

## “Expeditionary Economics”: Enabling Stabilization and Growth or Risking Cultural Collateral Damage?

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*America is great because she is good, but if America ever ceases to be good, America will cease to be great. (Alexis de Tocqueville, 1835)*

### Introduction

In their excellent draft précis provided to define the issues to be discussed, Colonel Jeff Peterson and Major Mark Crow succinctly present Dr. Carl Schramm’s argument from the May/June 2010 issue of *Foreign Affairs* on “Expeditionary Economics”. Essentially, Schramm calls for the U.S. military to formulate a doctrine, for post-conflict societies, to support “bottom up” approaches to spur economic growth. The précis raises several points which this paper will discuss – including an apparent acceptance that, indeed, the U.S. military should develop this doctrine such that the use of “expeditionary economics”... can be a “*method to hasten the military’s redeployment* from a region by making the military more effective in its primary task of achieving security” (original emphasis).

The discussion which follows is in response to the request made by the conference organizers to tackle the issue of ‘social and cultural norms as they relate to the military’s efforts to understand and integrate economic development principles to achieve security and economic stabilization in a manner that minimizes harm to long-term economic development programmes’. To that end, the following presentation will proceed along question and answer lines, and is shared in the spirit of constructive provocation and deliberation.

Schramm argues that:

*The United States' armed forces are uniquely positioned to contribute to world peace and prosperity by means other than actual force. And if they apply the ideas outlined here, they could start a revolution in thinking about economic growth. But using the whole of American power effectively -- beyond simply the "whole of government" -- means reconfiguring the usual cast of actors, recognizing the limits of government, and tapping the enormous potential of entrepreneurs and skilled investors. If successful, such efforts could reshape current thinking about international development and help strengthen the United States' national security. One*

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*can only hope that this decade will one day be known as the decade of development, a decade when the world's most troubled nations finally began to grow.*<sup>2</sup>

Peterson and Crow cite three assumptions regarding the military's involvement in the economic stabilization of post-conflict societies: 1) that tangible economic progress is critical to transition to peace; 2) that economic development in post-conflict settings is unique and distinct as compared to "normal socio-economic development"; and 3) that "post-conflict" environments remain too dangerous for governments and civil society to play an effective role. Therefore, Peterson and Crow contend, "the military should assume the prominent role in stabilizing the economy until the security environment improves enough to transition responsibly to civilian aid and development experts." The impression herein given is of a temporary involvement in economic development. However, the authors immediately go on to qualify this: "Unfortunately, it is not possible to specify a temporal condition to the military's fulfillment of this role as it is dependent not on time, but on the security conditions of the environment" (pp. 1-2).

### **QUESTION: What are the socio-cultural dynamics involved?**

Before answering this question, let us first clarify what is meant by culture. The term 'culture' has generated a significant amount of research over the years and, indeed, there is a distinct discipline within anthropological studies which is geared around appreciating the complicated and varied definitions and dynamics of culture around the world. In other words, there is no one definition of culture, although there are common threads to the different understandings - from Sociologist Max Weber's 'webs of significance,' to Clifford Geertz's 'systems of meaning.' Over the years, entire disciplines of sociology have emerged around the varied dynamics of 'culture' from the study of meanings of words (semiotics) to the study of symbols and ways of life (ethnography and anthropology). Rather than attempting to understand all the arguments, here are 12 salient features of what culture is understood to be:

*1. "the total way of life of a people" 2. "the social legacy the individual acquires from his group" 3. "a way of thinking, feeling, and believing" 4. "an abstraction from behavior" 5. a theory on the part of the anthropologist about the way in which a group of people in fact behave 6. a "storehouse of pooled learning" 7. "a set of standardized orientations to recurrent problems" 8. "learned behavior" 9. a mechanism for the normative regulation of behavior 10. "a set of techniques for adjusting both to the external environment and to other men" 11. "a precipitate of history" 12. a behavioral map, sieve, or matrix*<sup>3</sup>.

Thus, culture is the complicated mix of behaviours, attitudes, norms, and values – the total life of a people. In other words, culture encompasses the economic, legal and political realities of a people. It is not "something we can get to later," a "byproduct," nor an incidental "category" of concern. It is the very oxygen of life, and by implication therefore, cultures form the context of any intervention – from the most intangible, to the most tangible.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/66207/carl-j-schramm/expeditionary-economics>

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.wsu.edu/gened/learn-modules/top\\_culture/culture-definitions/geertz-text.html](http://www.wsu.edu/gened/learn-modules/top_culture/culture-definitions/geertz-text.html)

To bring it closer to ‘home’ (here in the U.S. military context), General Tony Zinni (Ret) who, as part of a distinguished career of service, served as Commander-in-Chief of CENTCOM and special envoy to the Middle East, refers to cultures as “the complex ways in which history and geography have molded people into whatever they have become”. This understanding mirrors the essence, or gist, of the points above – for culture is indeed complex, mired in history and evolution of humanity, impossible to limit the impact of and, above all, it shapes the way each one of us, as well as collectives, think, believe, and behave.

Common misconceptions of culture include it’s being understood as a static, homogenous ‘reality’. In fact, to accurately reflect matters, one should speak of ‘cultures’ in the plural, and simultaneously acknowledge the quintessential dynamism of the components - and the whole - of the ways people think, feel, and behave. Had culture been static, for instance, then all of the U.S. military would share one culture. However, we are alerted by Taylor, Rosenbach and Rosenbach in their edited volume on *Military Leadership: In Pursuit of Excellence*, to the fact that not only are there different cultures within the same military, but that such clashes can test the very essence of military strength – its leadership.

*Clashes in culture within part-time units, as well as differences within active-duty forces, test existing leadership paradigms. Military leadership is global in scope, and senior leaders must demonstrate multinational experience. Within the military, and with those who are friend as well as foe, appreciating the different contributions and perspectives of heritage, characteristics, values, and norms compounds the difficulties of executing leadership (p.218)<sup>4</sup>*

Thus, if one ‘entity’ such as the U.S. military can encompass different cultures, then it is obvious that within the one nation, a multiplicity of cultures thrive. This brings us to another misconception about culture. All too often, it is assumed that there is a culture of ‘us’ and, ostensibly, a different culture of ‘them’. These ‘cultural differences’ - all too easily characterized - may even lead to ‘clashes’ since the presumption is that the values upon which people think, believe, and behave, are supposedly different. Here again, General Tony Zinni, in describing his own experiences over the years, notes:

*I learned over time that from society to society there’s little difference in fundamental values and fundamental concerns. But there are great differences in approaches to these values and concerns. We all value family. We all value life. We all value keeping our word. But our approaches to expressing these values and prioritizing them can be remarkably difference. We don’t have different values, but we shape our approaches to these values in all kinds of different ways. And these differences become issues that spark misunderstandings...and sometimes spark conflicts (p.23).<sup>5</sup>*

Differing approaches, albeit to the same values, are absolutely critical for the argument about cultural norms within the societies in which the U.S. military would seek to support economic development – especially given the post-conflict nature of these societies.

<sup>4</sup> Robert L. Taylor, William E. Rosenbach, and Eric B. Rosenbach, (eds.) 2009, *Military Leadership: In Pursuit of Excellence*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press (sixth edition).

<sup>5</sup> Gen. Tony Zinni and Tony Koltz, 2006. *The Battle for Peace: A Frontline Vision of America’s Power and Purpose* - London and New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Societies which have undergone armed conflict are often referred to, for obvious reasons, as “war-torn”. In most cases, these are contexts in which the very threads holding the social fabric (and in which systems of meaning, sense, wisdom, empathy, and a whole host of other basic human aspects) are either broken, torn, or in collapse. In most instances, these are societies in which the elderly, children, girls and boys, women and men, able and those living with disabilities, have suffered additional traumas. In other words, war-torn contexts are also not just economically, militarily and politically traumatized – or, to use a less loaded word, “transformed” – but also ones where ways of thinking and behaving (i.e., cultures) have been impacted.

It can be maintained that the impact of conflict on cultures deserves far more thorough, sustained, and comparative analysis – particularly in modern times – than is currently the case. A great deal of worthwhile research, by contrast, exists on the socio-cultural impact colonialism had in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Yet there are important lessons to learn from, and heed. The process of colonialism entailed (often armed) presence in other peoples’ lands/territories, and control over the administration of basic needs by some (Europeans). Granted, this may have had certain positive socio-cultural implications in some situations (e.g., creating one common formal language among diverse linguistic and ethnic groups which may have facilitated aspects of communication, and improved access to education in some areas and better health and sanitation services in yet others), but most of the socio-cultural impact has been adverse.

From urbanization patterns (to serve the emerging industrial needs of extraction required by colonial rulers) which disrupted traditional ways of relating to each other as communities, to new religious doctrines and changes in the demographic, ethnic, and even spatial composition of each territory, the empires of old have indeed left a legacy. Some of this remains (problematic) till today. Among the many repercussions of colonialism which resonate with the socio-cultural composition of countries in which the U.S. military is based – such as Iraq and Afghanistan – is the creation and sustainability of a ‘westernized elite.’

This particular socio-cultural demographic reality has persisted till the present, long after former colonialists departed. The presence of this elite itself is an important cultural schism within these societies. This is not to say that the westernized elites exist only in post-colonial contexts. Far from it, they exist all over, and are one of the many attributes of globalization. Rather, the attention here is to highlight the presence and consequences of such an elite in post-conflict societies, where in several instances, they may have survived the conflicts with *relatively* less economic bruises and painful social disruption scars. Given this inequality of impact, there is already an element of socio-economic tension within these societies, which is part of the broader cultural reality.

This is not unlike the argument made by Robert Zoellick, the President of the World Bank Group, in a presentation at the United States Institute of Peace on “Securing Development” in January 2009, wherein he argues that

*...effective efforts to address fragility and conflict must be grounded in a **political economy** that is capable of sustaining peace. This means **taking into account the relationships between power and wealth in society**. Conflict and instability can, after all, be a lucrative business for those in power who may exploit state resources or profit from violence. If links develop between political power and illegal*

*economic activity, they can deprive the legal economy of an opportunity to grow, the state of revenue, and both of legitimacy. This may be especially dangerous in countries where there is natural resource wealth. [Emphasis added]*<sup>6</sup>

It follows that engaging as a foreign military presence in the “legal economy,” is also bound to have consequences on configurations of power and wealth, and the social implications thereof.

Invariably, this elite can ‘speak the same language’ as external powerful interlocutors, and, ‘can do business’ with them in different guises. By virtue of easier access to economic resources, this elite is also the class from which business entrepreneurs emerge. And indeed, this is the social group which many successful entrepreneurs (who acquire wealth) become part of. Moreover, this elite is often perceived as, again *relatively*, more accepting of the actual on-the-ground presence of the dominant “foreign power.” These perceptions – regardless of their veracity and/or how widespread they are – further accentuate the socio-cultural and economic tensions in these countries, and cannot be ignored. The contention here is that post-conflict societies, in addition to the other social and economic traumas, ‘suffer’ from these kinds of social tensions even more. Engaging with this elite, or appearing to benefit them further, as a foreign military power, albeit in the name of creating a climate conducive to long-term security, is a cultural risk.

Last but by no means least in this regard, one of the implications of Schramm’s article appears to be that the U.S. military, in trying to engage entrepreneurs, develop social capital, attract venture capital, etc., may also be seen as paving the way for U.S.-based entrepreneurs. To complicate matters more, this role may entail solidifying the impression that in exercising such economic agency, the U.S. military may be attempting to create its own cultural business elite. Either way, a real danger may well be that such involvement is perceived as creating the conditions to complete ‘their circle of dominance’ in the countries in which they are present.

### **QUESTION: What can the U.S. military do differently, or add, and how?**

According to Schramm, “[T]he United States’ experience with rebuilding economies in the aftermath of conflicts and natural disasters has evidenced serious shortcomings...Yet there is a proven model for just such economic growth right in front of U.S. policymakers’ eyes: the entrepreneurial model practiced in the United States and elsewhere.” Schramm also argues that this entrepreneurship is required to stimulate high growth enterprises, and thereby attract needed venture capital. He proceeds to use China and India as good examples thereof. He argues that such enterprises will then become the engines of sustainable peace, or post-conflict livelihood. Yet, we are also aware that in post-conflict societies (of which, incidentally, neither China nor India fit the bill), venture capital itself has to be attracted by entrepreneurship...chicken or egg?

Schramm then goes on to lament the fact “U.S. military planners and U.S. troops on the ground often turn to U.S. and international development agencies or nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) for practical guidance on improving local economic conditions only to find that the putative experts are little help.” Here I must pause. Although present and contributing to this discussion in my individual capacity, my professional affiliation is to the United Nations, and in

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.effectivestates.org/Papers/zoellick.pdf>

that regard for me this assertion is highly problematic. One can quote copious facts and figures from over 65 years of field experience rooted in developing economies around the world, and the respective positive impact thereof of creating and enhancing economies that serve the needs of millions at the micro, meso, and macro levels, from a range of United Nations and other international financial institutions (from the World Bank to the IMF, from the World Food Programme (WFP) to the International Labour Organization, from the United Nations Development Programme to the Food and Agricultural Organization, and many, many others). Rather than that, I would refer readers to the respective websites of these organizations and the scope of literature containing annals of research, analysis, and policy.

As to NGOs, I would quote General Zinni here once again. While fully acknowledging the multitude of challenges in dealing with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) operating on the same terrains and territories, the retired General nevertheless provides due diligence in describing their philosophy and modus operandi as follows:

*“The NGOs complain that the military, with its monolithic and structured perspective, misses the subtleties of humanitarian aid and its aftermath. In their view, we set up systems that are not transferable, and we make the people we’re trying to help too dependent on the aid we provide. The NGOs have a different approach. They start with humanitarian aid: you have to save lives at risk. But then you have to move to what they call “sustainment” as quickly as possible, The idea is to leave behind systems that the people themselves can operate. “Don’t give them fish,” the saying goes, “Teach them how to fish”.*<sup>7</sup>

Traditionally, NGOs, international development agencies, and community-based philanthropic efforts have focused on economic development since the inception of development work. This entailed micro-finance schemes, small-scale infrastructure works, and the like. Development theories argued that economics was at the root of all solutions, and there was a widespread assumption that what worked in one context should work in others. In the U.S., this was also evidenced in the old adage that ‘what is good for GM is good for America.’ Schramm’s argument that “U.S. and international development policies would be much more successful if they applied to other countries the salient features of the United States’ economic form, especially entrepreneurship” dangerously echoes the idea that there is a workable model, whereas each ‘model’ entails a cultural context. And we have already argued that these contexts are diverse and the approaches therein to reach the same values differ.

By the late 1960s and 1970s, a barrage of evidence-based criticism had accumulated to discredit these ‘models of economic development’ which were not only *not* delivering but, in many instances, *accentuating* economic disparities, and creating and sustaining economic elites (ergo the westernized elites noted earlier) at the expense of an expanding strata of poor. Some development economists, notably Nobel-prize economist Dr. Amartya Sen, successfully argued that this kind of economic reductionism obfuscated and challenged sustainable human development as a whole. Sen (building his work on the causes of famine, which led to the development of practical solutions for preventing or limiting the effects of real or perceived shortages of food) argued for ‘development as freedom’. This, he elaborated, implied development as the expansion of capabilities, including having the freedom to choose between different ways of thinking to pursue the enrichment of human lives, and being able to choose

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<sup>7</sup> Zinni and Koltz, p.77

*how* you want to live. This ethical dimension is a culturally sensitive operationalization of human security, which addresses the gaps of traditional economic development frameworks.

Human development as a philosophy, and praxis therefore, of any and all development interventions, became the focus for most actors, building on the lessons learned that economics alone did not guarantee opportunities for decent education, equitable access to resources, and gender equalities - let alone create all the conditions necessary for countries to avoid armed conflicts. Indeed, this argument was also used to make a case for why economic development had to be accompanied by political investments such as democratic governance.

A more holistic and culturally sensitive focus on enhancing the economic, socio-cultural, and political welfare of all individuals, therefore, became the means to invest in and ensure comprehensive human development and, by extension, the sustainable conditions for peace. These undertakings are the bread and butter of governments, NGOs, and international development agencies. And where governments are ‘otherwise occupied,’ the other actors are very much there.

Here, it is also important to highlight that NGOs are both secular and faith-based. The latter, also referred to increasingly in international development language as faith-based organizations (FBOs) or local faith communities (LFCs), are some of the oldest, widest reaching, and sustainable social and economic service providers in many developing countries. Many LFCs are very protective of their services within their areas and communities, and by virtue of what they provide, they may have a direct and significant stake in the “bottom-up” economic development of their countries. A question that will have to be asked in this regard, therefore, is: “how will the U.S. military deal with that particular socio-economic reality in its balancing of security concerns?”

*“Even the best laid development plan will founder on the back of national indifference. Secure development requires national ownership. Outsiders can help, but they cannot substitute for local ownership and responsibility”. [Robert B. Zoellick]<sup>8</sup>*

It is timely that the U.S. military, whose objective is human security, is now wondering whether and how to “work from the ‘bottom-up’ in assisting enterprises and entrepreneurs through enablers such as microfinance, small-scale infrastructure, and human resource development and local governance” (Peterson and Crow, p. 2). Given the concern of this paper with the cultural dimensions, the question for the U.S. military’s considerations of a doctrine of expeditionary economics would need to address the extent to which the military is willing to simultaneously address development as freedom, i.e. having the freedom to choose between different ways of thinking, and being able to choose *how* you want to live. These considerations must form part of a culturally sensitive doctrine.

Therefore, effectively, such a doctrine cannot be limited to the knowledge of basic – or even highly advanced – economics, but would have to take into account critical dimensions such as gender imbalances in access to all kinds of resources (including decisions made by women and

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.effectivestates.org/Papers/zoellick.pdf>

men in *how* they want to live), because that is part of the social capital on which entrepreneurship will be built and from which it will come. A doctrine which ignores these intertwined socio-cultural and economic dynamics (which Schramm's article overlooks), will not only be incomplete, but it may result in entrenching very warped gender inequalities in these societies, which runs contrary to freedom and, thus, to human rights.

This brings us to a potential head-on collision with the internal cultures of the U.S. military – including recent progressive developments therein – and the local cultures in which they operate. It is no secret that Iraqi and Afghan societies are conservative when it comes to gender relations, sexuality, and consequences on certain life choices. To assume that expanding the role of the U.S. military in economic programs to facilitate security can circumvent the already sensitive terrain about how the military's presence and actions impact on gender relations in these countries is akin to deciding to undertake a risky military operation at night - but without the necessary night-vision equipment.

Moreover, if the U.S. military in places like Afghanistan and Iraq were to play a more engaged role in economic stimulation and development, there are bound to be questions raised by the example this could set for military regimes in neighboring countries. By working to achieve stabilization in a local economy, the U.S. military is carving out yet another niche for itself in the manner of operations and control of these countries. In other words, this has important implications on the ensuing culture(s) of military governance, with critical consequences for dynamics of accountability and transparency.

Further, given this precedent, why should the Saudi, Iranian, Egyptian, Syrian and Pakistani militaries - each of which already plays a precarious political role – *not* also attempt to consolidate entrepreneurs in their own countries as a means of enhancing security and stability? Would that not entail an even greater scope of non-democratic dominance in countries already rendered highly unstable and considered almost global security liabilities? Indeed, where would the dividing line between encouraging entrepreneurship and attracting venture capital on one hand, and appearing to dip into the profits and control national resources on the other, be drawn? This question is valid for the national military bodies and, even more so, for a foreign military presence. Unfolding events in the Middle East reveal millions of pro-democracy activists - many of whom are prepared to pay with their lives, not only to secure human rights, but to do so by curtailing the deep-rooted and complex military involvement in their societies. Given the global interlinkages of today's world, what impact would deepening U.S. military involvement in the countries they have occupied, have on such political aspirations? In other words, how can it be legitimately argued that on the one hand U.S. military should play a more active role in social and economic development in Iraq and Afghanistan, but on the other, the Egyptian/Syrian/Libyan/Pakistani militaries need to re-consider the extent and nature of their national involvements?

Or would these socio-cultural, economic and political aspects be considered 'collateral damage' of the U.S. military's attempts to build sustainable and long-term safety and security for the people of these countries?

## QUESTION: Does the U.S. Military Have An Opportunity to Expand Its Imagination?

In lieu of a conclusion, I want to pay tribute to Schramm's assertion that "[G]rowth is not simply a mechanistic composite of statistical indicators. It is in a very real sense an *expansion of the imagination*" [emphasis added]. In that vein, it occurs to me that there are at least two opportunities which present themselves if/when social and economic development become part of U.S. military policy. The first we already refer to above in terms of an opportunity to coordinate and enhance capacities and partnerships with traditional development donors and actors.

Second, an opportunity potentially presented by a doctrine of U.S. military engagement in social and economic development could revolve around the U.S. military's using its leverage at home to impact on decisions made right here in the United States. And this opportunity could be seen as a form of preventive maintenance strategy. I refer specifically to an impending environmental crisis that will endanger the lives of millions of people through critical shortages of the single most critical means of livelihood – water and food – and potentially increase the likelihood of regional war. As illustration, consider the following:

In 2006, a briefing on Afghanistan by the United Nations offices there highlighted the following:

*Desertification is very much threatening Afghanistan and advancing in the northern, western and southern regions, where widespread grazing has reduced vegetation cover and exposed soils to erosion. Another aggravating factor is the uncontrolled extraction of water resources and deforestation. Officials estimate the amount of forest lost in the last two decades to be 30 per cent. However, local forest officers suggest the true figure lies between 50 and 70 per cent in provinces like Paktya, Khost and Paktika. In addition to desertification, the incidence of drought has also risen sharply in Afghanistan over the last 20 years, and more specifically in the last 6 years - a trend that might never be reversed. Conditions in large parts of Kandahar, Helmand and Nimroz provinces have deteriorated dramatically and some of these areas will never be able to support their former human populations again.*<sup>9</sup>

Moreover, in their article on "A Global Problem: How to Avoid War Over Water - Editorials & Commentary" published in the *International Herald Tribune*,<sup>10</sup> Kevin Watkins and Anders Berntell argue that:

*The Tigris and Euphrates river systems figure prominently at World Water Week. No river system better demonstrates the nature of hydrological interdependence. In Turkey, the Tigris and Euphrates rivers are seen as an underexploited source of power and irrigation. Viewed from Syria and Iraq, Turkish dams are a threat to hundreds of thousands of livelihoods, with farmers losing access to water. Underpinning the rivalry between states is the idea that sharing water is a zero-sum game: Every drop of water secured by Turkish farmers appears as a loss to Syrian farmers... The threats posed by competition for water are*

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.un.org/apps/news/infocusnews.asp?NewsID=933&slD=1>

<sup>10</sup> A global problem: How to avoid war over water - Editorials & Commentary - International Herald Tribune, by Kevin Watkins and Anders Berntell, Published: Wednesday, August 23, 2006 - <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/08/23/opinion/23iht-edwatkins.2570814.html?pagewanted=1>

*real enough - but for every threat there is an opportunity... Like oil and other energy resources, water is a source of life and livelihoods. It follows that water security is every bit as integral to human progress as energy security, with one large caveat: unlike oil, water has no known substitutes. That is why no country can afford to suffer a catastrophic loss of water resources.*

Given the window of opportunity to develop its own doctrine for enabling stabilization and growth, what better occasion can there be for the U.S. military to simultaneously ‘work their own people’ – i.e., reverse an age-old cultural mentality of empire which always attempts to change ‘over there’ - and address these impending critical socio-economic realities?

Specifically, using some of the means potentially at its disposal - with the U.S. Department of Defense’s controlling one-fifth of U.S. foreign aid today – why not play a role in lobbying U.S. entrepreneurs and businesses to cut carbon emissions and ‘go green’ for the sake of the environment which is impacting most directly the lives of people in the countries the U.S. military is operating in? What is there to stop U.S. military advocacy and advise the American business community – which has a vested interest in Iraq and Afghanistan – on the importance and means of tackling the devastating impact of climate change? Granted these are considered by some U.S. policy circles as ‘esoteric’ and possibly ‘secondary’ considerations. But given the risks to basic livelihood to people in the two countries the U.S. military occupies today, and given the consideration of long-term national and regional security consolidation, what can the excuse(s) be for ignoring these dynamics?

To come full circle, here are a couple of reminders:

Schramm argues that “[T]he United States’ armed forces are uniquely positioned to contribute to world peace and prosperity by means other than actual force... But using the whole of American power effectively -- beyond simply the “whole of government” -- means reconfiguring the usual cast of actors, recognizing the limits of government, and tapping the enormous potential of entrepreneurs and skilled investors.”

So, if we extend the logic of this advocacy, one can argue that the U.S. armed forces could tap ‘the enormous potential of U.S. entrepreneurs and skilled investors’, as part of ‘reconfiguring the usual cast of actors’, in order to ‘contribute to world peace and prosperity’. In that case, why not attempt to tackle almost certain environmental doom in the same two countries the U.S. armed forces are occupying?

And another reminder speaks for itself: “America is great because she is good, but if America ever ceases to be good, America will cease to be great.” (Alexis de Tocqueville, 1835)