devastation of the kind seen in the Germany of 1945. In fact, Washington planners themselves expected to take over an intact, if Third World, economy and society which could then be swiftly converted to the free market and to democracy. Paul Wolfowitz, the Deputy Secretary of Defense, assured Congress: 'We are dealing with a country that can finance its own reconstruction and relatively soon'. Washington even hoped to hold elections by June 2003 for an Iraqi national congress which would then select an interim government.

Yet a comparison of the two occupations more than a year after their beginning reveals a sharp contrast between commendable achievement in Germany in 1945-6 in dealing with an enemy country ruined by five years of total war, and relative failure in Iraq in 2003-4 in dealing with a country little damaged and supposedly liberated.

The first published report by the Control Commission for Germany (British Element) in June 1946 describes what had already been accomplished in twelve months, both in regard to physical reconstruction and to social and political transformation.<sup>1</sup> Almost the entire route-mileage of railway was now repaired and in operation. Eight hundred rail bridges had been repaired or rebuilt, including two semi-permanent ones over the Rhine. About a third of the 1500 demolished road bridges had been reconstructed, while the number of road transport workshops had been increased from 744 in July 1945 to nearly 4,000. All main waterways were now open, so that monthly loads carried by inland water transport had risen from less than 40,000 tons in June 1945 to just under two million in June 1946. Under direction of the Royal Navy, German ports too had been cleared of obstructions and rendered capable of dealing with

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<sup>1</sup> See Monthly Report of the Control Commission for Germany (British Element), Vol. I, No.1, June, 1946, published by Headquarters, Control Commission for Germany (British Element), Berlin. For the sake of simplicity, I will concentrate on the record of the British zone of Germany, which in any case contained the densest concentration of industry and population. The Americans and the French in their own zones followed broadly similar policies, with broadly comparable results.

current demand. Output per man-shift of coal, the basic energy source for transport and industry had doubled over the year. And during the six-month period September 1945 – March 1946 over half a million dwellings received emergency repairs, partly with the aid of the Royal Engineers. Internal postal services were back to normal, while the public telegraph system was now carrying 50 per cent more traffic than in 1938.

Just as impressive were the achievements of the occupation regime in health and welfare, even in the face of acute malnourishment because of desperate Europe-wide shortages of food and the highly insanitary conditions resulting from bomb damage to water and sewage systems. Some 75 per cent of the population had been inoculated against typhoid and typhus. Children and adolescents had been immunised against diphtheria. The infant mortality rate had been halved. The number of hospital beds had been increased to 275, 000. Seventeen thousand German doctors were at work. The colossal problem of 'displaced persons, to be repatriated to the west or the east had been largely solved, with British transit camps handling over 2.2 million refugees in less than a year. The orderly disbandment of 2.5 million former members of the Wehrmacht had likewise been completed.

None of this would have been possible without the framework of efficient administration. The transition from Nazi dictatorship to government by the victors via the allied Control Commission had been accomplished without hiatus and indeed with German cooperation. Thanks to the work of German review boards in evaluating nearly one million individual questionnaires (*Fragebogen*), the process of denazifying the legal, administrative, and educational systems was well on the way to completion, with some 12 per cent of personnel being removed. To replace nearly 17,000 teachers with suspect records, a three-year training programme was now running. All six universities and seven other *Hochschulen* in the British zone had been re-opened. The Nazi court and penal system (including the infamous 'People's Courts') had been swept away, and a new Code of Criminal Procedure issued to all courts.

The foundations of future German self-governing democracy had been laid, with a free press, free trade unions, and thriving political parties. These included the two main contenders for power in today's Germany, the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and the German Socialist Party (SPD). A network of nominated local councils and a central advisory council had been set up as precursors to German self-government. Local elections were due to be held in autumn 1946, followed by *Land* (State) and provincial elections in 1947.

One factor above all had made the Control Commission's all-round achievements possible. It lay in the firm establishing of law and order under the authority of the occupying powers. Although the German armed forces, with the support of the German people, had fought resolutely right up until the final surrender in May 1945, no resistance groups emerged later to challenge by force the rule of the allied occupiers. Post-war Germany, for all its inevitable privations, was a country at peace.

It can hardly be said that Iraq more than a year and a half after liberation, by the Americans in 2003 is a country at peace. There is no need to repeat here in detail what we read day by day and week by week in our newspapers or see graphically presented every night on television. Suffice to say that no major highway in Iraq, not even that between Baghdad airport and Baghdad city, is safe; and that attacks by car-bomb or rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) are taking place in all corners of the country, even in the fortified 'Green Zone', centre of American political and military power in Iraq, and seat of the American-appointed interim Iraqi government. Kidnappings and assassinations abound. Oil pipelines, the key to future prosperity, are regularly sabotaged. Meanwhile power cuts still continue. Hospitals still lack essential equipment and medicines, while the streets in poorer districts still run with raw sewage. According to a recent report, the general health of the Iraqi people is worse than before the war. And in November 2004, in the so-called 'Sunni triangle', the Americans have had to mount a full-scale military offensive backed by massive firepower in order to retake Falluja from Iraqi resistance fighters – at the cost of forcing 200,000 civilians to flee and largely destroying the city. It is as if in late 1946 the

British army and air force in Germany had had to fight a major battle to re-take Cologne from Nazi insurgents.

This prevailing climate of violence, disorder, and fear overshadows current American hopes of progressing towards a sovereign and democratic Iraq, beginning with elections for a constituent assembly on 30 January 2005. General Abizaid, commanding the US forces in Iraq, has admitted that the new Iraqi police force and army are neither numerous enough nor well-enough trained to cope with the insurgents. In order to provide security for the coming elections, the American occupation forces are to be increased to 150,000 - 10,000 more than was required for the original conquest.

What, then, accounts for the success of the allies in Germany in 1945 and 1946 and the failure thus far of the Americans in Iraq?

In the first place, there are certain fundamental differences between the two cases that have nothing to do with the policies adopted by the victors.

In the case of Germany, she was occupied in consequence of total national defeat at the end of a six-year war started by the German dictator, Adolf Hitler. War-weariness, hunger, and the reduction of national life to basic survival, all conduced to acquiescence in the occupation regime of the victors. Moreover, with the brief nightmare of the Third Reich now over, the occupied and the occupiers alike could once again share a common European history, a common cultural heritage, and common Christian values.

But in the case of Iraq, the lightning American conquest signified the forcible intrusion of Western power and Western values into an Islamic country with its own proud cultural and religious history. The American invaders came not as mere foreigners, but as aliens. Even their military costume, a blend of Darth Vader and Wehrmacht-style helmets, served to reinforce this impression - especially when coupled with their evident disdain for ordinary Iraqis in the streets. Although President Bush and the neo-con ideologues around him might tell themselves that America had 'liberated' Iraq, many patriotic Iraqis soon came to see the occupation regime simply as

old-style imperial rule as once practised by the British. Such a climate of mutual estrangement would have blighted even well-devised occupation policies.

But in any case, Washington's planning for a post-war occupation regime in Iraq was very far from being well-devised. As we now know from Bob Woodward's authoritative book, *Plan of Attack*, the heavy emphasis in the Bush administration in 2002-3 was on planning and preparing the actual military attack on Iraq, to the relative neglect of what would follow the victory. According to Sir Christopher Meyer, then the British Ambassador in Washington, the British, as America's only important ally, regularly raised their concerns about how much planning was going on to secure the country after Saddam, but the issue was largely ignored. The British tried to convince the Americans that while winning the war was fine, 'we must be clear in our own mind what is happening afterwards. That was absolutely indispensable. The message was well taken in the State Department, but it could not agree an approach with the Defense Department and Vice-President Cheney'.<sup>2</sup>

In August 2002, a top-level meeting under Condoleezza Rice (the National Security Adviser) discussed, amended, and agreed a National Security Presidential Directive (or NSPD), entitled 'Iraq: Goals, Objectives and Strategy'.<sup>3</sup> This laid out post-war objectives in highly generalised terms: 'to establish a broad-based democratic government ... that would respect the basic rights of all Iraqis, including women and minorities, that would adhere to the rule of law, including freedom'. The strategy would make clear, said this NSPD, that in collaboration with 'the international community' the United States was 'prepared to play a sustained role in a post-Saddam Iraq that rapidly starts the country's reconstruction, that preserves but reforms the current Iraqi bureaucracy and reforms the Iraqi military and security institutions'. However, when it came to the means of implementing these broad objectives, this NSPD merely referred to the Iraqi 'opposition' to Saddam Hussein – meaning émigré politicians such as Ahmed Chalabi, the Pentagon's favoured choice

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<sup>2</sup> Quoted in *The Observer*, 16 November 2003.

<sup>3</sup> Bob Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, (New York, Simon & Schuster, 2004), pp. 154-6.



for head of a postwar Iraqi government. The US, wrote the NSPD, was 'to work with the Iraqi opposition to demonstrate that we are liberating, not invading, Iraq, and give the opposition a role in building a pluralistic and democratic Iraq, including the preparation of a new constitution'.

All this was very far from constituting an operational plan for civil affairs and an organisation to carry it out. Yet five months were to elapse before Bush and his war cabinet received (on 15 January 2003) a detailed presentation by Elliott Abrams (the National Security Council's Middle-East affairs director), on the likely postwar problems, coupled with proposals for solving them.<sup>4</sup>

At present, reported Abrams, there were 800,000 internally displaced persons in Iraq and 740,000 actual refugees. How many there might be after the occupation would, Abrams went on, depend on inter-ethnic tensions, violence and reprisals, the duration and intensity of the war, and the ability to get aid in fast enough to induce Iraqis to stay put where they were. Abrams then briefed the President about current operational planning for the post-war era - where the US civil-military operation centres and disaster assistance teams would be based, what the UN and the Red Cross would do; how the humanitarian infrastructure of Iraq, such as hospitals and sanitation, could be first preserved from war damage and later modernised under the reconstruction programme.

The President accepted Abrams' brief, saying that he wanted surge capability for humanitarian aid, with loaded ships ready 'so that we can go in very promptly. There are a lot of things that could go wrong, but not for want of planning'.<sup>5</sup> But planning in the operational sense had hardly begun.

Colin Powell as Secretary of State agreed that the civil affairs organisation must come under the Pentagon's authority and part of the military chain of command - as it had been in the Second World War in regard to Germany and Japan. But he sent over two expert

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<sup>4</sup> *ibid.* pp. 176-284.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* p. 278.

advisers on Arab affairs from the State Department who had deeply studied the likely post-war problems in Iraq. These men were summarily thrown out by Donald Rumsfeld, the Secretary for Defense, who appointed one Douglas Feith to mastermind civil-affairs planning. Feith was a university-trained intellectual, proficient at drafting glib memoranda, but a man despised by practical soldiers like General Tommy Franks (Commanding General, US Central Command) who would have to run the war and then be responsible for enforcing the peace. Feith proposed setting up a planning cell in the Defense Department who would later go to Iraq to carry out the policy which it had developed.

On 20 January 2003, now a mere two months before the scheduled launch of the war, the President duly signed an NSPD setting up 'the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Aid', to plan and execute post-war policy. A retired general, Jay Garner, was appointed to lead it. Yet on 10 March, just ten days before the attack on Iraq began, the National Security Council was still discussing post-war policy not in operational detail but in terms of broad questions - how many Baathist bureaucrats should be removed; whether existing police and courts could be used by the incoming administration; whether the Iraqi currency should be replaced by the US dollar as an interim measure.

But the NSC representative who briefed this meeting did at least point to the basic issue so far largely neglected in Washington discussions: 'A successful establishment of rule of law in the immediate post-conflict environment is critical to ensuring stability, allowing for relief and reconstruction, and rapidly rebuilding Iraqi society'.<sup>6</sup>

However, it was one thing to point out what needed to be done; it was quite another thing to do it. Jay Garner's own team was too small and unfledged, while Rumsfeld and the generals remained entirely focussed on winning the war. Rumsfeld rightly believed that this could be done with light, hi-tech forces - some 140,000 men as against the 250,000 which Powell had advocated. However, Iraq is a

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<sup>6</sup> *ibid.* p. 339

country almost as large as France, with long open frontiers on all sides. To impose the authority of the victors and enforce the rule of law over such an extent of territory and a population of 24 million demanded soldiers en masse, just as the allies had deployed in Germany in 1945. In the event, the American command in Iraq (and Rumsfeld) was so focussed on defeating the Iraqi army and toppling Saddam, that it saw the enforcement of law and order as a secondary issue, and one for which it could ill spare troops.

Because of this, and because Garner's inadequate Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Aid was poorly integrated with the military command, and hence doubly ineffective, there ensued a complete power vacuum in Baghdad and other cities the moment that Saddam Hussein's regime abruptly collapsed. The vacuum became swiftly filled by anarchy, with frenzied mobs wrecking and looting government ministries, so demolishing the basic machinery of national administration. Even hospitals were looted of their vital drugs and equipment. Those American troops present at these appalling scenes of lawlessness failed to intervene, remaining content to be mere bystanders. It is a measure of Donald Rumsfeld's lack of political comprehension that his comment on such scenes ran thus: 'It's untidy and freedom's untidy and free people are free to make mistakes and commit crimes and do bad things'.<sup>7</sup>

At the very moment of winning the war, the United States was therefore in danger of losing the peace. As a senior British official working with the Americans in Baghdad told *The Daily Telegraph* in June 2003: 'We are facing an almost complete inability to engage with what needs to be done and to bring sufficient resources to make a difference'.<sup>8</sup>

By the time the looting was over and the mobs had dispersed, Iraqi resistance forces were already beginning their campaign of bombing and assassination; and American forces had already angered Iraqi opinion by shooting dead more than a dozen people in a protesting crowd in Falluja. The cycle of violence had begun to revolve. Within

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<sup>7</sup> *The Sunday Independent*, 13 April 2003.

<sup>8</sup> *The Daily Telegraph*, 17 June 2003.

100 days of the conquest, the Americans had come to be regarded by ordinary Iraqis as occupiers rather than liberators, and, moreover, occupiers who, unlike Saddam, could not ensure law and order, nor even basic services like electricity and water.

Yet it took Garner's replacement as civil administrator of Iraq, Paul Bremer III, finally to throw away America's fleeting post-conflict opportunity - by demobilising (on ideological grounds by order of the Pentagon) the Iraqi regular army and police force, and sending them home without pay. With one stroke, Bremer deprived himself of a useful instrument of American rule, and created a mass of unemployed, disaffected men well able to use the weaponry with which the country abounded.

The American occupation regime has never recovered from this false start in spring and summer 2003. It has paid the price for Washington's lack of thorough and realistic prior planning and preparation for the task of running post-war Iraq.

In contrast, Allied plans for the administration of a defeated Germany were some three years in the making. They evolved out of detailed study by legal, economic, and administrative experts, and drew on the lessons of experience in North Africa in 1942 and Italy in 1943 --- to say nothing of the occupation of the Rhineland after 1918..If incidental mistakes were made, it was not because of disregard of the scale and complexity of the problems to be solved.

As early as February 1941 the British War Cabinet decided that the War Office, and, below that, the theatre military commands, must be responsible for administering conquered territories. In March 1941, a new branch, MO 11, was set up within the Imperial General Staff's Directorate of Military Operations to discharge this responsibility. In October 1942, MO 11 appointed a Deputy Civil Affairs Officer for North-West Europe to plan and prepare for post-invasion civil administration of liberated countries. In June 1943, MO 11 was itself promoted to be the Directorate of Civil Affairs under a major-general, and accountable to the Permanent Under-Secretary of State at the War Office. In the next three months, Deputy Directors for military government *per se*, personnel and training, 'technical' (really repair

and reconstruction of infrastructure), and economics were appointed. Together with a Chief Legal Adviser and other specialist advisers, this central planning body survived unchanged to the end of the European war, reaching a peak strength of about 90.<sup>9</sup> Meanwhile, training courses for future civil affairs administrators were begun in 1943 at Cambridge University and continued at the Civil-Affairs Staff Centre at Wimbledon in the London suburbs.

Although overall responsibility for post-conquest civil administration had been vested with the War Office, it was clear that other government departments, such as the Foreign Office, had a major interest in the field. In Washington in 2002-3 the State Department and the Defense Department had constituted two rival and mutually suspicious empires. In wartime London, coordination between all interested departments was assured by the standard Whitehall device of an inter-departmental committee - in this case, the 'Administration of Territories (Europe) Committee'. Permanently represented on it were the War Office, Foreign Office, the Board of Trade, inter-allied relief organisations, the American Embassy, the United States Army, and the military headquarters preparing for the invasion of Europe. There certainly ensued much vigorous debate, whether about alternative solutions to practical problems or about allotment of bureaucratic responsibilities. Nevertheless, by the time this committee was superseded at the end of 1943, it and the General Staff's Directorate of Civil Affairs had found workable answers to the fundamental problems of civil affairs and military government.

In August that year the Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, set up a committee of the War Cabinet itself to take responsibility for overall policy in the field of post-conflict civil affairs. This 'Armistice Terms and Civil Administration Committee' was soon supplemented by a second Cabinet committee, on 'Supply Questions in Liberated and Conquered Areas'. These bodies were supported by two parallel committees of civil servants and military officers. By mid-1944 the Whitehall planners were already considering how to manage a

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<sup>9</sup> See F. S. V. Donnison, *Civil Affairs and Military Government Central Organization and Planning*, (London, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1966), pp. 22-29.

transition from immediate post-hostilities military government to the long-term governance of Germany by a civilian inter-allied High Commission.

Meanwhile, just after the invasion of Sicily in July 1943 and with an invasion of the Italian mainland in prospect, a Combined Civil Affairs Committee had been set up in Washington as an agency of the Anglo-American Combined Chiefs of Staff Committee. This was to frame broad allied policy and coordinate the work of the new Civil Affairs Division in Washington and the Civil Affairs Directorate in London.

All this is a measure of how carefully this question of governing a defeated Germany was studied in all its aspects long before the Normandy invasion in June 1944, let alone the final conquest of Germany in the spring of 1945.

The functioning of civil affairs in relation to military operations in the field was just as thoroughly worked out. The principle had been early established that civil-affairs teams, by ensuring orderly administration of captured territory, were a vital factor in achieving and supporting military success. It had also been accepted that in north-west Europe the civil-affairs teams must be 'embedded' (to use a 21st century expression) in the field armies. Only thus could they be assured of military cooperation at the formation and unit level, especially in regard to essential back-up such as transport or communications. This was a lesson learned from the allied campaign in Sicily in 1943, where, below the level of an army headquarters, 'AMGOT' (Allied Military Government) had formed an organisation parallel to, but separate from, the military structure of corps, divisions, and brigades. Hence liaison was poor, while commanders and staffs were suspicious of the civil-affairs personnel of AMGOT, so rendering them reluctant to spare military transport and other back-up.

There was therefore to be no separate 'AMGOT' during the campaign in north-west Europe, but instead civil-affairs teams fully integrated into the military command structure. In October 1943, nine months before the planned invasion of France, it had been decided

that civil affairs staffs at army group headquarters should number 85, at army level 33, at corps level ten, and at divisional headquarters, three. These civil-affairs staffs would control and direct numerous field teams varying in size and composition according to changing military needs. In the case of 'SHAEF' (Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force), responsible for planning and conducting the allied invasion of France, a new and entirely integrated Anglo-American G-5 Division of the SHAEF staff was set up, consisting of 325 personnel, including 116 officers. Its remit covered the whole field of post-conflict functions, from the administrative and legal to the fiscal, public health, and displaced persons.<sup>10</sup> In the British 21st Army Group, a 248-man strong civil affairs staff (including 84 officers) was formed in October 1943, with branches mirroring those of G-5 at SHAW.<sup>11</sup> Civil Affairs field detachments in France were to number 3,600 personnel sixty days after D-day.

In regard to countries liberated from German occupation, it would be the task of civil-affairs staffs to support the restoration of their own governments and administrative systems. But in the case of conquered German territory, 21st Army Group made it plain that:

it is the duty of commanders to impose the will of the Supreme Commander upon the German people... The [German] civil administration, and all aspects of civilian life, will be directed and controlled according to the requirements of the Supreme Commander and, ultimately, the [Allied] Control Council, whose authority will be final.

According to a directive to General Dwight D. Eisenhower (Supreme Commander Allied Expeditionary Force) by the Combined Chiefs of Staff, control of administration in enemy countries was no longer to be referred to as civil affairs, but as 'Military Government':

Military Government will be established and will extend over all parts of Germany, including Austria, progressively as the

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<sup>10</sup> F. S. V Donnison, *Civil Affairs and Military Government, Northwest Europe 1944-1946* (London, Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1961), pp. 26-29

<sup>11</sup> *ibid.* p. 29.

forces under your command capture German territory... you are clothed with supreme legislative, executive, and judicial authority and power in the areas occupied...<sup>12</sup>

By what means should these powers be exercised? According to the Combined Chiefs of Staff directive, 'Military government will be effected as a general principle through indirect rule' - meaning through the existing German administrative structures. The CCOS further instructed: 'The principal link for this indirect rule should be at the *Bezirk* or *Kreis* level [regional or local government]; controls at a higher level will be inserted at your discretion'. In order to exercise this indirect rule, Military Government detachments would be installed in each German local government headquarters to lay down policy and issue instructions to senior German officials; and, where necessary, to appoint new ones. There was to be no wholesale dismissal of either bureaucrats or police as carried out by the Americans in Iraq in 2003, but instead a measured de-nazification, as and when practicable on functional grounds.

So much for the forward planning, but what was it like on the ground for military government teams in the wake of the rapid allied advance deep into Germany in 1945? According to an official report on the taking over of Osnabruck:

The town is probably three-quarters blitzed. The RB [*Regierungsbezirk*] Military Government detachment got in early, being sniped at on the way in. They surveyed the RB HQ and occupied the Brown House [local Nazi Party HQ]. They found civilians and displaced persons engaged in looting... two officers of the Detachment tackled the crowd with their revolvers, and gained control after inflicting casualties. The commander of the RB detachment then reinstated 24 hours house arrest for the entire population and gained control which he has not again lost ...<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid. pp.191-2.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. p. 217.



Similar decisive leadership in controlling mobs of looters was shown in other captured German cities such as Hanover. For it was well recognised that it must be the primary task of Military Government to bring law and order out of anarchy. In the British zone of operations, 'Public Safety Officers' seconded from the police forces of the United Kingdom played a major part thanks to their training, experience, commonsense, and character. The recruitment of these invaluable officers is yet another example of the thought and care that since 1941 had gone into planning post-conflict civil administration.

The contrast is stark with the complete American failure to anticipate, and deal with, similar scenes of anarchy in Baghdad and other Iraqi cities in spring 2003.

The immediate assertion of dominance by Military Government teams in the British zone of Germany was followed up in the summer of 1945 by the beginnings of a long-term regime of occupation. By July, over 200 German local authorities were functioning again alongside a similar number of Military Government detachments. In September, responsibility for administering the British zone of Germany was transferred from GHQ British Army of the Rhine to the Control Commission (British Element). The organisation was therefore now in place which would successfully meet the immediate challenge presented by a war-wrecked country facing a starvation winter, and which would go on to achieve the successes in basic reconstruction in the following twelve months described in the first paragraph of the present paper.

But what of long-term future policy? In the first place, no one had raised, let alone decided, the question of how long the military occupation should last. By the Treaty of Versailles after the First World War, the Allies were entitled to occupy the Rhineland until 1935, although in the event the last (French) troops left in 1930 after twelve years. Those twelve years proved insufficient to ensure a stable German democracy and prevent the resurgence of a militarised and aggressive Germany. With this object lesson in mind, the allies during the Second World War accepted that the post-war occupation of Germany would continue *sine die* in order to prevent any revival of Nazism or militarism. However, by 1948 the 'Cold War'

between the Western allies and the Soviet Union gave a new imperative to the long-term continuance of the British and American garrisoning of western Germany. The Cold War also gave a new direction to Anglo-American occupation policy, with the German nation mutating from potential enemy into possible ally. It now became Anglo-American policy to rebuild Western Germany's industrial strength and economic prosperity while at the same time progressively empowering her new democratic institutions, first at the *Kreis* and *Regierungsbezirk* level. This political process culminated in 1949 with the creation of the self-governing Federal Republic of Germany, and in 1954 with the sanctioning of the rearmament of Germany as part of NATO.

Yet all this time there remained British, American, and French garrisons on West German soil, their task now to deter or resist a Soviet invasion. In fact, residual garrisons still remain there today, 15 years after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the re-unification of Germany, 60 years after the defeat of Nazi Germany - just as American armed forces still remain on Japanese soil 60 years after the Japanese surrender.

These historical lessons were ignored by Washington when in 2002-03 it assumed that after the conquest of Iraq, 'democracy, would be swiftly ushered in, and that the American occupation forces could be just as swiftly reduced. Moreover, Washington no less ignored the more recent lessons afforded by Bosnia and Kosovo that, however quick the victory in Iraq, the political and military entanglement afterwards would in all likelihood be prolonged. In Bosnia, for example, there is still no viable political settlement in prospect ten years after the end of hostilities, and only the presence of a NATO occupation force averts a renewed outbreak of civil war between ethnic Serbs and Muslims.

The lessons from recent history - above all from the Second World War and the current debacle in Iraq - are therefore clear. Firstly, it is crucially important to plan well in advance, and in detail, the post-conflict takeover of the administration of a defeated country, and to organise and thoroughly train the civil affairs agencies which will carry that administration. Secondly, these agencies and the military

occupation forces backing them must be proportionate in numbers of personnel to the extent of territory and the size of population to be governed. In particular, the occupation forces must be strong enough to impose law and order without delay. Thirdly, these agencies must as matter of urgency revive and direct the indigenous administrative structures, and work closely with their personnel. And lastly, the possible time-span of the hoped-for transition to a stable democracy (and hence of the occupation) must be realistically estimated beforehand - it being fully understood by the political leaders launching a war that this time-span may well extend to several years, or even decades.

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