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The *MARO Handbook:* New Possibilities or the Same Old Militarism?

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In recent years some human rights scholars, journalists, activists, and policy makers have advocated the use of military intervention against violent mass human rights violations by governments or other perpetrators in societies with governments that are unable or unwilling to prevent the violence.[1] This push is a response to the failures of outside powers that appeared militarily capable of intervening in, for instance, the genocides in Rwanda and Bosnia in the 1990s. While many such advocates also recognize the importance of long-term prevention efforts and non-military options, they argue that there will be cases in which prevention efforts will fail and violent mass human rights violations against vulnerable groups will become a serious threat, if they do not actually take place. In such instances, military intervention from the outside is the legitimate last resort.[2]

The Carr Center for Human Rights Policy of Harvard University's Kennedy School and the United States Army's Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute offer the 2010 *Mass Atrocity Response Operations; A Military Planning Handbook.* The handbook was intended not only as a step toward the broader recognition of the purported need for military intervention but also as a crucial step toward the concrete capacity to intervene successfully. Designed for the United States military, the authors indicate that, with suitable adjustments, the handbook could be used by other forces as well. The report is meant to guide higher level decision makers and field commanders who might be required to run a mass atrocity response operation (MARO) through the planning process of the intervention and to guide adjustments as the intervention unfolds on the ground.

There are two general questions against which the handbook can be evaluated. First, assuming that military intervention in the kinds of situations discussed in *MARO* is morally right, does the manual fulfill its goal of providing useful guidance for accomplishing a successful intervention—that is, an intervention that saves some or all of the victims from violence and ensures long-term safety for them and stability for the area that they inhabit? The second question is more complex: given the concrete realities of the US military and the impacts of military intervention, is military intervention itself justified and, if so, under what conditions? At first glance, this second question would seem to carry us beyond the scope of the handbook, which is concerned with what should be done once the decision to intervene has been made. But, as will become clear below, given the concrete specifics and history of the US military and the ways in which it has been used, the issue of how to intervene is inseparable from the question of whether it is morally right to intervene, even if in *MARO* the latter is disregarded. What is more, the authors of *MARO*—Sarah Sewall, Dwight Raymond, and Sally Chin—hope that this unofficial guide, as the handbook

is presented, will be adopted officially by the US military. Such adoption is predicated on the acceptance of MAROs as acceptable military missions, and thus the *Handbook* implicitly advocates for this acceptance, if its internal content assumes that acceptance.

Both questions generate the evaluative points made in the present consideration of the handbook.

Steps Forward

The authors and consultants that contributed to *MARO* deserve credit for recognizing the significant differences between a standard operation in which US military forces would form one party in a two-party conflict and a MARO in which US forces would be outside actors coming into a situation of one-sided mass violence. Clearly it is one thing to seek to defeat or contain an enemy force and quite another to seek to protect a non-combatant group against one or possibly more military and/or paramilitary force(s). One strength of the handbook is that it details the various actors that can possibly be present in or potentially relevant to any MARO situation, including a set of perpetrators that might or might not be a part of the government of the area in which the atrocities are taking place or expected to take place—a set consisting of, in some cases, more than one perpetrator group; victims or potential victims that might have their own agendas beyond survival and other basic human rights; a host government that might be supporting the atrocities, unwilling or unable to alter the situation, or supportive of intervention; other states that might be supportive of (to the point of sending troops in) or opposed to an intervention; international actors such as the United Nations and African Union; non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that are already operating in the affected area, doing, for instance, relief work; NGOs that are not yet involved but that might have a role in post-intervention recovery; the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank; and non-military components of the US government, such as the State Department. The often differing and even conflicting goals, motives, and methods of different parties, even those supporting intervention, make a MARO much more complicated than a standard military operation in a war.[3] The report emphasizes such things as the risk that victims, once the intervention succeeds, might engage in retribution against the perpetrators, in which case MARO forces "then become a shield" for the former victims as they carry out retribution (27).

Another laudable point of analysis is the recognition that, although there are some indicators that are sometimes useful in this regard, there is no recipe for predicting which contexts will generate mass atrocity situations (30–31). For this and other reasons, MAROs will often escalate rapidly and not allow for optimum force assemblage, while a quick response will sometimes be necessary to have a meaningful impact in stopping the killings of members of the targeted group(s) (33). The handbook significantly points out that the threat of prosecution or other accountability must be "real and understood" in order for the gathering of evidence and public exposure to have a real deterrent effect (35)—a point that the Rwanda and Bosnia cases illustrate all too well despite the fact that some perpetrators were ultimately prosecuted in those cases.[4]

Without explicitly identifying the sources of the lessons, the handbook appears to reflect certain lessons learned from earlier mass atrocity situations, including some interventions. The authors rightfully point out that intervention can introduce factors into a local situation that might exacerbate rather than mitigate the human rights problem. For instance, they understand that "if not controlled, humanitarian assistance supplies during and after an intervention may be at risk for appropriation by

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criminals, military forces, or other armed groups and fuel black market activities"
(53). This is well illustrated in Michael Maren's account of humanitarian inter-
vention in Somalia in *The Road to Hell*.[5] The authors of *MARO* also recognize that
hate speech and other types of "inflammatory information" can be key factors in
supporting or driving human rights violations, and they call on MARO planners to
monitor and possibly stop such speech as a method of prevention or intervention
(55). This is presumably informed by the role of propaganda hate radio in the
Rwanda Genocide and the debates about this hate speech that took place in US
military and policy circles.[6]

The handbook also includes some good critical points that support the concrete
planning and execution of MAROs. In discussing each of the seven forms that the
actual military format of a MARO might take, the authors raise interesting objec-
tions regarding the third, which calls for the imposition of a militarily defended
buffer zone to separate victims from perpetrators. This approach might be considered
an obvious way of protecting a victim group, but the authors highlight several of its
shortcomings: this approach does not help transform the society in which human
rights violations either are or are on the verge of taking place, it will not necessarily
protect people who are behind the lines of the buffer zone from violence that
might be pursued by others behind those same lines, and it can have an unintended
permanent political effect beyond the protection of the victim group by producing
a permanent political border (77). Similarly, the authors critically engage another
approach, which consists of setting up internally displaced person (IDP) camps to
gather potential victims for easier protection. They point out that this approach
might actually reward the perpetrators' aggression if, for instance, in the case of
attempted ethnic cleansing, the IDP camps become long-term homes because the
victims will have been removed from the territory over which the perpetrators wish
complete hegemony (78). At various points, the handbook recognizes a crucial issue:
the threat or the beginning of an intervention might actually trigger the beginning
of violent mass human rights violations or accelerate their execution. Because perpe-
trators might see that the window for action is closing and become convinced that
intervention will prevent them from having any future opportunities to attack their
targets, they might decide to begin or accelerate the violence when they might not
have done so under other circumstances.

The handbook also includes recognition of some of the subtleties of MARO situa-
tions. For instance, the writers point out that the government in a MARO area might
not have control over the population and so other forces could drive atrocities (109).
It is much more difficult to intervene in this kind of situation than in a case in which
there is an explicitly defined and identifiable perpetrator group with clear mechanisms
of power and military organization and operation.

Missteps

While, as the previous section indicates, the handbook does potentially advance an
understanding of MARO situations and responses, there is also a range of problems
with the *MARO Handbook*. Some of the inadequacies of the project are not funda-
mental and could be addressed if the handbook were to be revised in the future.
Some of *MARO*'s shortcomings, however, are functions of deeper problems with
the MARO concept itself, military intervention, and the historically revealed but
uncorrected tendencies of the US military in its relationships with civilian popula-
tions. Addressing these will require more than the revision of the report; it will
require changes in approaches to international relations and the role of power and

violence in them as well as changes to some features of the culture of the US military. Nonetheless, revisions to the handbook that address these deeper issues can help spur these changes while their absence from the handbook in its present form reinforces the problems at stake.

Although some of the problems will inhibit the success of MAROs, not all of the problems will do so. Increases in capacity and commitment are sometimes assumed to automatically be positive moves forward. But even the ways in which the handbook increases the capacity and commitment to carry out MAROs might not constitute genuine improvements in the level of respect for human rights in the world. Moving the agenda of military intervention forward is not necessarily productive, especially if the handbook does not address the problematic relationship of the military basis of MAROs to human rights.

Issue 1: Reliance on the Report of the Genocide Prevention Task Force

MARO's authors frequently cite with approval the 2008 report issued by the self-designated "Genocide Prevention Task Force," which was chaired by Madeleine Albright and William Cohen.[7] For instance, page 66 of *MARO* reproduces an extensive table directly from the Albright-Cohen Report. While the authors are certainly free to use material from the Albright-Cohen Report, there is no critical evaluation of what is appropriated or justification for its appropriation. This is, of course, a minimal requirement for any work claiming intellectual legitimacy. In the case of the Albright-Cohen Report this is especially important because the report has received detailed criticism from various angles. A special issue of *Genocide Studies and Prevention* featured commentaries on the report, a number of which made substantive, well-grounded criticisms of key aspects of it, including its approach to US military intervention.[8] While this is not the appropriate place to rehearse those criticisms, the fact that *MARO*'s authors miss the opportunity to address them and thereby improve thinking on military intervention means that key shortcomings of the Albright-Cohen Report are imported directly into *MARO*.

Issue 2: Is There an Editor in the House?

Any reader used to decent journalistic, technical, business, or academic texts will doubtless be struck by the acronym-infused, jargonistic, cumbersome writing of the *MARO Handbook*. While the claim might have been made that a specialized military audience would be used to such writing and comfortable with it, *MARO*'s authors repeatedly express their desire to make the report accessible to a general audience. For instance, in discussing the genesis of the report, they explain, "We streamlined the entire process, stripping it of many detailed elements that would be essential but familiar to military planners while making the language and process easier for civilian actors to understand and apply" (135). Even as they stress this, the authors cannot resist using unnecessary acronyms: "Planners also sought to translate the JOPES process into concepts and terms that would be more easily understood by the US interagency community as well as NGOs and the general public" (133). "JOPES" is an acronym introduced just on page 133 with no role previously in the report and used only three times in total in the report. The sentence in which it is introduced manifests a typical use of acronyms: "This effort was based on the military's existing Joint Operational Planning and Execution System (JOPES) process, but the APF was envisioned to provide guidance to a GCC on how to develop a

Commander's Estimate and Operation Plan" (133). Perhaps it is enough to say that the acronym key runs for three full pages (141–43).

The jargon problem, while not as sustained as the acronym addiction, reaches levels of absurdity at points. For instance, in place of, presumably, "helicopter" we have "rotary-wing asset" (125, 127) and in place of, presumably, "communication" we have "two-way information" (70). We also find out that these "rotary-wing assets" can be employed from "amphibious decks" (127). The meaning here would seem to be either aircraft carriers or helipads on other types of naval vessels, unless it means some type of pontoon-supported floating helipads offshore. Regardless, not only is the term "amphibious" jargon but it also seems to be incorrect unless these are ships with helipads that actually come on land in addition to floating in water. Other non-standard and obscure uses of English include "socializing" as in "[t]he process of socializing the MARO Project among various military, government, and non-governmental communities" (101). Quite simply, it is unclear what this means— does it mean talking up the project in informal conversations, getting formal feedback through group discussions, or something else?

While it is tempting to dismiss such terminological twists as harmless lapses or at worst as a form of exclusivism that pretends to superiority over non-military readers, as some points below suggest, these uses of language might better be seen as evidence of muddled or closed thinking, whereby certain patterns of language typical in military circles are repeated without clear understanding or critical engagement. The jargon becomes a kind of endless mantra that displaces genuine thinking and expression.

There are also structural writing issues. For example, how do the different "approaches" to MAROs, that is, methods of actual military interventions (e.g., imposing a buffer zone between perpetrators and victims [70–87]); "lines of effort," that is, all major functions that are necessary and collectively sufficient to achieve success (88–95); and MARO phases (95–100) relate to one another? For instance, how does a variation in military approach require changes in the "lines of effort" to achieve success for that approach? The report does not explain the interrelationships among these aspects of planning. An example of where this would appear essential is the discussion of MARO Phase II, "Seize the Initiative," which focuses on the beginning of military operations (on "D-Day" [97]). Will the features of this phase vary depending on the approach to military operations? Do some features but not others apply to some but not all approaches?

Issue 3: Abstraction and Pro-Forma Lists

The handbook is supposed to provide a process for planning a MARO that will include the things that need to be thought out ahead of time and during the implementation of the plan. While clearly some kind of generic template—possibly an extensive one—could be used as a framework for planning, the handbook limits itself to generic templates, despite the authors' claim that in their writing process they wished to avoid "any attempt to create a universal or generic plan" (133). These templates are detailed in that they often include lists of all sorts of elements that might be necessary to a plan as well as many considerations of potential problems or obstacles that might be relevant. At the same time, the templates remain pro forma—that is, an abstract list of all sorts of possible issues that seem produced *a priori*, without an attempt to engage the real issues that have occurred in real attempts at humanitarian military intervention, such as in Somalia. While, as stated above, these experiences might have informed some of the details presented abstractly

in the handbook, by incorporating the details in an abstract manner, there is no indication of how they relate to actual interventions. In other words, planners are not shown how these detailed lists of considerations and the extensive templates for plans relate to concrete, on-the-ground situations. At too many points *MARO* becomes merely a sequence of lists following lists following lists, with no analysis, context, or application to concrete situations that would help in real planning for real operations (see, for example, 37–39, 51–57, 63–64, 90–95). Items are often obvious or generic, of the form "Laundry can consist of socks, underwear, pants, shirts, towels, etc. Towels might mean bath towels or dish towels or hand towels. The possibility that 'pants' might include shorts should be considered."

Discussing the link between planned and real, concrete (as opposed to generic) situations would have made the handbook much more useful. For instance, while the "Draft Strategic Guidance" (106–7) could be employed in planning, without a link to specific situations established through examples, MARO commanders are left with the entire burden of figuring out how to apply the guidance to real situations without having the benefit of the experiences of others who have tried to do this kind of thing or any concrete analyses of the links to specific situations. The hard part of planning is too often left as an exercise for the reader.

A typical example, selected from many possibilities, of where a concrete example drawn from real experience would have increased the handbook's value serves to illustrate this:

> MARO plans will normally follow this process, although they may be complicated both by a lack of specific and timely guidance as well as by high-level participation in the planning process because of the politically sensitive nature and potential media glare put on a MARO, particularly with respect to COA development and selection. (42)

Without a concrete example, this says little more than "things might be complicated and planning must take this into consideration." Explaining *how* things might be complicated using specific examples would be very helpful. Indeed, given that there have been a number of humanitarian interventions in recent years and that *MARO*'s authors seem to consider the military form of the invasions and subsequent occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan to be similar to MAROs, the authors could have discussed how these operations worked and how various aspects of the suggestions for planning worked or would work relative to each of the different actual situations, all with the benefit of hindsight. Rather than presenting planners with generic, abstract situations into which to fit their real situations, Sewall, Raymond, and Chin could have given planners real situations as reference points to make real decisions about what would be likely to work and not to work in a given specific MARO situation. At times *MARO* reads like a geometry textbook without any illustrations. At least at some points, students need to look at figures of right triangles to understand certain properties of right triangles that have previously been presented by abstract definition.

While the inclusion of concrete illustrations drawn from historical events would have been a significant improvement, the authors should have gone even further by testing each of their plan templates, assumptions, various lists, "approaches," "lines of effort," phasing schemes, and so forth against real past operations and MARO situations. This would have transformed much of the handbook's content from generic, seemingly *a priori* speculation into genuine empirically-based analysis.

A similar limitation is revealed when the authors assert that a "brief historical overview" of a MARO situation might be helpful for the planning process (43). There

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are two issues with this assertion. First, part of the problem relative to MARO situations is that outsiders, including the US government, rely on "brief historical overviews" that contain simplifications and "standard wisdom" about a situation, rather than factual analysis that is nuanced and accurate and has genuine explanatory value. For instance, the Rwandan Genocide was simplistically misrepresented by US policy makers and journalists as an intractable centuries-old ethnic conflict rather than the result of a complex set of contemporary forces that culminated in a well-calculated attempt by the ruling Interahamwe to retain power in the face of an impending shift to electoral democracy in Rwanda,[9] a project that more instrumentalized "ethnic hatred" than was generated by it.[10] Second, the authors do not explain what specifically in a historical overview would be useful and in what ways. They too should have provided historical overviews of past MARO situations and discussions of how they could have been used for MARO planning to illustrate their meaning.

While other elements of the MARO are not always as flawed as its account of the Rwandan Genocide, the brief historical overview of that case (6) is a good example of the problems that arise with limited accounts of human rights crises. The authors present the genocide as having started in 1994 with the breakdown of the peace accords, without any recognition of the complex political process that led to genocide as a way to prevent democratization of Rwanda. Shallow and limited "historical" accounts are in some ways worse than no accounts at all, as they provide false information that will mislead MARO planners. The authors could and should have included examples of the right kind of historical analysis that would support the success of a MARO, rather than repeat reductive accounts of such events as the Rwandan Genocide. This problem might have been addressed in part by the contributions of scholars, in addition to that of military leaders, to the research, conceptualization, and writing processes.

It might be argued that this level of specificity (i.e., testing against historical examples) would have increased the length of the *MARO Handbook* far beyond what would be manageable for planners, but at least some specificity could have been introduced instead of the rather significant amount of repetition in the work. For instance, the possibility that victims can potentially become perpetrators is unnecessarily repeated a number of times.

Similarly, we have an abstract assertion, "Understanding a perpetrator's motivations is essential for determining how best to counteract,"[11] followed by a list of different possible motivations (45), but we do not have suggestions on how the specific possible motivations might be addressed with specific courses of action or how responses would vary based on different perpetrator motivations. Possible motivations are simply listed. Identifying different motives is not enough for planning; real models for what to do once the motives are identified are necessary. This is another example of the authors offering extensive lists of considerations without adequate (or any) guidance on how to relate those lists to real situations and actions.

An additional point relates to an issue that will be treated in greater detail below. The planning schemes presented in the handbook assume that US military personnel at various levels in MAROs operate as automatons, simply following orders and not engaging in any self-directed or divergent activities. Indeed, leaders and soldiers are treated in the abstract, never actually mentioned or evaluated, as if they have no history, no problems, or other features. There is no discussion of the kind of preparation, training, or selection process that might go into putting together a force that would have the right understanding of and regard for human rights

concerns—not simply military training—to carry out a MARO successfully. While the authors call for the consideration of all sorts of nuances of the perpetrators, victims, and other groups, there is absolutely no consideration of similar issues regarding US forces. As will be discussed in detail below, there is no mention of potential human right violations by U.S. troops, let alone elements of the planning process devoted to anticipating and preventing such abuses.

Issue 4: Optimism

While in some circumstances, an optimistic view of a situation might be useful by motivating actors to attempt to do what they might otherwise not have done and to have the confidence to push forward despite obstacles, in the planning process of a military mission optimism can obscure or cause to be discounted or spun facts that have life-and-death implications. *MARO*'s authors tend to be realistic (if abstract) and recognize many obstacles and potential problems arising in any MARO situation. At the same time, there are points where they display naïveté. In listing Flexible Deterrent Options, the authors claim that a show of force can be made by inviting regional leaders on US naval ship tours with media coverage. The idea is that this will convey "an implied deterrent message to perpetrators" (122). It is hard to believe that people considering or even having already initiated mass violence will suddenly change their course of action by seeing US naval ships up close. The authors offer no evidence that this type of approach has ever worked. On the one hand, if the perpetrators are motivated in a way that trumps risk analysis, then no threat of any level of power will change their minds. On the other hand, if they are more calculating they are also likely to be sophisticated enough to understand the meaninglessness of such gestures.

Another example occurs on page 90: "Short-term efforts include dissuading HN [home nation] leaders, organizations, and populations from conducting mass atrocities, while emphasizing the importance of good governance, human rights, and acting as a responsible member of the international community." The idea that the drive to commit human rights violations is such a surface phenomenon that this kind of response will have any impact at all would appear to be naïve even without reference to the many historical cases that belie it.

A yet further example can be found in the discussion of PSYOPs ("psychological operations"): "All potential perpetrators are informed that they have the option of behaving responsibly or suffering the consequences" (124). The problem here is not just that this is unlikely to have any positive effects, but that this suggestion seems to be based on a simplistic and inaccurate notion of what motivates and produces violent mass human rights violations.

Issue 5: The Power of Euphemism

Jargon and the excessive use of acronyms are, presumably, innocent writing problems that can be addressed by good copy editing. Euphemisms are a different issue. While they likewise cloud meaning, they often function to hide what might be problematic attitudes or facts and thereby prevent exposure and criticism of them. The handbook is rife with euphemism, including euphemisms that have long been discredited for precisely such obscurantism. At the top of the list is a term that has been used to cover up the intensity and acceptance of what many consider unjustified, unnecessary, and largely preventable civilian killings and other casualties in recent military actions: "collateral damage." This term appears on pages 68, 84, 86, 87, and 113, at which points a thoughtful discussion of the contradiction between civilian casualties

and a humanitarian intervention would have been appropriate and meaningful. Indeed, the apparent callousness of the US military regarding "collateral damage," the apparent undercounting in both Iraq attacks and other cases,[12] and other concerns would appear to require such a discussion in the handbook to redirect military personnel away from callousness and toward a genuine respect for civilian human rights, which would seem to be requisite to any successful MARO—successful not in terms of some notion of military dominance but of an actual net gain in the safety of civilians (all civilians) affected by a MARO.

Another euphemism used with great frequency is "strategic communication," which appears to be code for "propaganda," that is, statements that purport to manipulate the target audience in some way regardless of their truth or falsity. The term is used on pages 21, 55, 63, 64, 112, 116, 121, 122, and 126, and a whole section is devoted to it on page 90. This term hides the manipulative and potentially falsifying nature of such communication and renders it an apparently innocent part of military planning. The acceptability, to *MARO*'s authors, of false communication that might even harm Americans comes through on page 69, where they suggest that "issuing travel advisories" regarding a potential MARO area can be a tool for putting pressure on the home government. Doing so transforms travel advisories into a propaganda tool, rather than an informational practice that promotes the safety of US citizens and residents. As this abuse of travel advisories becomes more apparent, the main effect will be a "crying wolf" effect similar to the use of "terrorist attack threat levels" after September 11.[13] Many Americans will come to view all travel advisories as suspect and in cases in which they should heed them, most obviously in potential MARO areas, they will not take them seriously.[14]

While the killing of civilians as the by-product of military action aimed at military domination or victory does not logically contradict those goals (however unnecessary and culpable it might be), the killing of civilians in order to protect civilians is clearly contradictory. This contradiction reveals a core problem in the handbook: military methods that have historically caused the destruction of civilians and violations of their human rights are now claimed to have the opposite goal and effect. Of course, the authors extend the euphemistic façade to say that such killings of innocent men, women, and children are due to US forces engaging "innocents without being aware of their status or intentions" (68). Innocent *what?* Even here human beings killed by US forces are not identified as human beings and are denied their human status. What is more, their deaths are just an honest mistake, not a foreseeable result of military operations as currently practiced[15], in full evidence in Iraq and Afghanistan, such that the military has not taken seriously even reporting this[16] let alone coming up with better options for approaching operations. The suggestion of "precision targeting" is clearly another aspect of this problem (66); the fact that "precision targeting" is not as precise as suggested[17] and often results in civilian deaths is not even acknowledged in the handbook, let alone treated thoughtfully.

Should not methods of stopping "collateral damage" have a central place in the handbook rather than be an issue of relatively low importance that is mentioned in only a few sentences in 150 pages? And "strategic communication" masks the reality of propaganda efforts. Here we have a two-layer propaganda process which uses doublespeak to hide from policy makers and the public what the military is actually doing, which is to use propaganda in an operation. This doublespeak might also prevent a process of self-reflection by military leaders and personnel who might otherwise notice the contradiction and decide in favor of human rights protection

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rather than operating in ways that kill significant numbers of civilian noncombatants. This raises a yet deeper issue.

The authors promote conducting "Psychological Operations (PSYOP) to influence perpetrators, victims, and other actors" (57). The military will attempt to manipulate through psychological pressure even victims of violence or potential violence. Clearly dominance over *everyone* in a situation, even those who are supposed to be helped by the US military, is the goal here, but this is covered over by a vague term. To the extent that these activities are recognized for what they are, it is of little wonder that people in affected areas as well as human rights groups and other NGOs would be suspicious of US motives and attitudes regarding any military intervention. This issue will be revisited in the next section of this paper.

Issue 6: An Ideologically Closed Discursive System

Perhaps the most significant impact of the *MARO Handbook* will not be human rights promotion, which, for reasons discussed in this paper and other critical evaluations, will likely be minimal if not undermined by it. Rather, *MARO*'s significance lies in what it reveals about the mentality of contemporary US military upper- and mid-level leaders and the discourse they have fashioned with the support of militarist politicians, policy makers (such as *MARO*'s lead author Sarah Sewall), police forces, and others in successive waves from the post-Vietnam reclamation process, through the re-introduction of blatant militarism in the post-Cold War world of the first Gulf War, to the post-September 11 consolidation of what might be termed the "New Militarism." The focus on human rights and the exceptionality of MAROs offered military strategists an opportunity in the *MARO Handbook* to break free from the discursive limits that have emerged and are manifested in everything from the fallacy that criticism of US military action is "unpatriotic" or "anti-American"[18] to the view that the standards of democracy and liberty require that US military personnel not be subject to an international court such as the International Criminal Court for allegations of human rights abuses.[19] The fact that *MARO*'s authors did not take that opportunity in this work is telling.

The analyses provided in the handbook reveal what can be termed an "ideologically-closed discursive framework" in which no potential critical points about the US military are recognized because they are either spun as innocent mistakes or misperceptions by others or omitted entirely from discussions of military issues. This ideological closure is a problem for two reasons. First, it renders invisible the many points in history in which the US military has engaged in human rights abuses. There has never been a sustained engagement with this history by the US military, and so the institutions, attitudes, culture, and practices that produced such abuses and continue to be formed through them remain intact because nothing has been done to counter, reverse, or exorcise them. The similarity of this aspect of the handbook to genocide denial is disturbing. Second, the report studiously avoids a substantive, explicit engagement with the failures and mistakes of the US military in regards to past MAROs and other military missions that the authors consider similar to MAROs, especially past humanitarian interventions and engagements in counterinsurgency warfare. *MARO* reads as if it were written in an ahistorical vacuum, projecting into the future all sorts of suggested procedures and plans without engaging the past data that should have been studied carefully as the bases of plans and speculations.

MARO includes list after list, plan schematic after schematic, and so forth, there are virtually no explicit, specific, comprehensive discussions of actual military

operations that have occurred in recent history or the obstacles, problems, or issues revealed in these operations. There is no discussion of what worked and did not work in relevant past operations, such as humanitarian interventions or peacekeeping operations. Here the abstractness discussed under Issue 3 becomes more than a correctable shortcoming; it becomes a method of avoidance. Generic recipes and lists do not merely fail to include useful information; they exclude data and insights that would reveal negative things about the US military.

Examples of ahistoricity in the handbook abound. It includes ignoring highly relevant causal factors, past human rights abuses as indicators of possible future abuses by US forces, and similar issues. The authors state, for example,

> Military actions to halt the targeting of civilians may therefore develop from, or even coexist with, other operational concepts in the context of a larger campaign in which US forces are engaged. For example, it is easy to imagine how systematic mass atrocities could emerge from a security vacuum created by the withdrawal of a foreign counterinsurgency force. Thus, mass killings could haunt US forces as they exit Iraq. (14–15)

Here a critical evaluation of the US invasion of Iraq, centering on the question of how the specific form and approach of the US invasion and occupation have created conditions that might lead to mass violence if the United States withdraws its troops, is avoided. The future possibility of mass violence in Iraq is disconnected from all causal factors: the US military is presented only as a potential brake on mass violence, not as the key destabilizing force producing the possibility.

The authors also suggest that "the analysis [of a MARO situation] should include key considerations with respect to agriculture, manufacturing, trade, gross domestic product, natural resources, income distribution, poverty, unemployment, corruption, black marketing, narcotics trafficking, human trafficking, and humanitarian assistance needs" (53). There is no recognition here or elsewhere that peacekeepers themselves routinely use trafficked girls and women and sometimes traffic girls and women[20] so there need to be active steps to prevent this in any MARO.[21] Peacekeeping missions might be motivated by a "world community" desire to protect the human rights of victims, but that does not necessarily mean that military personnel will be similarly motivated. Everything depends on the character of the troops deployed and how they are supervised. The military commander(s) and other US leaders at various levels should make the issue explicit and caution against any such activities, monitor personnel with an eye toward such violations, and pursue vigorously and sincerely any suspected violations. Rather than sacrificing civilians in cases of accusations against US military personnel to preserve US military power, control, and immunity from human rights standards as much as possible, in a humanitarian intervention US forces must place respect for the human rights of all civilians in their area of operation at the center of concern.

The misassumption that other groups might commit human rights abuses but U.C. military personnel are somehow immune from such behavior is captured particularly clearly on page 120: "Positive measures may serve as incentives for Country X forces or military-to-military contacts to improve their professionalism. This may make indigenous forces less prone to conduct mass atrocities." This ignores the unfortunately significant number of recent abuses of human rights by US forces, during and outside of wartime. Most notable are the rampant rapes. Susan Brownmiller highlights just how normalized the rape and trafficking of Vietnamese women and girls by US military forces in Vietnam became and the degree to which these became

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a part of military culture.[22] A wartime to peacetime parallel is the huge number of rapes, as well as related murders in some cases, documented or estimated to have been committed by US military personnel against Okinawan and Japanese women from the time that the island was captured near the end of World War II to the present.[23] As previously, news stories coming from Iraq presumably show just the tip of the iceberg.[24] Perhaps the most publicized story was that of the rape of a 14-year-old Iraqi girl and the murder of her and her family by US soldiers in 2006.[25] The relative impunity of perpetrators as well as the lack of concern from or even complicity of military leaders at various levels regarding the sexual abuse of Iraqi women and girls[26] is consistent with the Okinawa, Vietnam, and other situations discussed above.

Other human rights abuses committed or encouraged by US forces with high-level political and military approval or instigation include the extensive murdering and torture perpetrated by countless human rights abusers trained by the US Army's School of the Americas[27] and the torture practiced against prisoners in the global "war on terror," in Afghanistan, Iraq, Guantanamo Bay, and beyond.[28] In the entire handbook there is no mention, not even in one single sentence, of the risk of US military personnel abusing human rights and absolutely no provision for this contingency, which has been a constant in the US military for at least decades, in any aspect of the suggestions for MARO planning.

If there is any doubt that human rights abuse, including violence against non-combatant women and girls, by US forces is a real risk that should be addressed in any plan, one need only take account of the fact that in Iraq, as in previous peace and wartime situations, sexual assault of female US military personnel has occurred at an astounding level. Even statistics from the Department of Defense show that about 30 percent of scientifically surveyed US servicewomen who served at some point from the Vietnam era forward experienced rape or attempted rape, often repeatedly.[29] Incident after incident has exposed too many military leaders at every level as well as many under them for their indifference to hostility toward women who attempt to seek justice for these violations of law.[30] In Iraq, for instance, it appears to be routine for commanders to dismiss the claims, while rapes are covered up and the women who report them suffer retribution.[31] This appears to be a pervasive aspect of US military culture. As Sadler et al. put it, "Consistent rates of rape across eras of service indicate that violence towards military women remains an unresolved problem."[32] While the rapes of US servicewomen are of tremendous concern in themselves, the extensive and institutionally complicit human rights abuse they represent is also an indicator of the risk of human rights abuse of other targets by US military personnel.[33] It is a reasonable inference from these abuses that there is a substantial risk of human rights abuse of non-US civilians in MARO areas.

It is important to point out that denial of these kinds of abuses does not have to be the result of a set of explicit decisions or a conspiracy within the military. Indeed, while in the nineteenth century cover-up and acceptance of US military human rights abuses, including genocide, was authorized by a broad and deep anti-Native American genocidal mentality,[34] one can see the most recent wave of denial as the long-term consequence of the defensive reaction to the broad criticisms of the military's abuses in Vietnam, especially as contrasted with the universal support the military enjoyed during World War II. This defensive cognitive dissonance emerged as a way of preserving a problematic military culture and conduct in a morally com-

fortable manner. Similar to the abuses themselves, this defensive reaction does not need to be seen as the function of explicit top-down decision-making or conspiracy to be seen as a pervasive problem in an evolving US military culture. As genocide studies scholars such as Irwin Staub and Vahakn Dadrian argue, the impunity of the perpetrators of human rights violations not only encourages them to continue abuses, but sets an example for others toward a broadening prevalence and intensification of human rights abuses.[35] The problem is not the result of any one explicit policy or decision, but has evolved as the consequence of countless half-decisions to look the other way, encourage, or otherwise enable human rights abuses that have produced a self-reinforcing process which forestalls the kind of self-reflection and -analysis that would drive genuine moral accountability and change. Far from excusing such problems, however, the real significance of their genesis is that they have become embedded at a level deeper than policy and law and thus addressing them requires much more than proscriptive rhetoric.[36]

Perhaps the central reason for the lack of factual and historical appraisal of the US military in the handbook is the source of its content. It is striking that, beyond the three primary authors (which includes one person whose career has been in the defense establishment and one military officer), the entire team of consultants consists of military personnel, many of whom participated in the invasion of Iraq and other operations that would seem to beg for critical analysis at both the human rights and operational levels. While it is certainly not the case that all military personnel think in the same way about human rights, military strategy, and so forth, the narrow range of discourse on these issues in the handbook in relation to the obvious points of analysis that should have been included and the homogeneous nature of the analyses presented provide evidence that no effort was made to find even within the military true dissenters who could have added greatly to the report, let alone analysts of the military and others from outside who could have provided much-needed objective analyses. It is also striking that a bibliography that is only 33 percent longer than the list of acronyms does not include a single historical analysis of the relevant aspects of the Vietnam War, the Somalia intervention, Yugoslavia, or any other such case. What should have been the core of the research done for the handbook is, quite simply, absent.

The absence of critical perspectives is not only a matter of omission. Where criticisms are referenced in *MARO* they are uniformly dismissed as ungrounded. The authors appear to have been well aware of the kinds of issues highlighted above as well as others, yet chose to discount actively and explicitly all criticisms of the US military, no matter how well-grounded in fact. This discounting of facts is obviously poor scholarship, but it has deeper implications in a discussion of human rights. Apparently, the authors of the report could not bring themselves to recognize real and serious human rights issues that were right in front of them, raising questions about the very notion of human rights underlying the handbook. This is the core meaning of an ideologically closed discursive system. It is closed because all potential facts and insights that fall outside of a narrow range of "acceptable" discourse are automatically and without any critical analysis dismissed, excluded, or misrepresented. From within this mindset, legitimate criticisms become problems to be handled, often pre-emptively, so that they do not derail the military agenda, rather than reflections of problems with US military culture and conduct that need to be addressed through change in that culture and to that conduct.

The most typical method, repeated many times, is the misrepresentation of substantive criticisms as mere perceptions implied to be functions of misunderstanding

or some political outlook such as anti-Americanism. As the report authors state in reference to the inevitable grey areas of moral decision making that will arise in a MARO,

> Interveners must not only anticipate [moral] dilemmas, but prepare themselves for criticism from interested parties—to include neighboring countries, human rights groups, and diaspora communities. The potential ethical backlash could be debilitating. Instead of producing the pride and satisfaction of being recognized for humanitarian action, a MARO may cause service members to question the morality of their actions and nations to second-guess their decisions to intervene.
>
> Doing the right thing without being prepared for tough choices and potential ethical backlash can undermine the effectiveness of the operation and dissuade parties from future humanitarian action. (39)

There is no concern here that the ethical criticisms might actually be correct, but merely that they might interfere with the operation and cause moral quandaries for military personnel. Yet, if there are moral issues with the "humanitarian" action itself and the methods used to carry it out, is it not the duty of all involved to take those issues seriously? *MARO,* on the contrary, counsels commanders here to inoculate those serving under them from any moral qualms about what they are doing, a form of advice that itself increases the likelihood that they will commit human rights violations. If they follow such guidance, commanders will not only reinforce any existing human-rights-violating tendencies among their soldiers, but will in fact manipulate or push soldiers to suspend the moral compunctions against human rights abuse that they have. If this advice is followed, the un-self-critical self-righteousness underlying this statement—the military is *always* right and critics are *always* wrong—will be transferred to soldiers through their commanders. What is more, MARO forces are represented as automatically right in their decision making *by virtue of their good intentions.* Rather than recognizing that it is in fact good to "question the morality of [one's] actions," even when they appear on the surface to be morally right, *MARO*'s writers call on military personnel to hold on to their notions of what is right dogmatically and without taking responsibility when they make bad decisions, bad decisions that are likely to result in the deaths of innocent people. This creates a very dangerous self-justifying dogmatism that can mean that those who are inadvertently creating problems or even engaging in human rights violations are actually convinced they are promoting human rights.

The authors further inform their readers that

> the MTF [MARO task force] could become the target of numerous factions that are frustrated by their perception of the situation, particularly if their expectations are not met. Mitigation approaches include strategic communication to influence the population, perpetrators, and other actors favorably regarding the intervener's actions. (63)

Not only are potential criticisms that an operation will face dismissed as the result of "frustration" by "factions" based on their "perception," by the handbook, but the solution is to use propaganda to manipulate them and others to see the operation in a favorable light. The language here is quite loaded: we have "frustration" rather than "critical evaluation," "factions" rather than "legitimately interested parties," and "their perceptions" rather than "the facts of the situation." The term "factions" connotes belligerent parties representing narrow agendas that they are attempting to impose on others. That the MTF will become a "target" suggests that it is the victim in the situation, which could be far from the truth. What if these

"factions" are responding to real problems with the MARO operation? Even un-intended problems—as abound in Iraq and Afghanistan—require thoughtful critical evaluation.

The issue comes up again on page 113: "Interveners may be motivated by other than humanitarian motives, which could cause others to view their actions skepti-cally." Again, the actions will be *viewed* skeptically, as if this is just a matter of perception. But the authors themselves admit that the United States might be using the cover of humanitarian intervention to advance a political or economic agenda. While it might be in the political or economic interest of the United States for US military forces to discount such criticisms and might even be useful in manipulating US soldiers so that they will complete their mission without moral qualms, pro-moting this in a handbook that is supposed to be concerned with human rights, not cynical advantage, is a glaring ethical failure. The advice the authors should be giving is, "do not engage in violations of sovereignty and other kinds of interventions under the guise of humanitarian concern when in fact they are motivated by goals other than supporting human rights."

It gets worse. The authors identify as a key vulnerability of intervention "opposi-tion from other countries because of their concern over 'imperialism'" (113). The use of quotation marks delegitimates the term, turning it into yet another mis-perception. The implication is that "imperialism" is a term bandied about by mal-contents who are always there to detract from the positive image the United States should rightfully have. There is no consideration that the term in fact does apply to many US military interventions and that, given this history, the burden is on the United States to demonstrate its good intentions and lack of military and economic expansionism whenever it uses its troops to violate another state's sovereignty or it engages in similar military actions. The invasion of Iraq violated that country's sovereignty with the result of a military conquest whose ultimate goal many see with good cause as economic benefit through increased and favorable access to oil.[37] Other contemporary examples of military actions that can be inter-preted as attempts to advance global US power and influence from Vietnam forward abound.[38] Once more the handbook's authors miss an excellent opportunity to pro-duce positive change in the US political and military culture, this time by pushing for a serious commitment to human rights promotion in the place of instrumental use of human rights rhetoric in the service of less laudable agendas. Instead, a legitimate concern is misrepresented as inherently unjustified and itself a cynical rhetorical move.

Even if the report's authors do not view this kind of criticisms as reasonable or empirically-justified, they nevertheless go too far in their delegitimation of it. They refuse to recognize that US military and related political actions in recent years at least make it reasonable for others around the world to be concerned about the projections of US military power, even when accompanied by human rights justifi-cations. The authors seem to lack the basic self-reflective realization that people around the world might possibly have reasonable cause to be suspicious of the US military, even if they do not agree with the expressed concerns.

MARO does recognize the potential criticism of the disconnect between the stated humanitarian goals and the realities of some US military operations con-nected to humanitarian rhetoric: "the fact that a MARO's endstate appears to be humanitarian in nature might not necessarily be accepted at face value by all NGOs" (49). It never occurs to the authors here or elsewhere to ask, why not? This brings us back to the ahistoricism discussed at the beginning of this section. The

handbook's authors do not analyze potential problems such as this in order to understand why such perceptions exist and thus get at the root issue, but instead recommend that MARO planners attempt to maneuver around them. Setting aside the moral concerns that this approach raises, it also represents a poor way of approaching human rights problems—the approach of developing some limited surface understanding of an issue and then addressing only that, usually in a limited tactical way, which thus leaves intact the problems generating the surface symptoms.

It is also telling that the authors recognize the criticism that China has received for support of the Sudan government throughout the Darfur Genocide (49), but they fail at any point in their work to recognize quite similar concerns about the motives and effects of US intervention based on active US support for dictators such as the Shah of Iran, Anastasio Samoza in Nicaragua, Ferdinand Marcos in the Philippines, and Indonesia's Suharto and for genocides by Guatemalan and Indonesian governments (twice),[39] as well as support for human rights abuse through training at the School of the Americas. This ideological blindness to the human rights issues of the US military is not acceptable and in fact contradicts the handbook's purported goal of human rights support.

Beside the potential hypocrisy of humanitarian interventions by US forces and the significant potential for human rights abuse by those forces, there is an "innocent" shortcoming of the handbook that could have just as devastating an effect. The authors fail to consider adequately the possible unintended consequences of military intervention, even when genuinely aimed at the promotion of human rights. They do acknowledge all sorts of lower-order potential problems, such as US forces inadvertently supporting and strengthening members of the protected victim groups in possible retribution against perpetrator groups. But intervention has the risk of radically destabilizing the area of the MARO and far beyond, as there is good evidence occurred through the US intervention in Iraq.[40] Even indirect intervention has the risk of dramatically increasing the military capacity of potentially dangerous players in a situation, as the US support for the Afghan resistance to the Soviet invasion that helped create Osama bin Laden and others like him shows.[41] Direct intervention can do as much as being the precipitating factor in a major genocide, as in the case of the US bombing of Cambodia that perhaps became the key factor in the rise to power of the Khmer Rouge and their subsequent genocide of 1.8 million Cambodians.[42] Central to any MARO process has to be consideration of such "doomsday" possibilities, given how frequently they have occurred in the practice of "targeted" or "limited" military operations.

Issue 7: Post-Intervention Recovery and Economic Development

Post-intervention economic development is discussed repeatedly in the handbook. For instance, the authors state,

> Other mid-term goals [of the post-MARO process] include prioritized restoration of key infrastructure in large population centers, development of international trade, establishment of a banking system, implementation of World Bank and International Monetary Fund programs, and creating an environment that attracts foreign investment. (95)

Two important issues emerge. First, there is no discussion in the handbook of any local decision-making in post-intervention economic reconstruction and development. While there is some discussion of the development of governing institutions, especially if the home government is defeated as part of the MARO or collapses because of it, the involvement of such entities as the World Bank and International Monetary

Fund (IMF) is assumed rather than left to the affected population. Second, a number of elements in "reconstruction" and "economic development" raise questions about the ultimate result of these processes. For instance, what does "creating an environment that attracts foreign investment" mean? It can mean foreign exploitation of local workers and foreign control of the economy generally, which undermines rather than promotes the human rights of the local population. In fact, the World Bank and IMF are often viewed with good cause as mechanisms of foreign (US) domination and exploitation of a developing economy.[43] Two core criticisms must be addressed in any responsible discussion of these two entities in relation to human rights: that the IMF and World Bank function to re-mold economic and political systems to open them up to US corporations[44] (typically rendering the affected areas providers of cheap labor and/or raw materials) and that they impose conditions of damaging debt on weaker economies that bring them under the control of foreign creditors and provides significant economic benefits to those creditors through devastating losses to targeted societies and the individuals within them.[45] At the very least, the serious effects of structural adjustments imposed by the IMF on local economies—the driving down of wages, lowering of safety and environmental standards, and so forth[46]—should be discussed in the handbook, so that planners can decide whether they should promote or block IMF involvement in the post-MARO process.

There is an additional concern. The general model presented in sections of the handbook dealing with the post-military process seems to follow the post-2003 Iraq script rather closely. Despite statements from official US military and other sources, from an outside perspective it is fairly clear that this "reconstruction" has not succeeded well and has also benefited companies such as Blackwater Worldwide[47] and Halliburton[48] much more than the Iraqi people.

Issue 8: Recycling

The authors bill the *MARO Handbook* as a radical new departure in military and human rights thinking. In fact, in the concluding remarks to the body of the work, they include the overused quote from William James, "A new idea is first condemned as ridiculous and then dismissed as trivial, until finally, it becomes what everybody knows" (101). The problem is that *MARO* appears to be much more a recycling of old military ideas than it is the development of anything new. In fact, it is unclear if any of the military strategies or tactics presented is a genuinely new approach, despite the insistence by the authors that MAROs are in some crucial aspects very different from traditional military operations (17; 23–29).

This recycling is similar to the absence of historical analysis highlighted above. The recycling is in fact ahistorical and uncritical; models that appear to have been standard operating procedure for military operations are simply imported into the handbook without critical evaluation or explicit modification. As already suggested, the most frequent model is the 2003 Iraq invasion and subsequent counter-insurgency war and occupation. *MARO*'s Main Approach 1, in fact, is explicitly modeled on "the occupation of Iraq after the 2003 invasion" (72). It is rather telling is that, despite the fact that five of the nine members of the MARO Project Core Planning Group working with the three main authors were involved in the Iraq invasion and/or its aftermath, there is no critical discussion of what worked and did not work in Iraq. Approach 5 is also based in part on Operation Enduring Freedom, again without critical commentary (80–81).

Other elements are also present. For instance, Approach 2 (72–75) is acknowledged as a classic strategy of counterinsurgency dating from 1964 and was pre-

sumably a mainstay approach to the Vietnam War. Given what would have to be understood as its failure in Vietnam and how much has changed militarily in 46 years, one would expect that if this approach was retained as an option it would have been updated to address the shortcomings experienced in Vietnam. Of special concern is that civilian noncombatants suffered tremendous casualties by US forces in Vietnam, and counterinsurgency techniques had a significant role in producing those casualties.[49] Approach 5 imports without comment an element that was used in Vietnam as well, the use of military "advisors" for partner forces (80).

Approach 6 is based on methods used in Iraq from 1991 to 2003 and the former Yugoslavia from 1995 to 1999, especially "the use of air . . . power to strike perpetrators or isolate them with . . . no-fly zones" (82). While there is a discussion of some of the negatives that presumably has some basis in these two concrete situations, given what must be understood as an overall failure in the former Yugoslavia prior to 1999 as well as Iraq after the Gulf War, planners would benefit from a detailed analysis of how these methods could be updated and modified to address their past shortcomings. Instead, they appear to have been simply imported into the handbook.

By presenting seven different approaches (70–87), *MARO*'s authors create the impression of comprehensive flexibility, but if each option is more or less some combination of commonly used military strategies, many of which have not been particularly successful even in non-MARO situations and some of which seem not to be good fit MARO situations, then the appearance of a diversity of options is misleading. What is needed is not a smorgasbord of the same old foods, but some genuinely new dishes. It is not enough to have a large number of options if those options are largely well-worn; what is needed are new options that are generated out of the specific needs of a MARO situation, not applied from very different kinds of military situations.

Power Politics

As stated above, good intentions do not guarantee good acts. This is not just a question of choosing between motives and consequences as the measure of morality. Even good intentions can mask deeper attitudes, commitments, and processes that undermine a stated commitment to human rights. Of course, the standard response is that the reality on the ground is messy and the best that can be done is a partial promotion of human rights that might involve setting aside or even directly violating some human rights. This is not true. And it is not good enough.

Two things come out of the foregoing examination of the *MARO Handbook*. First, perhaps the most effective strategy for the US military to promote human rights is for it to stop abusing human rights. The US military leadership and community as a whole could dramatically reduce sexual violence against women and girls by stopping their own violations of women within the US military and women and girls in the zones in which the US military operates in peacetime and wartime. The US government could dramatically reduce the number and intensity of human rights violations throughout Latin America by closing the School of the Americas and the Guantanamo prison. The US government and military could promote human rights by ending military occupations, not invading other countries to create refugee problems, and not supporting dictators and other governments—for instance, with military aid—that violate the rights of their own people and others. A good 3,000 people would not have been killed in Chile during the 1970s and 1980s if the US government had not aided and abetted the coup by arch human rights abuser Augusto Pinochet against the democratically elected president Salvador Allende.[50] The United States could have perhaps saved tens of thousands of Iranians from

the 1950s to the present if it had not helped oust democratically elected Prime Minister Mohammed Mossadegh in 1953 and installed arch human rights abuser Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi.[51] Not only would this have prevented his mass violence and other abuses,[52] but also, if he had not come to power, there presumably would never have been the 1979 revolution that installed Islamic extremists who themselves have violated human rights extensively. The United States could have saved 100,000 to 200,000 Mayans had we simply not provided prior military support and later political support to oppressive governments and genocidal dictators in Guatemala.[53] And so on.

Of course, from the perspective of the ideologically closed discursive framework that does not allow even the slightest criticism of the US military, such points will be dismissed as impractical or representative of some sort of extremist agenda. But, it is one thing to justify US military action based on power politics and "national interests" and another to claim that it is in fact what is best for those in MARO areas. It is quite possible that military intervention performed correctly *and morally*— without economic, political, or other strings attached—could have saved lives and promoted human rights in some historical circumstances and that there will be cases in the future in which this will also be true. But it is just as likely that in more future cases military intervention carried out for real or pretended humanitarian purposes will result in the long run in equal if not greater human rights abuses than those being opposed. Before MAROs are likely consistently to have positive benefits without significant negative impacts, there needs to be a dramatic improvement in US military culture and the US government's relationship to human rights. Respect for human rights is not controlled by a switch, which can be turned on for MAROs and turned off for US-supported coups. One military will engage in both, and the disrespect for human rights in one context will inevitably bleed into the other.

The real question here is not how to carry out MAROs, but why MAROs have come to be seen as important for the future of human rights. Though the authors do recognize that MAROs are just one option among many to support human rights, they are pushing for their handbook to become an official tool of the US military and for the MARO Concept to be an important human rights idea for policy makers and military leaders. The only moment of (partial) moral self-reflection in the entire handbook supports this push. It occurs with a throwaway comment at the end of the discussion of the seven military approaches to a MARO: "an eighth approach is simply to do nothing (or to conduct mild, *pro-forma* suasion efforts). For a variety of reasons policymakers may opt for this method, as has been demonstrated throughout history" (87). This is not a criticism of the US military, but in fact a criticism of US policy makers who have not used military intervention when it has, in the authors' view, been called for. Where did the notion that policy makers who do not use military intervention are morally culpable come from?

MARO appears to be a consequence of the shift in human rights thinking driven by such figures as Samantha Power. Her 2002 Pulitzer Prize-winning "*A Problem from Hell*"[54] is a polemic that reduces the problem of genocide in the twentieth century largely to one of the failure of the United States and other powers to intervene militarily. In Power's work there is nothing of the truly complex process of genocide and absolutely no moment of self-awareness of the role that the United States played as a perpetrator of or accessory to genocide in a number of cases, such as the genocides of various Native American groups, Indonesia's 1965 genocide, the Guatemala Genocide, the East Timor Genocide.[55] Genocides are reduced to the

crises they eventually became and presented in such a way that, in most cases, only a military solution appears to have been reasonable—which Power then promotes again and again. The core is an emotional appeal presenting the executions of genocides, exposure of the attitudes of and omissions by outside parties, and the justified outrage at what happened, in order to mold public opinion to see military responses as the right solution to human rights crises. Instead of untangling the knot of causal factors to locate the full range of culpable as well as innocent actions and omissions by the United States and other state and international actors that helped produce or supported genocide, Power ignores the genesis of crises, which makes it "self-evident" that the only thing that could have been done was military intervention. By dismissing hesitation as an indifference to human suffering or a sacrifice of human rights to other agendas, with either resulting in a lack of will to intervene militarily, this approach closes off the kinds of debates over the use of military power that are necessary for it to be used correctly and with respect for human rights—as well as offering a quick fix for problems that allows the United States to continue with global military, economic, and political policies that have contributed to many human rights crises, including genocides, that Power conveniently omits from her book.

The accomplishment of works such as hers has been to compress the framework of discussion of genocide and related violent mass human rights violations from a full consideration of how they might be prevented—including by having the United States simply stop its military and other support for human rights abusers—and a genuine analysis from various angles of the question of military intervention into a simple binary opposition: either you are against genocide and other mass human rights abuses and thus support military intervention or you are one of the bystanders who lets them happen. The *MARO Handbook* "operationalizes" this privileging of military solutions. It clearly follows and supports the Power shift. As the authors put it,

> While military force will not always be required to halt mass atrocity, the MARO Project helps make credible, effective options more likely and it better prepares intervening forces in the event that they are directed to act. In this respect, the Project can help shift the policy debate from "whether" to "how to intervene to stop widespread violence against civilians. (5)

It does not occur to the authors that the real issue is how to prevent violent mass violations of human rights, and that addressing this problem in a serious way could very well obviate the issue on which they focus.

If one must assume that military intervention is the solution to some human rights crises, the question is still not "How should military intervention be carried out?" The question is, rather, "Is the US military a force that can perform MAROs in an appropriate manner?" or "How can the US military's relationship to human rights be transformed so that it would be highly likely to consistently perform MAROs in an appropriate manner?" The *MARO Handbook* might indeed be ahead of its time, but not for the reasons the authors fear. It is ahead of its time because a US military force that could intervene on behalf of human rights in a genuine and morally correct way and a US government that could choose this path for the right reasons do not yet exist. And without them, intervention is not a path to human rights promotion, but a road to inevitable abuse. What is needed now is a deep transformation of US policy and military culture toward a genuine concern for human rights *throughout* their activities and institutions rather than a spotty concern

for human rights when no military or other "national interests" conflict with it or when intervention will support those interests. That transformation must include radical changes in (1) the present orientation of the US military toward violence against women and girls and (2) its attitude toward civilians in combat and occupied areas. At an individual level, there are presumably those in the rank-and-file and leadership of the US military who struggle on behalf of human rights in these deep ways already. If the *MARO Handbook* does not support their quest, perhaps the kinds of analyses contained in this *Genocide Studies and Prevention* special issue will.

Notes

1. See, for instance, Gareth Evans and Mohamed Sahnoun, Co-Chairs, *The Responsibility to Protect: The Report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty,* (Ottawa, ON: International Development Research Centre, December 2001); Joe Lauria, "U.S. Backs Implementing U.N. Doctrine Against Genocide," *Wall Street Journal,* 30 July 2009, http://online.wsj.com/article/SB124890587995691589.html (accessed 5 January 2011); and Jim Lobe, "Broad Support for U.N. Intervention Against Genocide," *Inter Press Service*, 5 April 2007, http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=37238 (accessed 5 January 2011).

2. See, for instance, Human Rights Center; Religion, Politics and Globalization Program; and International Human Rights Law Clinic, University of California, Berkeley, *The Responsibility to Protect (R2P): Moving the Campaign Forward,* October 2007, http://www.responsibilitytoprotect.org/files/R2P-Final-Report%201.pdf (accessed 5 January 2011), especially 2, 4, 10, 50, and 65.

3. Because the power to commit the United States to a war that was once exclusively Congressional can now be exercised by either the legislative or executive branch of the US government, "war" here means any sustained military action initiated by either branch. Any conceptual difference between these is not relevant to the distinction between usual military operations and MAROs.

   For details on the differences between war and MAROs, see Sarah Sewall, Dwight Raymond, and Sally Chin, *MARO: Mass Atrocity Response Operations; A Military Planning Handbook* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 2010), 26–28, 44–49. Subsequent references appear parenthetically in the text.

4. Regarding Rwanda, particularly the perpetrators' disregard for the UN, see *Frontline: The Triumph of Evil,* produced by Mike Robinson and Ben Loeterman (Boston: PBS/WGBH, 1999). Regarding the former Yugoslavia, see the 1995 "Exchange of Letters between Simon Wiesenthal and President Bill Clinton on the Prosecution of the Perpetrators of Genocide in the Former Yugoslavia," *Encyclopedia of Genocide,* ed. Israel Charny, vol. 2 (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1999), 639–40, especially if read against subsequent actions against Kosovo Albanians by Serbian perpetrators despite the 1995 indictments of some of the perpetrators for the violence of the early 1990s.

5. Michael Maren, *The Road to Hell: The Ravaging Effects of Foreign Aid and International Charity* (New York: Free Press/Simon & Schuster, 1997).

6. *Frontline: The Triumph of Evil.*

7. Madeleine K. Albright and William S. Cohen, *Preventing Genocide: A Blueprint for U.S. Policymakers* (Washington, DC: Genocide Prevention Task Force, 2008).

8. *Genocide Studies and Prevention* 4, no. 2 (2009).

9. René Lemarchand, "Genocide in Rwanda and Burundi," *Encyclopedia of Genocide,* ed. Israel Charny, vol. 2 (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1999): 508–13, 511.

10. See René Lemarchand, "The 1994 Rwanda Genocide," in *Century of Genocide: Critical Essays and Eyewitness Accounts,* 3rd ed., ed. Samuel Totten and William S. Parsons (New York: Routledge, 2009): 483–504, 490.

11. The sentence ends with "counteract" without a direct object, so "counteract" here presumably should be read as "counter act"—to react in a situation given this or that set of perpetrator motivations.

12. See, for instance, Jeffrey Sachs, "Iraq's Civilian Dead Get No Hearing in the United States," in *In the Name of Democracy: American War Crimes in Iraq and Beyond,* ed. Jeremy Brecher, Jill Cutler, and Brendan Smith (New York: Metropolitan Books/Henry Holt, 2005), 52–54.

13. On the abuse of "terrorist attack threat levels" see, for instance, Garance Franke-Ruta, "Ridge Says He Was Pressured to Elevate Threat Warning," *Washington Post,* 21 August 2009, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/08/21/ AR2009082103036.html (accessed 5 January 2011).

14. For a discussion of this implication of the "terrorist attack threat levels," see John Paul and Sangyoub Park, "With the Best of Intentions: The Color Coded Homeland Security Advisory System and the Law of Unintended Consequences," *Research and Practice in Social Sciences* 4, no. 2 (2009): 1–13, http://www.researchandpractice.com/articles/4–2/ paul_park-1.pdf.

15. In their 12 November 2002 report, Jane Salvage, June Crown, Richard Garfield, Douglas Holdstock, Victor W. Sidel, and John Yudkin developed a projection of the significant civilian impact likely resulting from an attack on Iraq based to a large extent on empirical data from the 1990–1991 Gulf War. Thus, a massive civilian death toll from military operations is foreseeable. See Salvage et al., *Collateral Damage: The Health and Environmental Costs of War on Iraq* (London: Medact/International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, 2002).

16. Sachs, "Iraq's Civilian Dead."

17. See, for example, "Nato's Bombing Blunders," *BBC News*, 1 June 1999, http://cdnedge.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/340966.stm (accessed 5 January 2011).

18. See, for instance, "Following NewsMax's Lead, Limbaugh Called Sheehan an 'Anti-American War Protester,'" *MediaMatters for America*, 23 September 2005, http://mediamatters.org/mmtv/200509230008 (accessed 5 January 2011).

19. An example of this kind of approach is Brett D. Schaefer and Steven Groves, "The U.S. Should Not Join the International Criminal Court," *Heritage Foundation Executive Summary Backgrounder* no. 2307 (17 August 2009), http://s3.amazonaws.com/thf_media/ 2009/pdf/bg2307.pdf (accessed 5 January 2011).

20. See, for instance, Stephanie Busari, "Charity: Aid Workers Raping, Abusing Children," *CNN World*, 27 May 2008, http://articles.cnn.com/2008-05-27/world/charity.aidworkers_1_ jasmine-whitbread-children-uk-report-abuse?_s=PM:WORLD (accessed 5 January 2011); Sarah Elizabeth Mendelson, *Barracks and Brothels: Peacekeepers and Human Trafficking in the Balkans* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2005).

21. Should such abuses be considered "collateral damage," that is, civilian casualties, in addition to what is usually meant by that term—civilians killed by a stray bomb and so forth?

22. Susan Brownmiller, *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1975), 86–113.

23. On the rape of Okinawan and Japanese women by US servicemen, see Cynthia Enloe, *Maneuvers: The International Politics of Militarizing Women's Lives* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 111–23; Yumi Otagaki, "Japanese Police Arrest U.S. Marine Suspected of Sexual Assault in Okinawa," *Bloomberg*, http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2010–08–04/japan-police-arrest-u-s-marine-for-sexual-assault-in-okinawa-kyodo-says.html (accessed 6 January 2011); Chris Hogg, "New US Rape Allegation in Okinawa," *BBC News*, 21 February 2008, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/7256056.stm (accessed 6 January 2011); Calvin Sims, "3 Dead Marines and a Secret of Wartime Okinawa," *New York Times*, 1 June 2000, http://www.nytimes.com/2000/06/01/world/3-dead-marines-and-a-secret-of-wartime-okinawa.html?pagewanted=1 (accessed 6 January 2011). On murders as well as rapes by

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U.S. servicemen, see Suzuyo Takazato, "Violence against Women under Long-Term U.S. Military Station in Okinawa," *U.S. Military Bases in Japan—An Overview*, http://www.jca.apc.org/wsf_support/2004doc/WSFJapUSBaseRepoFinalAll.html#Violence_against_Women (accessed 6 January 2011).

24. See, for instance, "U.S. Soldiers Accused of Raping Iraqi Women Escape Prosecution," *Democracy Now*, 29 March 2005, http://www.democracynow.org/2005/3/29/u_s_soldiers_accused_of_raping (accessed 6 January 2011); Ghali Hassan, "Iraqi Women Under US Occupation," *Global Research*, 6 May 2005, http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=158 (accessed 6 January 2011).

25. Reuters, "Soldier Weeps Describing Role in Rape and Killings in Iraq," *New York Times*, 22 February 2007, http://www.nytimes.com/2007/02/22/world/middleeast/22confess.html (accessed 6 January 2011).

26. See, for instance, "U.S. Soldiers Accused of Raping Iraqi Women Escape Prosecution."

27. In 2001, the School of the Americas' name was changed to the "Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation" because of the bad press it was receiving. The program remains the same, however. For information on the School of the Americas/Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation's important role in extensive human rights violations across Latin America, see *School of the Americas Watch*'s documentation and analysis, www.soaw.org.

28. *USA: Human Dignity Denied: Torture and Accountability in the "War on Terror,"* Amnesty International Report, 25 October 2004, http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/AMR51/145/2004/en/b6ab0f58-d570–11dd-bb24–1fb85fe8fa05/amr511452004en.html (accessed 6 January 2011).

29. Anne G. Sadler, Brenda M. Booth, Brian L. Cook, and Bradley N. Doebbeling, "Factors Associated with Women's Risk of Rape in the Military Environment," *American Journal of Industrial Medicine* 43 (2003): 262–73, http://www.veteransforpeace.org/files/pdf/Sadler%20Military%20Environment.pdf.

30. See, for instance, Nancy Gibbs, "Sexual Assaults on Female Soldiers: Don't Ask, Don't Tell," *Time*, 8 March 2010, http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1968110,00.html (accessed 5 January 2011); Eric Schmitt, "Military Women Reporting Rapes by U.S. Soldiers," *New York Times*, 26 February 2004, http://www.nytimes.com/2004/02/26/national/26MILI.html?th (accessed 6 January 2011).

31. Helen Benedict, "The Private War of Women Soldiers," *Salon*, 7 March 2007, http://www.salon.com/news/feature/2007/03/07/women_in_military/ (accessed 5 January 2011).

32. Sadler et al., "Factors Associated with Women's Risk of Rape," 270.

33. Actually, while one might suppose that any rapes of US servicewomen that occur during a MARO would have occurred in the non-MARO situation of the relevant units if they had not been deployed on the MARO, one might be justified in counting any rapes of US servicewomen during a MARO as part of the overall human rights abuse record for that MARO.

34. See, for instance, Ward Churchill, *A Little Matter of Genocide: Holocaust and Denial in the Americas, 1492 to the Present* (San Francisco, CA: City Lights, 1998).

35. See Ervin Staub, *The Roots of Evil: The Origins of Genocide and Other Group Violence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Vahakn Dadrian, *The History of the Armenian Genocide: Ethnic Conflict from the Balkans to Anatolia to the Caucasus*, 3rd rev. ed. (Providence, RI: Berghahn Books, 1997).

36. This, it should be noted, is not the same as the belligerence by some military leaders and personnel, hawkish politicians, and related nonmilitary personnel, such as the police, against civilian and military personnel who raise any criticism of the military explicitly. This latter phenomenon seems to be a function of a distinct dominance mentality that is also embedded in military culture and impels treating all those who do not conform to the worldview, practices, and attitudes of and even domination by the military as

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enemies to be attacked and subdued rather than interlocutors in a democratic exchange of ideas.

37. See, for instance, Graham Paterson, "Alan Greenspan Claims Iraq War Was Really for Oil," *The Sunday Times*, 16 September 2007, http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/article2461214.ece (accessed 6 January 2011).

38. For the mainstream recognition and justification of contemporary US imperialism, see Max Boot, "American Imperialism? No Need to Run Away from Label," *USA Today*, 5 May 2003. http://www.usatoday.com/news/opinion/editorials/2003–05–05-boot_x.htm (accessed 6 January 2011).

39. On these cases, see for instance the sources cited in Notes 51, 52, 53, and 55 and relevant entries in the *Encyclopedia of Genocide*, ed. Israel Charny, vol. 1–2 (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1999).

40. Rana Abdul-Aziz, "Iraq: Past, Present, and Future—A View from the Ground" (lecture, Center for the Study of Human Rights, Worcester State College, 5 April 2004).

41. Michael Moran, "Bin Laden Comes Home to Roost," MSNBC, 24 August 1998, http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/3340101 (accessed 6 January 2011).

42. Taylor Owen and Ben Kiernan, "Bombs over Cambodia," *The Walrus*, October 2006, 62–69, http://www.yale.edu/cgp/Walrus_CambodiaBombing_OCT06.pdf (accessed 22 April 2009).

43. "World Bank and IMF," *Global Exchange Fact Sheet*, http://www.globalexchange.org/campaigns/wbimf/facts.html (accessed 6 January 2011).

44. "World Bank and IMF."

45. M. P. Giyose, "The Debt to the Indebted: Reparations, Odious Debt, and Their Global Implications," *Armenian Review* (forthcoming).

46. Anup Shah, "Structural Adjustment—a Major Cause of Poverty," *Global Issues*, http://www.globalissues.org/article/3/structural-adjustment-a-major-cause-of-poverty (accessed 6 January 2011).

47. See, for example, Mark Mazzetti, "2 Ex-Workers Accuse Blackwater Security Company of Defrauding the U.S. for Years," *New York Times*, 10 February 2010, http://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/11/us/11suit.html?ref=blackwaterusa (accessed 13 January 2011); and Yochi J. Dreazen, "Audit Finds That U.S. Overpaid Blackwater," *Wall Street Journal*, 17 June 2009 (accessed 13 January 2011).

48. See, for instance, Griff Witte, "Army to End Expansive, Exclusive Halliburton Deal," *Washington Post*, 12 July 2006, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/07/11/AR2006071101459_pf.html (accessed 13 January 2011); Jane Corbin, "BBC Uncovers Lost Iraq Billions," *BBC News*, 10 June 2008, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/7444083.stm (accessed 13 January 2011).

49. See, for instance, Ken Silverman, "Six Questions for Deborah Nelson on Vietnam War Crimes, and Why They Matter Now," *Harper's Magazine*, 2 February 2009, http://www.harpers.org/archive/2009/02/hbc-90004324 (accessed 6 January 2011).

50. Samuel Totten, "Pinochet, Augusto, and a New Legal Precedent Toward Extradition on Charges of Genocide," *Encyclopedia of Genocide*, ed. Israel Charny, vol. 2 (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1999), 460–62.

51. "Obama Admits US Involvement in 1953 Iran Coup," *Agence France-Presse*, 4 June 2009, http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5j8-a9Bpq471PDjYA2z6WazPmIZqw (accessed 6 January 2011); David Barsamian, "What We Say Goes: Pakistan, Iran, and US Foreign Policy" (lecture, Center for the Study of Human Rights, Worcester State College, 12 September 2008).

52. See Ryszard Kapuscinski, *Shah of Shahs*, trans. William R. Brand and Katarzyna Mroczkowska-Brand (New York: Vintage, 1992).

53. "The Cold War, National Security Doctrine and the Role of the United States," *Guatemala: The Memory of Silence*, Report of the Commission of Historical Clarification, 25 February 1999, http://shr.aaas.org/guatemala/ceh/report/english/conc1.html (accessed 22 April 2009),

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para. 13–14; Susan Jonas, "Guatemala: Acts of Genocide and Scorched-Earth Counter-insurgency War," *Century of Genocide: Critical Essays and Eyewitness Accounts*, 3rd ed., ed. Samuel Totten and William S. Parsons (New York: Routledge, 2009), 377–411.

54. Samantha Power, *"A Problem from Hell": America in the Age of Genocide* (New York: Basic Books, 2002).

55. On the US role in the East Timor Genocide, see Matthew Jardine, *East Timor: Genocide in Paradise (The Real Story)* (Monroe, ME: Odonian Press, 1996).