

# Lessons in Nation-Building: The American Reconstruction of Germany and Japan

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KIERAN NEESON, OCT 20 2008

In this paper I will assess an important element of American foreign policy, that of nation building. I will focus on the American reconstruction of Germany and Japan in the aftermath of the Second World War and to evaluate their impact and successes and to ascertain whether those lessons on nation-building can be implemented today in Afghanistan. According to the RAND Corporation the definition of nation-building is, "The use of armed force in the aftermath of a conflict to underpin an enduring transition to democracy".[1] Few national undertakings are as complex, costly, and time consuming as reconstructing the governing institutions of foreign societies. Even a combination of unsurpassed military power and abundant wealth does not guarantee success, let alone quick results. The post-conflict nation-building exercises being carried out in Afghanistan and Iraq at present, will not only determine how safe the US will be in the future and how it will be viewed around the world; they will also help determine what the next generation of nation-building efforts will look like in the coming years. The lessons of post-conflict nation-building in Germany and Japan help point the way.

Historically, nation-building attempts by outsider powers are notable mainly for their bitter disappointments, not their triumphs. America is undoubtedly the world's most active nation builder. In the words of Robert Orr, "the US is in the nation-building business".[2] At present the US is more involved in nation-building than anytime in its history, and it looks likely that post-conflict reconstruction will be the fixture of international life in the twenty-first century. Thus, it is essential that America and the international community learn from the lessons of the past.

This huge involvement in nation-building efforts by the US is in stark contrast to what the present Bush administration believed the American military should be used for. The Bush administration came to office concerned about the overuse of the military. As early as January 2000, the future US National Security Advisor and Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice was arguing that the military was meant to be a lethal instrument, "not a civilian police force. It is not a political referee. And it is most certainly not designed to build civilian society".[3] Yet by 2003, the Bush administration had deployed a significant number of American forces to Afghanistan and Iraq, where they are deeply involved in fundamental nation-building efforts. Judging from the post-Cold War nation-building attempts, it could be questioned whether the US is prepared for the challenges of the twenty-first century. For all its ability to wage war, the US military is unprepared to mount major stability operations and secure a lasting peace. Furthermore, US civilian agencies lack the tools to take the job over from the military. Likewise, the American government's capacity to plan for and oversee both civilian and military post-conflict nation-building operations is wanting.

Since its founding America has used its armed forces abroad on more than 200 occasions. However, not all were nation-building efforts. To distinguish nation-building efforts from ordinary military interventions Pei and Kasper from the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace apply three strict criteria, (1) practical effects, if not the declared goal of US intervention must be regime change or survival of a regime that would otherwise collapse, (2) the deployment of a large number of ground troops, (3) the use of American military and civilian personnel in the political administrations of the target country.[4] On the basis of these criteria only 16 of over 200 US military interventions since 1900 are considered nation-building attempts. Furthermore, the overall success rate is only 4 out of these 16 – both Germany and Japan along with Grenada and Panama.

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Military occupation of a defeated foe, as in the case of Germany and Japan, is more complex and far more difficult than the commitments that have also tested the US in places such as Bosnia, Kosovo, Somalia, and Haiti. The German and Japanese occupations came at the end of long wars with large numbers of troops and a considerable logistics capacity deployed across the theatre that were available to pivot towards post-war initiatives. There was ample planning and legitimacy, and little anti-Americanism or regional instability to be concerned with. America had prevailed in a global war with a determinate foe, and domestically, Americans saw the occupations as the obligatory closure of a terrible but unnecessary episode. The post-war occupations of Germany and Japan offer examples of occupation environments and character of commitment that post-conflict environments routinely require.

As the sole superpower, the US has a dominant interest in maintaining a coherent and stable international order. Since the end of the Cold War, America has invested significant military, political, and economic resources into conducting nation-building operations in the aftermaths of conflicts or civil unrest in attempts at maintaining a stable international order.[5] However none of these efforts has proved to be successful in terms of creating democratic societies as was done in Germany and Japan. The post-Second World War occupations of Germany and Japan were America's first experiences with the use of military force in the aftermath of a conflict to underpin rapid and fundamental societal, political, and economic transformation. Both were comprehensive efforts that aimed to engineer major social, political, and economic reconstruction. Their success demonstrated that democracy was transferable; that societies could, under certain circumstances, be encouraged to transform themselves; and that major transformation could endure. The two cases of Germany and Japan set a standard for post-conflict nation-building that has not since been matched. It is for these reasons that I choose the nation-building efforts in Germany and Japan as a basis for this paper.

The occupations of Germany and Japan were huge operations, both in terms of financial aid and the numbers of American military that was involved. While the terms nation-building or reconstruction may not fully capture the scope of such operations, they do come as close as possible to the full range of activities and objectives involved. As they were such huge operations, there are many elements of nation-building to be considered. But for the purpose of this paper I will focus on three key areas. They are political, economic, and educational reconstruction. This is not to say that other important areas of reconstruction such as humanitarian aid, the legal and justice system, or the press and radio are not important, on the contrary, they were vital areas of the reconstruction that was to guarantee the overall success of the nation-building exercises, however to focus on those other issues would be another thesis in itself.[6]

Despite their differences culturally, both Germany and Japan were remarkably similar in their reasons for their historical aversion to liberal democratic ways. Both had unified and setup a strong central government supported by a resolute military around the same time – Japan in 1868 and Germany in 1871. The landowning Junkers in Germany and the Oligarchs in Japan manned key bureaucracies and the highest levels of the military. Workers, peasants, and the new middle class were excluded from power. Moreover, economic elites – big business – identified with strong authoritarian government in both countries. There were democratic developments in Germany and Japan – both adopted constitutions that allowed for elected parliaments.

However, authoritarian forces never accepted democracy's mandate. Despite their differences, in three key respects, both countries were not liberal or democratic – parliaments did not control governments (weak democracy); mercantilist policies of national economic development were pursued; and militarism was the primary instrument of foreign policy.[7] It is because of these reasons that my focus is primarily on political, economic, and educational reconstruction, after all political reconstruction and a strong peaceful democracy, where parliament and government are both representative and accountable, are fundamental to liberal democracy. Economic reconstruction is central in order to provide for equal distribution of wealth and a strong working and stable economy. And educational reconstruction is important as in both countries the schooling system had been a strong supporter for militarism that had led to war. Furthermore, it was a huge propaganda tool for both authoritarian governments. Education was a primary means of creating a democratic and peaceful Germany and Japan.

In the first part of this paper I will discuss the process of deconstruction in Germany and Japan. Before America and its Allies could democratically reconstruct both societies they had to deconstruct them, that is, using the process of

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demilitarisation, democratisation, decartelisation, denazification and the similar purges in Japan, they dismantled the pre-existing fascist regimes and began the process of reconstruction from 'hour zero'. I will present a fair description of the occupational directives and will define the principles of demilitarisation, democratisation, and decartelisation and further discuss the denazification process and the purges in Japan by primarily looking at the Nuremberg and Tokyo war crimes trials. The second part will be the in depth discussion of the nation-building efforts that occurred in the two case studies of Germany and Japan. I shall first define who was responsible for the reconstruction. I will then discuss the reconstruction in the chosen areas of politics, economics, and education, looking at elements such as, local and national elections and government, constitutions, the Marshall and Dodge Plans, and the schooling systems. In the final part I shall look at the on-going nation-building efforts being conducted in Afghanistan, and assess whether the successful elements of the nation-building efforts from Germany and Japan can be implemented. I will then sum-up with a conclusion considering such elements in nation-building as the cultural factor and the importance of history, among others. I will then identify the lessons learnt from Germany and Japan.

## Deconstruction

Before I discuss the elements of reconstruction in Germany and Japan it is essential for me to explain the process of deconstruction that America and its Allies pursued in both countries. In order to do this I must give a fair description of the American occupational directives in relation to the principles of demilitarisation, decartelisation, and democratisation. The principle of demilitarisation was fundamental to the Americans in order to eliminate both the German and Japanese war potential. On Germany the Potsdam Agreement stated that,

"In order to eliminate German war potential, the production of arms, ammunition and implements of war as well as all types of aircraft and sea-going ships shall be prohibited and prevented"[8]

In respect to Japan, part four of the Initial Post-Surrender Policy listed a series of reforms to be implemented, which included, "In the interest of economic demilitarisation there is to be a suspension and prohibition of military production." [9]

The purpose of the decartelisation principle was to breakdown the German and Japanese nation-centred, neo-mercantilist form of economic organisation which depended on state sponsorship of the country's economic growth through aggressive moves in world affairs. Thus both the German and Japanese economies would be decentralised. America was proposing a world economy sustained by principles of economic openness and interdependence. On Germany, Potsdam stated that,

"At the earliest practicable date, the German economy shall be decentralised for the purpose of eliminating the present excessive concentration of economic power as exemplified in particular by cartels, syndicates, trusts and other monopolistic arrangements." [10]

In Japan the decartelisation principle centred on the break-up of the small number of zaibatsu conglomerates that had been in control of the Japanese industries as they enjoyed preferential treatment from the Japanese government. In the interest of the promotion of democratic forces, the Initial Post-Surrender Policy for Japan stressed that the 'elimination of concentration in production and property rights – the policy of purging business leaders and breaking up of the zaibatsu was essential.[11]

Both the demilitarisation and decartelisation principles were designed to further enhance the fundamental principle of democratisation, which was the primary aim of the American occupying powers in Germany and Japan. At Potsdam, America and its Allies had agreed on Germany that their intention was to "prepare for the eventual reconstruction of German political life on a democratic basis and for the eventual cooperation in international life by Germany." [12] Similarly, in respect to Japan, the Potsdam Agreement declared that they looked forward to,

"a peacefully inclined and responsible government...established in accordance with the freely expressed will of the Japanese people...The Japanese government shall remove all obstacles to the revival and strengthening of democratic tendencies among the Japanese people. Freedom of speech, of religion, and of thought, as well as

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respect for fundamental human rights shall be established.”[13]

The central tenant to achieve these principles of demilitarisation, decartelisation, and democratisation was the denazification process in Germany and the similar purges throughout Japanese society. The policy of denazification throughout every aspect of German society, and the purges in Japan, was fundamental to the Americans in order to effectively reconstruct and democratise both countries. The basic principles of the denazification program were laid out in JCS1067, the American directives in Germany and at the Potsdam conference in August 1945. These principles focused on dismantling the political and legal structures that the Nazi party had created in Germany, arresting and punishing Nazi leaders and supporters, and excluding active Nazis from public life. JCS1067 stated that,

“All members of the Nazi party who have been more than nominal participants in its activities, all active supporters of Nazism or militarism and all other persons hostile to Allied purposes will be removed and excluded from public office and from positions of importance in quasi-public and private enterprises such as (1)civil, economic, and labour organisations, (2)corporations and other organisations in which the German government or subdivisions have a major financial interest, (3)industry, commerce, agriculture, and finance, (4)education, and (5)the press, publishing houses and agencies disseminating news and propaganda.”[14]

In August 1945 the US and its Allies signed a UN charter, creating the International Military Tribunal (IMT), to bring to justice some of the Nazi leaders responsible for the war. Each of the four occupying powers assigned leading jurists to serve as judges and prosecutors for the IMT. Twenty-four defendants were put on trial, three were acquitted, nine were imprisoned and twelve were sentenced to hang. Twelve subsequent Nuremburg Trials organised by the US government were conducted between 1946 and 1949. Indictments were filed against doctors who preformed forced medical experiments, judges who perverted the law, and industrialists, military leaders, and ministers who supported illegal Nazi policies. Of the one hundred and eighty-five tried, one hundred and forty-two were convicted.[15]

Similarly, with respect to Japan, the agenda for the occupation was drawn out in the Potsdam declaration, the Initial Post-Surrender Policy, and the classified JCS 1380/15. General MacArthur, who was Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers in Japan (SCAP), was instructed to implement punitive measures i.e the demobilisation of all Japanese armed forces, the carrying out of war crimes trials, the dissolution of the zaibatsu, and the purge of all public figures known to have sympathised or worked with the pre-1945 military regime.[16] In addition there were purges against military officers, government officials, politicians, and business leaders. On the 4<sup>th</sup> January 1946 General MacArthur issued SCAPIN550, providing the basis for a purge removing and excluding undesirable personnel from public office.

In May 1946 the US and its Allies established the International Military Tribunal for the Far East (IMTFE) to prosecute Japanese military and government leaders. In the trials that lasted two and half years, twenty-eight high-ranking Japanese political and military leaders, often referred to as the ‘Big Fish’, along with others were indicted on fifty-five counts in the most publicised Tokyo trials. The accused included former Prime Ministers, foreign ministers, economic and financial leaders, ambassadors, and senior military officers. MacArthur decided not to put Emperor Hirohito on trial. He was seen as a much needed leader and symbol for the new peaceful and democratic Japan to arise from the ashes of World War 2. In November 1948 all defendants were found guilty. Seven were sentenced to death (including the most famous, former PM Hideki Tojo); sixteen received life terms (though many were paroled in the 1950s), and two were given lesser terms. Two died during the trials and one was found insane. The Tokyo trials, while important, have often remained in the shadow of the more publicised Nuremburg trials in Germany.

There was still the issue, however, of a broader denazification program of the German and Japanese societies. In Germany, America and its Allies established tribunals to purge Nazis below the leadership level. However, although denazification was one of the principle objectives of the early occupation period, the proposed scale of denazification quickly proved impractical. It was a vexatious problem, because many millions of Germans had been involved in some way in Nazi organisations – the party itself, its paramilitary formation, the brown-shirted SA, youth movements, women’s organisation, and professional associations. Estimates presented by the Allies claimed that as many as

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twelve million Germans had participated in one way or another – about one third of the population.[17] The occupying powers did not have the manpower or resources to accomplish such a through purging of German society, and US forces found it impossible to administer the state without interacting with and utilising competent bureaucrats and officials, at least some of whom were complicit in the Nazi regime.[18] Instead, German officials largely ran the sector-level tribunals with US supervision. Out of over 3.5million who were considered chargeable, almost 900,000 were tried. This has led some to question the seriousness and thoroughness of the denazification program. Furthermore, according to Eisenburg, the figures obscure certain contradictory trends. As she points out,

“Many of the individuals who had been removed were quickly reinstated. Others were bumped down to subordinate positions from which they continued to exercise their previous authority. Then there were numerous instances where more than nominal Nazis were simply replaced by different more than nominal Nazis. And finally there were thousands of culpable people who were never removed at all”[19]

Other individuals especially those related to the economic realm were treated more leniently than others. There was a view that many German businessmen were more victims than agents of the Nazi regime, that their support for Hitler was seen as a by-product for profit rather than an expression of support for fascism. Furthermore, Americans who hoped to rebuild the German economy were convinced that the only people capable of directing this effort were those who had done it before. By the autumn of 1945 between 85,000 and 90,000 individuals were in custody. Most of these were political and military people suspected of committing crimes, whereas business leaders had been generally untouched. The most notable exceptions were the directors of the ‘big six’ German banks and of the sprawling IG Farben complex.[20]

The problem the Americans faced from the start of the occupation was finding replacements for the Nazi leaders and functionaries. The prevailing problem throughout Germany was one of political apathy, demoralisation and inertia. There was, though, some anti-Nazi political and social activity coming from an array of locally based antifascist organisations (Antifa)[21], however, the Americans believed that many of them had Communist links and refused to recognise their legitimacy.

In Japan, although the purges were punitive, they were not as severe as the denazification process in Germany. There were purges against military officers, government officials, politicians, business leaders, and teachers, although they were most notable on the military. By May 1948 some 220,000 people had been affected. Crucially, however, the Japanese bureaucracy remained virtually intact. Thus while 80 per cent of military personnel and 16 per cent of the pre-war Diet (Japanese parliament) was purged, less than 1 per cent of civil servants were affected.[22]

Long-term education to change the thinking of the German and Japanese populations was essential to the American occupying powers. The educational system, along with others such as the media were major vehicles for accomplishing reform and democratisation. Like that of the political and economic realm the character of the teachers and others in the education sector needed to be addressed. It was estimated that perhaps some 80 per cent of teachers in Germany were Nazi party members. However, it was in this domain that the Americans arguably made their least impact as it was left to the national authorities to deal with teacher certification in their own ways. In Japan, by 1949, over 942,000 teachers had been investigated, during the purges, and just over 3,000 were found unacceptable.[23] According to the historian Dower, the purges had a traumatic effect on Japanese teachers. He says that,

“The impact of defeat on teachers in general was exceptionally traumatic. Until the moment of surrender, they had been the drill sergeants of the emperor-system orthodoxies. Now, overnight, they were told not merely to think differently but to teach the new orthodoxies with the same passion they had brought to the old ones.”[24]

While the denazification program in Germany and the similar purges in Japan can be viewed as punitive the overall results were mixed. Many in the leadership level in both countries were sentenced to death, life in prison, or excluded from public life completely. However, to eliminate everyone that was involved in one way or another with the fascist movements that had existed in Germany and Japan was simply an impossible task. The Americans

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viewed the policies of demilitarisation, decartelisation, democratisation, and the purges of German and Japanese societies that went with them, as essential for the eventual reconstruction of both countries, and despite the problems that existed they can be viewed as successful.

## Germany

When Germany was divided after the ending of the Second World War each of the Allies established military governments in their respective sector. The American sector was organised under the command of the Office of the Military Government, United States (OMGUS). The first military governor of the US zone of occupation, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, was the military head of the theatre of operations. His deputy was General Lucius D. Clay. Eisenhower delegated almost all responsibility for OMGUS to Clay under the condition he was kept informed. Theoretically, according to the decisions arrived at in Potsdam, Germany was to be administered as a unity by a Four-Power Control Council in Berlin, a city in which each of the occupying powers was allocated a sector and to which their service personnel had right of access.

In practice, however, the Four-Power system never worked properly – although by 1947 the US and British zones merged economically and was known as the bi-zone, this I will discuss in the economic reconstruction section – and the Powers administered their zones without much reference to their colleagues.[25] Initial American policy for their sector was punitive, stressing denazification, demilitarisation, deindustrialisation, prolonged Allied occupation, a minimal standard of living for the German people, and tutelage in democracy. Consequently, due to the deepening of the Cold War and the onset of the Korean War, Americans changed their thinking about Germany, in the process reversing the policies of deindustrialisation and demilitarisation, de-emphasising denazification, and encouraging German economic recovery within a framework of European recovery, all while insisting on democratisation of the German polity.[26]

### *Political Reconstruction*

Germany did have some experience, albeit in a volatile form, of democracy in the years prior to Second World War. The Weimar Republic had a parliamentary government with active political parties. However with a number of radical parties on the political left and right, along with significant elements of German society that did not embrace Enlightenment traditions of personal liberty and self-government, adding to the economic crisis during the interwar years, which was marked by high unemployment and rampant inflation, German society facilitated the rise of Hitler and Nazism which led to the destruction of the Weimar Republic and ultimately World War 2. So for the Americans it was unclear whether the German people would accept Western democratic principles more readily after 1945.

Central to the objectives of the US and the other Western occupying powers was the transformation of German political life along democratic lines. According to the Potsdam Agreement,

“It is not the intention of the Allies to destroy or enslave the German people. It is the intention of the Allies that the German people be given the opportunity to prepare for the eventual reconstruction of their life on a democratic and peaceful basis. If their own efforts are steadily directed to this end, it will be possible for them in due course to take their place among the free and peaceful people of this world. Its principles were (1) local self-government shall be restored throughout Germany on democratic principles and in particular through elective councils as rapidly as is consistent with military security and the purposes of military occupation. (2) All democratic political parties with rights of assembly and of public discussion shall be allowed and encouraged throughout Germany. (3) Representative and elective principles shall be introduced into regional, provincial and state (Land) administrations as rapidly as may be justified by the successful application of these principles in local self-government.”[27]

Likewise JCS1067, for example, argued that one of the Allies most important objectives should be “the preparation for an eventual reconstruction of German political life on a democratic basis”.[28] This democratisation was to begin on the level of local government, as in the early post-war period, this was the only level of German bureaucracy that remained in any way intact. At first political parties were limited to the county (Kreis) level then later authorised at the state (Land) level. Land administrations were setup in the autumn of 1945 with the military government appointing

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(Lander) officials who were assigned full responsibility of internal affairs except security. Over time additional functions were transferred from OMGUS to various Lander administrations. In November 1945, OMGUS established a Council of Ministers-President (Landerrat) for the three states in the US sector. Although, at first it was advisory, by June 1946 the Landerrat had been assigned substantial executive functions and was the principle implementing agency for OMGUS. The first local elections in the American zone were held in the first half of 1946 starting with the smallest rural communities in January and ending with major cities in May. However, the restoration of local self-government was not complete with the return of the democratic voting process. German officials still had to report to the local Military Government detachment but with more of a reporting than a decision making function. Furthermore, some scholars, such as Boehling, claim that because the US postponed German grassroots political revival until August of 1945, this actually restricted and inhibited not only the development of new and renewed political parties, but also the potential for the democratic transformation of German society and economic order. She states that,

“The ban on political activity suppressed the potential for German grassroots democratic initiatives at a time when such initiatives would have had the strongest impact and could have provided the impetus for change. If US policy inhibited grassroots initiatives at the municipal level, where democracy and self-government were to be restored first, then there was even less potential for far-reaching democratisation on the Land, Zonal, or later the national level.”[29]

Other scholars such as Prowe, claim that the Americans underestimated the role of traditional German political and social forces in shaping German democracy. He says that post-war Germans were conditioned by two central, if not obvious facts. First, the whole population was deeply traumatised and insecure in the wake of Nazi defeat. Second and most important, post-war Germans remained steeped in values and assumptions with which they had grown up. Thus political and economic elites of Western Germany remained very much intact. He states that,

“Despite determined American efforts to promote democratisation from below, democracy could only come from above in war-torn, largely apathetic Germany. It was introduced through elites and old centralised organisations, which had dominated German political culture for a century and beyond.”[30]

However, compared to the Third Reich, local government was democratised in a sense that all political parties were eventually authorised and Germans were allowed to elect their own municipal officials. Furthermore, through its decree, the powerful Landerrat, or district president, was elected rather than appointed as they were previously. American policy also forced traditional German elites to open up their power networks to other groups in German society (labour, women, refugees, consumers). Thus the new West German democracy emerged as a mixed system. It had been significantly Americanised and yet continued to build on German traditions of old elites, powerful comprehensive organisations, state administrations, and political parties, and even remnants of economic democracy in the codetermination system.[31]

In 1949 the Allies permitted the first countrywide elections in the Western zones. This led to the creation of the Federal Republic of Germany and the election of Konard Adenauer as the first Chancellor. His government administered the new West German state at the national level, however ultimate sovereignty was vested in the Allied High Commission- the three Western occupying powers.[32] Konrad Adenauer worked with Allied military personnel to draft the ‘Basic Law’, the equivalent of a constitution for the Federal Republic of Germany. A committee of constitutional experts had gathered at Herrenchiesee to produce guiding principles for the Basic Law. It claimed German national unity as the ultimate aim. Avoiding the word ‘constitution’ in order not to condone the division of the German state, the Basic Law was approved by the new combined Allied military council – although at the early stages General Clay and OMGUS reviewed the Basic Law and concluded that there was too much centralisation of power and certain clauses needed to be rewritten – and was distributed among indigenous institutions created with the cautious introduction of democracy. The Basic Law called for loose federalism among small, semi-autonomous lands as well as checks and balances, with significant limits on executive powers.[33]

## *Economic Reconstruction*

Because the national German government was, for all intents and purposes, dissolved, the military governors of the

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zones were not only responsible for civil and political affairs but also for the economic recovery of their sectors. In the American sector, General Clay devoted much effort and resources to restarting German factories and mines. Despite initial discussions about prohibiting the reindustrialisation of Germany, German economic output recovered rapidly in 1946 as plants and mines were reopened. By the fourth quarter of 1946, industrial output in the US zone had risen to 2.4 times its fourth quarter 1945 level.[34] However, the situation in Western Europe after 1945 was in some ways similar to that after 1918, when an initial post-war boom had been followed by stagnation, inflation, and impoverishment for many European countries. Capital was scarce and governments were dependant on loans or other aid from the US. According to Nicholls,

“Had the situation which existed in Germany been allowed to continue, the whole of Western Europe would have experienced an economic and political crisis. This was partly because before the war Germany had been an important supplier of manufactured and semi-finished goods to neighbouring countries and a major market for their products. Unless Germany recovered, Europe could not recover.”[35]

In July 1946, the US Secretary of State, James Byrnes, suggested to a conference of Allied foreign ministers meeting in Paris that the German occupation zones should be merged into economic unity, without prejudice to any future political arrangements. By December of that year both the American and British agreed to the joint administration of their zones. The bi-zone, as it became known was formally established in January 1947. Both American and British economic polices moved towards creating an economic environment favourable for business. However, this was not enough. There was a series of strikes and a slowdown in the rate of economy recovery in both Germany and Europe which resulted in further concerns about recovery. This was enunciated in George Marshall's famous speech at Harvard University in June 1947, calling for a massive commitment of funds from the US to assist European reconstruction. The Marshall Plan as it became known contributed to rapid European and German economic growth and recovery between 1948 and 1951 when the program ended. Some scholars have attempted to belittle the impact of Marshall Aid on German post-war recovery for example Dobbins et al suggests that,

“In many ways, the period from 1946 to early 1948, before the official launch of the Marshall Plan, was more critical. During the period the US provided large funds and aid to a number of European countries, totalling \$3.4 billion in 1946 and \$4.7 billion in 1947. In addition, such international organisations as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and UN Relief and Rehabilitation Administration provided an additional \$1.2 billion and \$1.1 billion in 1946 and 1947 respectively. The United States also provided these funds and enabled Germany and the rest of Europe to pay for the large flow of imports that were instrumental for the post-war recovery.”[36]

It has also been suggested that the aid was slow to arrive and was only marginal in its effects. The latter point is, of course, true: Marshall Aid accounted for only a small percentage of West German GDP. But in crucial areas such as food and raw materials supplies, Marshall Aid paid the bills. Some have argued that German economic recovery was well under way by the time the Marshall Plan was passed. In addition, some consider the Erhard currency and fiscal reforms to have been more important for subsequent economic growth than the Marshall Plan was, especially since Germany received less assistance than other European countries.[37] From the American and also the British viewpoint a new currency was essential to West German recovery. Until money had real value no amount of reorganisation or grand economic planning was going to jolt the factories into production or induce the farmers to deliver their crops. Effectively, the Marshall Plan replaced JCS1067 with JCS1779 and pushed aside concerns over denazification and punitive reminders of defeat. The Marshall Plan saw the reconstruction of Germany and Europe in geo-strategic terms, a strong viable German economy and democracy being necessary not only for enhanced security against the Soviets[38], but also for the eventual exit of occupation troops.

## *Educational Reconstruction*

America and their Allies wanted to create a new political culture in Germany to replace that of the Third Reich. The secondary and university education system played a significant role in disseminating authoritarian, nationalist and racist views among young people. The Americans saw re-education as a prerequisite for the revival of self-government in Germany and therefore hoped to be able to change the structure of schooling in their zone.[39] In



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respect to education, the American instructions for General Clay in Germany read,

“In recognition of the fact that evil consequences to all free men flow from the suppression and corruption of truth and that education is a primary means of creating a democratic and peaceful Germany, you will continue to encourage and assist in the development of educational methods, institutions, programs and materials designed to further the creation of democratic attitudes and practices through education.”[40]

Similar to Japan, the problem with educational reform was threefold. First there was the problem of the character of the instructors, which I have discussed earlier with the denazification policy. The others were the revising of the curriculum and the organisation of the schooling system itself. With regards to the revising of the curriculum, the Americans and their Western Allies refused to sanction textbooks which glorified the Nazis or encouraged extreme nationalism; political, racial or religious discrimination; militarism; or cruelty and morbidity. A policy statement for German re-education, prepared for the Department of State by a committee of American educators in August 1946, called for the continued elimination of Nazism and extreme nationalism to encourage the development of a democratic and peaceful way of life,

“In the initial phases of control, Military Government has been concerned with the elimination of Nazi and militaristic doctrines and practices and the permanent exclusion of objectionable persons from posts of influence. These objections will continue to be its concern.”[41]

The educational reconstruction of German society was not just about the reinstatement of the pre-Nazi system. If that was the case the tasks would have been less difficult. According to Grace what happened was much more than that. As he put it, “it involved the creation of a democratic philosophy of education, a democratic plan for school organisation, and democratic practices, for German education had never been democratic”. [42] Prior to the Nazi regime all children attended Volksschule – elementary school – for at least four years. By the age of ten a decision was made to prepare them for a profession or trade. This was influenced in part by the social-economic status of the parents. Those selected for a profession entered higher schools, the others continued in Volksschule for another four years. Between 10-25 per cent entered higher school – university preparatory programs and fewer than 10 per cent of the vocational school children attended full-time.[43]

Under Nazism education was not only limited to formal educational facilities, but comprised every means by which the Party and state could dominate the minds and souls of an entire nation. The schooling system divided children between those, mainly of the working or lower-middle class, who would generally leave school at the ages of fourteen or sixteen, and the children of the better off, who were prepared for university education. This restrictive nature can be judged from the fact that in 1932 there were 131,000 university students out of a total population of 65million. In the secondary schooling system the Americans introduced a tuition-free system so that the attendance would be no longer limited to the privileged. The Americans also wanted to introduce the concept of social sciences into the curriculum of secondary schools which they believed would contribute to the development of democratic citizenship. However, this was not really new in Germany. US social science was strongly influenced by German tradition in the early twentieth century. In Germany, education first assumed the form and name of a science. The concept of state education authority, kindergartens, compulsory school attendance, and contributions to psychology, university seminars, research, and the doctor of philosophy degree are among many German contributions to American practice.

The attempts to alter fundamentally the structure of the German education system were not a total success. Along with the Americans insisting on the abolition of school fees, they also called for the introduction of a six year period of elementary schooling followed by comprehensive high school education. But the Land government in the US zone showed little enthusiasm for such experiments, due to the German educators tradition of identifying the intellectually gifted child at an early age. By 1948 the Americans tried to influence the Germans by encouragement. They succeeded by getting their Lander in their zone to finally abolish fees and provide free textbooks, an example which was generally followed, although with some reluctance, by the Land governments in other western zones.

In the field of university education very little had changed. Under Nazi persecution many good scholars left Germany

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either voluntarily or as a result of racist and political purges. However under the American occupation this was not reversed. Furthermore, the post-war era was an opportunity to change the university system to make it more flexible by increasing the number of teaching staff and reducing the absolute authority of the professors. This was not to happen due to the difficult economic situation of the occupation period such reforms were given a low priority. The university system, which had been one of the major breeding grounds of National Socialism, was left virtually untouched.[44] An instructive indication of how powerful the forces of continuity in German society were, despite talk of the 'Hour Zero' in 1945.

There was, however, a number of important programs established in the field of university education one of which was the Free University of Berlin. It was a product of a divided Berlin and the Cold War. It emerged in the autumn of 1948 in the midst of the Berlin blockade and airlift. It was a reform institution, intended by its founders not only to provide an alternative to the Soviet Zone's Universities, but also to influence German universities in what soon became the Federal Republic of Germany. It was perhaps the most ambitious experiment ever undertaken in German higher education.[45] There was also the Frankfurt-University of Chicago experiment which provided an opportunity for Germans to learn from scholars about scholarly attainments in the US. With a grant from the Bavarian government, the University of Munich was repaired and an American institute was established. There, German students could, for the first time, study American civilisation. Also, at a conference in 1949 in which all German universities were represented, a series of resolutions were adopted, they were known as the Nauheim resolutions. Among the proposals were the erection of dormitories and student unions, and the establishment of international education and development of a two-way student-professor exchange system with other countries.

## *Conclusion*

Similar to the case of Japan, the American reconstruction of Germany may be viewed as one of mixed results. Given the state Germany was in at the end of the war in 1945 and the condition of it politically and economically by the 1950s it must be considered a successful attempt at nation-building by America and the Allies. Contemporaries perceive 1945 as the 'Hour Zero' when Germany, or at least the Western zones of occupation, made a completely fresh start. However, there was a good deal of conservatism and continuity that guided the reconstruction, as many German elites remained in positions of power and influence, as they had done so during the war. This was especially the case in terms of political and economic elites. Compared to Germany under Nazism local and national government was democratised, free elections were held, and the Basic Law, the equivalent of a new constitution was drafted. Economically, the Americans introduced a new currency and fiscal reforms which helped balance the economy and get factories back to work. Without a doubt, the Marshall Plan will be remembered for contributing to rapid German and European economic growth and recovery between 1948 and 1951. In terms of education the Americans introduced a new system completely different from that under the Nazi regime and that of the pre-Nazi system. The schooling system became free and compulsory and similar to the American style system. The university system became more difficult to change. However, as I have noted there was some important programs established that contributed to the democratisation of the education system.

## **Japan**

The American occupation of Japan stands out as perhaps the most interesting and important of the post-war reconstruction efforts undertaken by the US. The reason for this is the fact that the occupation of Japan was a 'pure' American project. Whereas the occupation of Germany was a four-power operation in which the US often had to accommodate differing goals and approaches of its Allies, the occupation of Japan was a fully unified, American controlled operation. Furthermore, it was also the most ambitious, given the relatively greater challenges and more limited resources. While the Allies could build on institutions and draw on the personnel of the Weimar Republic in the German case, Japan had never fully experience democracy in the same way that Germany had for fifteen years under the Weimar constitution.[46] Despite this, the occupation proved to be quite successful in putting Japan on a stable, sustainable, democratic path.

The aforementioned Potsdam Agreement hoped that the Japanese government would become peaceful and responsible and that democratic freedoms would be enshrined. Similarly, the ultimate objectives of the US in regard

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to Japan were further set out in the Basic Initial Post-Surrender Directive. Its aims were,

“a) To insure that Japan will not again become a menace to the United States or to the peace and security of the world.

b) To bring about the eventual establishment of a peaceful and responsible government which will respect the rights of other states and will support the objectives of the United States as reflected in the ideals and principles of the charter of the United Nations. The United States desires that this government should conform as closely as may be to principles of democratic self-government, but it is not the responsibility of the Allied powers to impose upon Japan any form of government not supported by the freely expressed will of the people.”[47]

This was to be achieved not only through disarmament and demilitarisation, but also through strengthening of democratic tendencies and processes in governmental, economic, and social institutions, and the support of liberal political tendencies in Japan. Democracy, America believed, would lead to the ultimate goals of peace and stability in the world. American policymakers made a large assumption that democracy is a universal desire of all people and that its realisation therefore, depended largely on removing artificial barriers to its functioning.[48] Another important assumption by the implementers of the American occupation was that to create democracy in an inhospitable climate, a total approach would be necessary. The occupation had to have military, social, economic, educational, cultural and even religious foundations as well as a political one. This is most evident in the set-up of the occupation apparatus. The occupation had two distinct stages. The first was the ambitious, reformist, democratising stage from 1945-48. The second was the phase from 1948-52 which became known as the ‘reverse course’.

Taking their direction from Potsdam and the Basic Initial Post-surrender Directive, General Douglas MacArthur, who led the occupation, and his staff assumed the task of demilitarisation and democratisation with what is often described as messianic zeal.[49] In theory, MacArthur was acting on behalf of the Allied powers, who, were to formulate policies through the eleven-member Far Eastern Commission. A four power Allied council established in Tokyo in December 1945 and comprising representatives from the US, Britain, the Soviet Union, and China, was meant to liaise with MacArthur. In reality, though, the occupation was entirely run by MacArthur and his American staffed bureaucracy – Supreme Commander Allied Powers (SCAP), who reported directly to military superiors in Washington. SCAP consisted of a dozen or so sections.[50] Among the most important groups were the Government section that oversaw political reform and the Economic and Scientific section that had broad economic policy authority.

In a radio broadcast in September 1945 MacArthur said the American occupation would provide Japan with the chance to embrace the democratic values of the West (i.e. US),

“Today, freedom is on the offensive, democracy is on the march. Today, in Asia as well as in Europe, unshackled peoples, are tasting the full sweetness of liberty, the relief from fear.”[51]

The key tasks of the American occupation, of which I am going to look at in greater detail, were the reconstruction of the political system, economic system, and the education system.

## *Political Reconstruction*

Political reform began in earnest in October 1945 when SCAP issued a civil liberties directive releasing political prisoners, legalising all political parties, and assuring protection for the rights of assembly and speech. With this the Japanese Communist Party (JCP) was legalised and its leaders were allowed to return from exile. The cabinet of Prime Minister Higashikuni Naruhiko (formed shortly after the surrender) resigned in protest, warning that the gates of Communist revolution had been thrown open.[52] The legalisation of the JCP was soon followed by the revival of pre-war political parties such as the Socialist party (Nihon Shakaito), Liberal party (Nihon Jiyuto) and the Progressive party (Nihon Shimpoto) later to be called the Democratic Party. The first post-war elections of the Lower House, in April 1946, saw over 300 parties and 2,770 candidates competing for 466 seats. Such a proliferation of parties was greatly facilitated by a multi-vote, multi-member constituency system (the first and only time used), whereby 124

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electoral districts returned up to 14 members each and voters had between 1 and 3 votes depending on how many members a particular district had.[53]

The elections were notable for being the first in which women voted and stood as candidates (see new constitution below). Voter turnout for women was nearly as high as men 67 per cent to 74 per cent respectively. They also produced a new Diet (Japanese Parliament) with 375 out of the 466 members being elected for the first time. The makeup of the new Diet was significant when one considers the timing of the purges (of which I have explained in the deconstruction section) and its targets. SCAPIN550, which provided the basis for the purges, was issued three months before the first general election under the occupation and included 80 per cent of the previous Diet and over 50 per cent of P.M Shidehara's cabinet.[54] The largest single party to emerge was the Liberal party with 140 seats. Political turmoil, however, was to be the order of the day for the next few years, and it was not until the elections of 1949, when Yoshida's Liberals gained 264 out of the 466 seats, that a political party would hold an absolute majority in the Diet.[55].

If the purges, which I have discussed in the deconstruction section, were seen as a crucial step in destroying the old order in Japan, the writing and implementation of a new constitution were seen as the key to creating a new order. MacArthur himself identified the new constitution as "probably the single most important accomplishment of the occupation." [56] The new constitution, which was written mainly by MacArthur and SCAP, lowered the voting age to 20, converted the emperor into a constitutional monarch and abolished the peerage. It vested supreme power in the Diet. A bill of rights was formulated, whose assumptions of individual and group freedom clashed with basic collectivist values enshrined in the Japanese tradition. Indeed, with its measures to provide equality for women and collective bargaining for labour, the civil liberties promised to the Japanese, were more advanced than American legislation at the time.[57] Despite the fact that the constitution was implemented so quickly, the fact that it obtained considerable public support and had remained intact clearly demonstrate a willingness by the Japanese people to respond positively to democratic reform. However, despite these important reforms, many powerful structures resisted change. According to Schaller,

"Pre-war career bureaucrats remained in charge of most ministries, hardly touched by the purge or the new constitution. MacArthur's concern with free elections obscured the fact that, because of their pre-war roots and financial links to big business, conservative parties continued to dominate the Diet." [58]

Because the new constitutional system depended on democratically elected and democratically inclined leaders, the US gave a great deal of attention to creating a new political system in which elections would play a central role. Occupation forces helped draft new election laws, established new electoral institutions, and undertook the role of election-monitoring. Furthermore, they promoted local elections as well as national ones. These were deemed important not only in their own right, but also because participation at the local level was thought to encourage people to take an active interest in the selection of officials, and hence to strengthen democratic tendencies at the national level as well.[59]

## *Economic Reconstruction*

The Japanese economic democratisation program was designed to underpin the political democratisation. Part four of the Initial Post-Surrender policy for Japan listed a series of reforms to be implemented.

"1) In the interest of economic demilitarisation there was a suspension and prohibition of military production.

2) In the interest of the promotion of democratic forces, provision was made for the promotion of labour unions and agriculture associations. Furthermore, the elimination of concentration in production and property rights – the policy of purging business leaders and breaking up of the zaibatsu.

3) Resumption of peaceful economic activity – Japan itself bore the responsibility for its economic plight and likewise bore the responsibility for reconstruction." [60]

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The purpose of breaking up of the Japanese Zaibatsu was to destroy Japan's military power both psychologically and institutionally. Japan's industries had been under the control of a few great combines enjoying preferential treatment from the Japanese government. With this high concentration of Japanese capital in the hands of a small number of Zaibatsu conglomerates, the occupation authorities singled out ten of them for particularly close scrutiny. Four famous old Zaibatsu plus six new Zaibatsu had risen to positions of dominance by collaborating closely with the military during the war. In 1945, the ten combines together controlled 49 per cent of capital invested in mining, machinery, ship-building, and chemicals, 50 per cent in banking, 60 per cent in insurance and 61 per cent in shipping.[61] Moreover, the concentration of industrial control promoted the continuation of a semi-feudal relationship between labour and management, held down wages, blocked the development of labour unions, obstructed the creation of firms by independent entrepreneurs, and hindered the rise of the middle class in Japan. However, it is important to note that the policy of dissolving the Zaibatsu is against the principles of democracy of which the American occupation was trying to promote. As Nakamura points out,

"The unrelenting nature of the Zaibatsu dissolution, even to the extent of taking measures against founding family members, was contrary to the general principles of a modern democratic society." [62]

There was also a land reform program which stipulated that all the land of absentee landlords would be bought by the government and redistributed to the tenant farmers. The new farmers were mobilised into politics under the auspices of their own interest groups and the conservative parties. MacArthur believed that land reform was also one of his greatest accomplishments saying that,

"the redistribution formed a strong barrier against any introduction of Communism in rural Japan. Every farmer in the country was now a capitalist in his own right." [63]

This comes from the Jeffersonian principle, which is a long held tradition in America, – with property comes responsibility.

Promotion of labour democratisation began with the enactment of three labour laws, the Trade Union Law, the Labour Standards Law, and the Labour Relations Adjustment Law. The proportion of workers organised into labour unions rose rapidly, from zero in 1945 to nearly 60 per cent in 1948-49.[64] The improved working conditions, particularly the higher wages achieved by the labour unions, expanded domestic consumption markets and made a great contribution to the development of the economy. Furthermore, the wage increases were highly significant for the economy as a whole, and prepared the way for subsequent growth.

By the autumn of 1946, with the deepening of the Cold War, the US began to think in terms of hastening Japan's recovery and using its economic and military strength. This, along with the spiralling costs of the occupation, and the need to relieve the American taxpayer, would ultimately encourage quite a different approach, – that of rehabilitating Japan as an industrial exporter to South East Asia. Indeed, by May 1947 in a speech delivered by Assistant Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, the US revealed a new approach to foreign policy in relation to Japan and Germany.

"The dollar gap and the grim economic situation abroad stemmed from the grim fact of life that the greatest workshops of Europe and Asia, Germany and Japan, remained idle. World stability required rebuilding the two workshops on which the ultimate recovery of the two continents so largely depends. American forces would stay in Germany and Japan until their economies revived." [65]

A new occupation agenda was formalised in a document submitted by the US policy planning staff to the National Security Council during the summer of 1948 and approved as NSC 13/2 by President Truman in October. It proclaimed economic recovery as the prime objective in Japan. SCAP and the Japanese government were to preferentially allocate new materials and credit to firms that produced for export. The US Congress helped by passing the Economic Recovery in Occupied Areas (EROA) bill and cotton credits offering substantial amounts of capital and raw materials. According to Nakamura,

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“This resolution formalised the major shift in American basic policy towards Japan, removing many restrictions that had been previously imposed and decreeing that Japanese economic recovery would be expedited. On the basis of this decision, aid to Japan was cut, a nine-point economic stabilisation program was issued by SCAP in December of 1948 under directions from Washington, and Joseph Dodge came to Japan charged with the task of implementing reconstruction policies.”[66]

The Dodge Plan, as it became known, aimed to bring about financial discipline in Japan by imposing wage and price controls, balancing the budget and ensuring allocations of raw materials for export production with the aims of curbing inflation and damping domestic consumption. The domestic repercussions of the reorientation of US planning included the revision of trade union laws, the termination of the anti-Zaibatsu campaign, the implementation of a more stringent and planning based economic policy, an extensive left-wing purge and finally, the beginnings of rearmament.[67]

In April 1949, Dodge encouraged the Japanese government to organise a Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI). MITI would provide administration guidance to banks and corporations. It directed the flow of domestic credit, foreign currency, imported raw materials and foreign technology to favoured companies that produced primarily for the export market and sold goods for hard currency. Dodge considered industrial recovery and the containment of Communism as related goals. A stable Japan, he argued, would serve as a key border area in the world-wide clash between Communism and democracy. Ideologically tied to the west and commercially linked to Asia, Japan would deflect totalitarian pressures and counter the Communist pan-Asiatic movement. Through Japan, the US could apply tremendous influence over our relations with all of the Orient.[68]

It was, however, the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950 that breathed new life into the Japanese economy and stock-market. Exports grew by 2.7 times from 1949 to 1951, and production, too, increased by nearly 70 per cent.[69] As far as business firms were concerned, this boom provided a greater boost than anything else to their economic recovery, heavily weighed down as they were with the burdens of reconstruction. War orders benefited the textile, construction, automotive, metal, communications, and chemical industries. During the first year of the war, procurements totalled some \$329 million, about 40 per cent of Japans total exports in 1950.

By 1952 procurement and other forms of military spending reached \$800 million. The index of industrial production surpassed pre-World War 2 levels in October 1950, rose to 131 per cent in May 1951 and kept climbing. By 1954, Japan earned over \$3 billion in defence expenditures, initiating a two-decade period of 10 per cent annual growth in the GDP.[70] At the peak of the Korean conflict, nearly 3,000 Japanese firms held war related contracts, while many others arranged with US companies and the Defensive Department to acquire new technology. Speaking in the Diet in early 1951 PM Yoshida asserted that the Korean War provided more stimulus for Japanese economic resurgence than did all the occupation efforts.[71]

## *Educational Reconstruction*

Educational reform liberalised school curricula, promoted coeducational egalitarianism, and broadened access to the elite track of universities. Educational reform began almost immediately with the occupation as SCAP authorities screened textbooks and suspended the teaching of ethics and Japanese history in schools. Early efforts focused on the removal of all traces of emperor worship and militarism from classrooms and the curriculum. This was viewed by the US as essential to the permanent removal of the ability of the government to indoctrinate Japanese students in the narrow form of Japanese nationalism that was believed to have sustained support for the Second World War.

In a sense, the Ministry of Education, which had been a vigilant watchdog of emperor-system ultra-nationalism, was transformed into one of the country's most systematic and zealous proponents of peace and democracy.[72] Militaristic textbooks were discarded. However, until new texts could be introduced, students were required to go through their schoolbooks with the guidance of their teachers and systematically exercise with brush and ink all passages deemed to be militaristic, nationalistic, or in some manner undemocratic. By 1950 over 250,000 new textbooks were being produced annually. The purges against teachers and other educationalists, which I have already discussed in the deconstruction section, proved to be successful in the eventual reconstruction of the

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Japanese educational system.

The tenor of the intense campaign to democratise education was conveyed in the new Educational Guidance issued by the Ministry of Education in May 1946 after the visit of the US education mission. The goal of the new system, it was stated, was to contribute to constructing a democratic, peaceful nation of culture. The guide offered a detailed discussion of the fundamental problems in constructing a new Japan, these were, for example, (1) self-reflection concerning Japan's present state (2) eliminating militarism and ultra-nationalism (3) promoting respect for human nature, personality, and individuality (4) raising scientific standards and philosophical and religious refinement (5) carryout through-going democracy (6) constructing a peaceful nation of culture.[73]

The new Education Law that was drafted declared the right to equal opportunity of education without discrimination regardless of race, greed, sex, social status, or family origins.[74] Under the new education law the school system was to be based on the American model with compulsory education extended to include six years of elementary and three years of junior high school. Furthermore, in relation to higher education, over one hundred universities were created. The authority of the Education Ministry was also curtailed with state authorised textbooks banned and the choice and texts assigned to individual schools themselves.

In addition to the reform of the education system there was an emergence of a new lexicon of borrowed American terms such as 'curriculum', 'guidance', and 'course of study'. Beginning in 1947, adult education programs were introduced that were explicitly designed to help grown-ups learn the consciousness, habits and lifestyles of a democratic people. There was also a greater emphasis on science education. Two days after the Japanese surrender in Tokyo Bay, the Ministry of Education announced it was establishing a new bureau of scientific education. In a speech to young people, education minister Maeda, explained that the cultivation of scientific thinking ability was the key to the construction of a Japan of culture.[75]

## *Conclusion*

The Peace Treaty that formally ended the occupation was signed in San Francisco in September 1951 and came into effect from April 1952. On the same day it was signed the US and Japan signed a Security Treaty. The Security Treaty firmly tied Japan to the imperatives of American foreign policy and allowed for the presence of US military bases in Japan to deter any foreign military threat. For America this was necessary, given the growing strategic importance of Japan as the Cold War deepened. Some 260,000 American troops were stationed in 2,824 bases and had the authority to suppress internal disturbances. Furthermore, under the treaty the US could use its bases in Japan for actions in Asia without consulting the Japanese government.[76] The Security Treaty had its advantages for the Japanese economy. P.M Yoshida Shigera set economic reconstruction and development as the nation's immediate goals, while saving on military expenses by leaving defence to the US military.

So, was the occupation and the American democratisation of Japan a success? Given the deplorable state of Japan in 1945 and the much improved condition in which the US left the country in 1952, the occupation must be considered a success. Perhaps the most significant accomplishment was the establishment of an entirely new constitutional order that to this day remains intact.

During the occupation the Japanese people were converted from subjects to citizens, governed by a newly democratic constitutional order in which executive, legislative, and judicial powers were separated and the parliament made the chief origin of state power. The people, especially women, were granted a host of civil and political rights that they had never had. In the economic arena, the results, like the policies themselves, were mixed. Economic democratisation yielded some positive results as well as failures between 1945 and 1948. Efforts in the area of economic revitalisation were more successful especially after the 1948 reverse course. According to Orr,

"In a very short time, the US helped Japan regain its economic footing, successfully re-oriented trade flows so as to eliminate the motivation for imperial expansion, and left in place a rebuilt economic infrastructure that would form the launching pad for the Japanese miracle." [77]

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In terms of the education system, Japanese schools became coeducational and free. The Ministry of Education found its powers reduced and teachers that promoted the old emperor worship style system were purged. The expansion of higher education was encouraged leading to the number of students attending universities increase many times over.

However, not all scholars share a positive view of the American democratisation of Japan. According to Dower,

“Initially, the Americans imposed a root-and-branch agenda of demilitarisation and democratisation that was in every sense a remarkable display of arrogant idealism – both self-righteous and generally visionary. Then, well before their departure, they reversed course and began rearming their erstwhile enemy as a subordinate Cold War partner in cooperation with the less liberal elements of society.”[78]

Similarly, Schaller emphasises the significant of the reverse course and links it with American anti-communist policies throughout Asia,

“In a very real sense Japan arose from the ashes of the second world war largely on the crest of an expanded American military crusade in Asia.”[79]

It must be said though that the overall picture of the occupation is a highly complex one, characterised by continuity as well as change, and by reactionary as well as progressive impulses.

## Afghanistan

Afghanistan has been a weak state pulled apart by its neighbours. In 1979 the Soviets invaded and a war against the Afghans ensued. After the Soviets withdrew, various civil factions occupied and then lost control of the capital, Kabul, until the Taliban took control in 1996. They established an Islamic fundamentalist regime which operated under Sharia law. The country was ruled by an autocracy, women had no rights and there was no freedom of the press or religion. Moreover, the Taliban was closely associated with Osama Bin Laden’s terrorist network Al Qaeda, who in turn used his money and influence to support the Taliban regime. As Vaishnav put it,

“Afghanistan served as a recruiting ground for Islamic terrorists, an important hub for members of the Al Qaeda network, and a launching pad for worldwide terrorist operations. The ruling Taliban regime had granted Al Qaeda safe haven in Afghanistan and was regarded by the Bush administration as a co-conspirator in the 9/11 attacks.”[80]

After the 9/11 attacks in America, the US launched Operation Enduring Freedom to eliminate the Taliban and Al Qaeda in Afghanistan. After a few short months of war, the American led coalition, with the assistance of the Afghan Northern Alliance, ousted the Taliban and took control of Kabul. Subsequently, Afghanistan became the site for the twenty-first century’s first major post-conflict nation-building operation. On close inspection of the American record in Afghanistan, it could be suggested that it has fallen short of its capabilities and expectations. Relying on what is often called a ‘light footprint’ approach, the Americans placed the onus of the reconstruction burden on the Afghans themselves. In addition America spent roughly eleven times more money on its efforts to defeat the Taliban and Al Qaeda remnants than it did on civilian reconstruction.[81] Together this has mounted to what Ignatieff calls “nation-building lite” or “nation-building on the cheap.”[82] Furthermore, the security problems have plagued the reconstruction from the start. Security is the precondition on which the very foundation of reconstruction must build. The US failed to secure the whole country, hostilities have continued to disrupt the reconstruction, and remnants of the Taliban continue to threaten the peace.[83]

### *Political Reconstruction*

Just after the war ended, in November 2001 expatriate and Northern Alliance leaders met in Bonn, Germany, to establish an interim successor regime. By December they signed the Bonn Agreement which established a road map at achieving peace and reconstructing the country. Hamid Karzai, a Pashtun leader, was chosen as the chairman for the interim government. Although the Bonn Agreement had established democracy as a goal, the US



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and International community focused on the creation of a broadly based and representative regime whose base could be further broadened and whose legitimacy could be enhanced over time using traditional Afghan processes, the Loya Jirga (general assembly). However, according to Starr, the Bonn Agreement marked an unsuccessful end to the critical phase of nation-building, rather than the beginning. As by then the Northern Alliance, who had assisted the US in the fight against the Taliban, had taken control of the capital, Kabul, and proceeded to fill governmental positions including the most important ministries of Defence, Interior, and Foreign Affairs. This fuelled the ethnic tensions of the country and other ethnic groups viewed the administration as at best semi-legitimate.[84]

The Bonn Agreement did create a government representative of the various ethnic groups in Afghanistan. The long-term prospects of Afghanistan depended on how these relationships continue in a peaceful and democratic manner. The Loya Jirga was set-up to be both a process and an event. The process was designed to enable the broad and equitable participation of the Afghan people at every level of society through the convening of local and regional meetings during early 2002 to choose representatives for the nation-wide Loya Jirga. This was a broadly inclusive process yet not completely democratic. Over 1,500 participants were selected through such grassroots process and participated in the Loya Jirga in June 2002.[85]

The process was dogged with problems from the start as most Afghans give their primary allegiance to local warlords, ethnic groups and tribes. As mentioned before, the Americans had relied on some local warlords from the Tajiks and Uzbeks that made up the Northern Alliance for support and assistance when ousting the Taliban and this led to a political black hole. The US did not have a long-term political vision for Afghanistan that dealt with the warlords. Lacking a sufficient number of ground troops required for security duties, the Americans found themselves in the untenable position of supporting a central government whose stated aim was to reduce the power of the warlords, while providing financial and other material resources to the warlords themselves.[86] This contradictory policy severely weakened the authority of the Afghan government. According to Ottaway and Lieven the US and International community had no choice but to work with the warlords as it was extremely difficult, if not impossible to create any unifying political structures.[87] The Bonn Agreement had effectively codified the standing of the warlords and legislated the unworkable relationship between the warlords and the central government, as each of the four major ethnic groups within Afghanistan: Tajiks, Uzbeks, Hazara, and Pashtuns, were represented in the Interim government. Another problem was that faced by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). It was created after the Bonn Agreement and was to supervise the Afghan political process, assist in the creation of an effective civil administration,[88] and to oversee the drafting of a new constitution. However, it proceeded with a great deal of difficulty. The lack of security made it impossible for public consultation on a new constitution.

One positive event for the Americans and the international community in the process of nation-building in Afghanistan came in October 2004 when the first ever presidential election was held. Despite significant security concerns, over 8 million Afghans, with a 70 per cent turnout, voted. The interim and transitional president, Karzai, won 55.4 per cent of the vote.[89] The election did breakdown along ethnic lines. Karzai, a Pashtun, polled well across the country among the refugee population and did best among his fellow Pashtuns.[90]

## *Economic Reconstruction*

In the economic realm the process of reconstruction was equally difficult. Afghanistan's economy had been ravaged by over twenty years of conflict. Its infrastructure had been severely damaged, the availability of electricity and water supplies was sporadic at best, and there was high unemployment. There was no stable national currency and key institutions such as the central bank, treasury, civil service, and legal and judicial systems had been rendered weak or non-existent due to the passed cycles of conflict. Widespread famine caused by droughts further weakened the economy. In 2002 it was estimated that 60-80 per cent of the population lived below the international poverty threshold of \$1 a day.[91] In addition to this Afghanistan suffers from low life expectancy rates, low literacy rates, and high infant mortality rates.

In April 2002, President Bush likened the effort of economic reconstruction in Afghanistan to that of the Marshall Plan in Europe after World War 2. In a speech in Virginia he says that "by helping to build an Afghanistan that is free from this evil and is a better place in which to live, we are working in the best tradition of George Marshall." [92] The

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reality, however, has fallen far short of the rhetoric. In the initial stages of the reconstruction America only spent \$1 billion on reconstruction. In addition, due to the security situation, international donors were hesitant to invest money in any significant ways in such an unstable economic environment. In January 2002, international donors met in Tokyo, Japan, to discuss financing the reconstruction of Afghanistan. They pledged \$5.2 billion over five years. \$3.8 billion would come in the form of grants and \$1.4 billion as loans. However, this was much less than many experts believed were necessary for a successful reconstruction effort. The Asia Development Bank, United Nations Development Program, and the World Bank estimated that \$10.2 billion would be necessary over five years, almost double of what the international donors had pledged.[93]

International donors met again in Berlin in April 2004 to recommit their long-term support for Afghanistan. \$8.2 billion in non-military aid over the 2004-07 period including the \$4.4 billion already pledged for 2004-05, of which the US agreed to cover half, was promised. But once again this commitment fell short of what Afghan officials claim was necessary for Afghanistan to become just a normal low-income country.[94] Furthermore, the problem with the money that was being made available from the international donors was that less than one fifth of it was being channelled through the central government. Most of it was going through the hands of the warlords and local ethnic leaders. This called into question the US and international community's political objectives of strengthening government institutions and also the legitimacy of Hamid Karzai.

There were some signs of improvement in the economic reconstruction of Afghanistan. Indications of recovery are strongest in certain sectors such as construction and services. Assistance from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the US Treasury enabled Afghanistan to establish a marco-economic framework necessary for economic growth. In October 2002 the Afghan government introduced a new currency, the Afghani, a significant step toward facilitating and improving financial transactions. Furthermore, a basis for future economic growth was created with schools reopened. The drug trafficking business has also resumed despite the Afghan government's attempts at prohibiting its activities. Thus, while being a problem, the drug business has in some measure been responsible for economic growth in certain areas.[95] According to Goodson the drugs-trafficking economy is 60 per cent the size of the legal Afghan economy.[96] The Afghan economy remains more depended on narcotics production than any country in the world, which in turn, adds to the problem of democratisation and security. Rubin stresses this point,

"No country can establish a sustainable, accountable government and security structure while nearly half of its economy – the most dynamic half – is based on illegal production. Hence the opium economy constitutes a major strategic threat.[97]"

Preventing the cartelisation of the drug industry that will promote Afghanistan's rapid descent into becoming a narco-terrorist state is the most significant immediate reconstruction challenge facing the country. The US has moved away from its early focus on crop eradication toward more funding for alternative livelihoods. In his research on Afghanistan, Rotbery offers new alternatives which include monetary incentives for growing wheat, which would feed hungry Afghans while reducing the drug-trafficking, as a way of bolstering economic governance and eliminating corruption.[98]

## *Educational Reconstruction*

Under the Taliban education in Afghanistan was in a dire situation. The school curriculum was restricted, schools destroyed, and females were banned from all education life. In 2000 UNICEF reported that between only 4 and 5 per cent of children were being educated at primary level, and even fewer still had access to secondary and university-level education.[99] After the American attacks in 2000 over 70 per cent of the educational infrastructure had been destroyed and many of the schools still in existence were in need of essential repairs which included water and electricity supply and sanitation. A new, reinvigorated education system, from primary to university level, is needed that will contribute to the emergence, strengthening, and consolidation of a viable, progressive, pluralistic, democratic, and stable society.

During the reconstruction progress has been made. The number of students and teachers returning to school as a result of a donor-assisted back-to-school campaign far exceeded expectations with over 3 million enrolled and 1.5

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million looking for opportunities.[100] Afghanistan has also seen the highest number of female students in decades. Over a million girls are now in school and hundreds have taken the entrance exams for Kabul University. The US has also established the American University of Afghanistan.[101] Based along the lines of American universities in Beirut and Cairo, the American University of Afghanistan is a private institution with lectures and textbooks in English. The university hopes to train a new generation of Afghan professionals and leaders. Currently, it offers two degree programs in Business Administration and Information Communication Technology. As a Liberal Arts university, all students take a wide range of courses for first two years including literature, science, social sciences, philosophy, and the arts. The university has had its criticisms. An English language university espousing American values may become a target to terrorists. Furthermore, the lack of urban infrastructure, and the fact that the university is unaffordable to most Afghans, makes running such an institution difficult.

Problems still remain with the overall education system. There is a huge shortage of trained teachers at every level of the education system and attacks against female students attending school and university have increased. The number of university students is still small and must improve dramatically, as university provides students with opportunities to build a better future. In 2004, the Afghan National Human Development Report called their educational system “the worst in the world”. [102] In the absence of a sufficient educational system for decades, to many in Afghanistan’s authorities education was not their top priority. According to Wajdi, an education specialist with the World Bank in Kabul,

“Conflict, economic hardship, and cultural and religious conservatism had never allowed the authorities to pay much attention to the promotion of education, especially for females. The value of education was never considered.” [103]

While progress in the reconstruction of the educational system in Afghanistan has been made, much more is needed by the US and the international community to ensure the effective democratisation of education and to strengthen the prospects of a democratic society.

To sum up there appears to be deep flaws in the American strategy in the attempts at nation-building in Afghanistan. For Goodson there are deep flaws in the US strategy due to institutional incapacity with the US government for nation-building, and the Bush administration’s initial reluctance to make nation-building in Afghanistan a priority.[104] This is arguably due to the fact that President Bush and most of his advisors were assertive nationalists, not democratic imperialists as some may believe.[105] In terms of security, the US successfully secured both Germany and Japan, thus enabling the reconstruction to precede without major security problems. The same cannot be said in the case of Afghanistan. The American ‘light footprint’ approach proved extremely problematic, producing a situation in which security could not be guaranteed by the American-led coalition, thus allowing a panoply of other actors to effect the security equation.

In the initial post-war period, the US-led military coalition focused almost exclusively on anti-terrorist operations against remnants of Al Qaeda and Taliban holdouts, rather than on securing the country through broader peace enforcement and peacekeeping operations. This resulted in a serious security gap for areas outside Kabul. The US wanted to focus on efforts to build an Afghan national army and in doing so, did not address the short-term and medium-term stability and security needs. Thus, encouraging a dangerous multi-year security gap which in turn degraded popular support for the Karzai government and goodwill towards the American presence. In the absence of pervasive security, the prospects of widespread economic recovery or political development are very limited.

By mid-2003, lagging progress in the reconstruction contributed to the decision by the US to adopt a new management strategy for Afghanistan. The new strategy concentrated responsibility in a single individual, Zalmay Khalilzad, who worked closely with the military. A bureaucracy under his leadership was established – the Afghan Reconstruction Group (ARG). It assumed the role for rebuilding the army and police, disarmament and demobilisation. It was also responsible for elections and advised in areas such as health, education, and agriculture among others. To some extent Khalilzad and his bureaucracy deepened the American footprint.

Also in 2003, the US began to deploy reconstruction units in several cities in Afghanistan. Provisional Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), as they were known, consisted of between 50 and 100 US soldiers and were

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complemented by development, diplomatic, and economic civilian specialists from the US government. Their aim was to bolster reconstruction efforts, extend the influence of the central government beyond Kabul, and monitor and assess the local and regional developments. However, according to Weinbaum the PRTs were poorly equipped to engage in such development activities, and represented a tangible expression of a multi-national commitment to Afghanistan's recovery.[106] Despite this they did have some success in undertaking small reconstruction projects that improved relations between local Afghans and US officials.

The American reliance on the warlords in ousting the Taliban and the failure to provide adequate funding for the reconstruction of Afghanistan has caused further problems in the nation-building efforts. Furthermore, deconstruction on the scale of Germany and Japan was not implemented in Afghanistan. Although, the financial incentives being provided in the agriculture sector to encourage farmers away from opium production is viewed, albeit, in a small way as decartelisation. Increasingly, there are demands domestically and from the international community that individuals responsible for the country's suffering ought to be brought to justice. However, post-conflict realities have made reconciliation and re-absorption a preferable transitional government policy. The ease with which Afghans have switched sides ideologically has especially complicated holding people individually accountable for their past behaviour. Amnesty has effectively been granted to all but higher-ranking Taliban figures.[107]

America did not place enough emphasis on civilian reconstruction during the early stages of the reconstruction phase. Moreover, the money did not pass through the Afghan central government. This put into question the US political objectives of strengthening government institutions and the legitimacy of Hamid Karzai. In March 2003, Afghan Finance Minister Ashraf Ghani briefed an annual gathering of donor nations in Brussels. Looking five years into the future, he described three potential outcomes for Afghanistan. The first was a western-friendly democracy with a strong central government and enough new infrastructure to establish a thriving private sector. The second was yet another floundering third-world country that borrows money it cannot repay and lifts virtually no-one out of poverty. The third was a narco-mafia state, where opium producers and warlords create enough mayhem to thrust the nation into the whirlwind of anarchy.[108] Based on this, the first scenario looks doubtful; the second is likely; and the third is conceivable. If the US, international community, and the Afghan government do not take steps to reduce the stature of the warlords, consolidate the power of the government, and make considerable headway on social and economic reconstruction, Afghanistan could turn into the drug-riddled feudal state Ghani describes. The interconnectedness of security, governance, and social and economic reconstruction is amply demonstrated in Afghanistan. Insecurity has been the root of all the problems in the nation-building efforts in Afghanistan.

## *Conclusion*

Countries emerge from conflict under different and unique conditions. Thus the nation-building efforts will differ from country to country. There is no doubt that the two cases of Germany and Japan differ from the case of Afghanistan. The high level of education and industrial know-how in post-war Germany and Japan helped launch an economic recovery in both countries that is inconceivable almost anywhere else. Germany also had a strong tradition of the rule of law, property rights, and free trade before the Nazi era. Japan's elite embraced a honorific culture that respected and obeyed the wishes of the victor in battle. Afghanistan, in contrast, has little in the way of either liberal traditions or cultural attitudes that are agreeable to massive foreign interference. Furthermore, the leaders of Germany and Japan were not just utterly defeated in war. At the war's end their ideology was totally discredited in the eyes of their own people. Thus both countries were prime candidates for nation-building. However, it is premature to assume the same pattern will hold for the leaders of the Taliban in Afghanistan. Islamic fundamentalism remains powerful, and its defenders are still seen as heroes and martyrs among much of the population.

Nation-building today is much more complex and problematic than those efforts of the post-World War 2. As O'Hanlon puts it,

"While the leaders of the 1940s may indeed have been somewhat better at nation-building than we have been since, their job was slightly easier, too. Most of the states we're trying to build today are either ethnically more complex than

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Germany and Japan, or less economically developed than these two countries were prior to World War 2, or both. Furthermore, there are many actors in any nation-building mission now, which can only create policy confusion. The rise of nationalism and the easy availability of small weaponry around the world have also complicated nation-building efforts.”[109]

There are limits to the significance of the lessons learnt in Germany and Japan – both were products of their time, specific sets of circumstances, and personalities. Nevertheless they do process relevant lessons in nation-building.

Before I discuss the lessons learnt I shall give a brief summary of each case study. In Germany General Clay and OMGUS were charged with imbuing the German public with an appreciation of US-style governance. In the initial stages of the reconstruction local Germans were appointed as regional administrators in the US sector. With their advice, Clay created quasi-judicial bodies to try lower-level war crime suspects. Furthermore, the police forces were ordered to disband then re-establish employing Germans who were not previously associated with the Nazi Party. These quasi courts, local administrations, and police forces modelled on local control and decentralised power formed the basis for the development of these institutions for decades to come.

By the summer of 1947 Marshall had replaced JCS1067 with JCS1779. This pushed aside concerns over denazification and punitive reminders of defeat. Under JCS1779 over 90 per cent of Germans purged under JCS1067 were eventually rehabilitated into society. Common concerns about security and the need to reconstruct the German industrial areas for Europe’s benefit moved the Western Allies into a closer working relationship. Together they unified currency, defined a flag, restored local government, and by 1949 helped draft the Basic Law. This delighted the Germans, as did the delivery of aid to Berlin during the blockade. The rapid improvement in the standard of living in the Allied sectors accelerated progress towards political goals. As Germany became increasingly important in strategic terms during the Cold War, it realised that in order to be protected it had to embrace democracy. According to Ikenberry,

“A democratic Germany would be necessary to ensure its full participation in a non-coercive and legitimate Western order. When Germany negotiated the return of its sovereignty in 1954, it had an incentive to embrace its new democratic institutions – recognising that the Western Allies could only be relied upon to defend Germany if it embraced democratic values. Democracy was both an end and a means.”[110]

In Japan the Potsdam declaration, the United States Initial Post-Surrender Policy relating to Japan, and the classified JCS1380/15 provided theme and direction to the occupation government in Japan. Potsdam was tough but still less vindictive than JCS1067. It described how stern justice, reparations, and demilitarisation were necessary along with the removal of obstacles to democratisation. The Initial Post-Surrender Policy went further. It gave General MacArthur authority over media as well as education and social policy in order to politically reorient the country.

The occupation government in Japan was to install an appreciation of democratic practices from its earliest days. Within his first few weeks, MacArthur ordered and then delivered on an impressive array of reforms, including the dismantling of large family-run conglomerates, land redistribution, and the introduction of civil liberties protections. Labour was given the right to organise and strike, freedom of speech and assembly were announced, women were given the right to vote and political prisoners were released from jails. The government sanctioned religious cult of Shinto was banned. School curricula were revised and the media and arts were censored to promote pacifist values even while occupation personal stressed the importance of a free press. Simultaneously, there were purges of well known militants and war-time collaborators from their posts, making an example of them in the press and on public trials. By 1947, with the deepening of the Cold War and Japans growing importance in geo-strategic terms, the Dodge Plan, which set the economic recovery of Japan as its prime objective, was implemented. It was however, not until 1950 with the outbreak of the Korean War that a huge impact was made on the Japanese economy.

It is reasonable to conclude that the American impact was greater on democratisation in Japan than on Germany. Left to its own devices, Japan probably would not have undertaken comprehensive land reform, abolished its military ministries, or reworked its constitution – either to provide the range of civil liberties dictated by the Americans or to

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restrict the throne so completely to ceremonial duties. These polices were of the utmost importance in determining the character of post-war Japan.[111]

In Afghanistan post-war security and the formation of a viable, legitimate authority loomed as the two largest post-conflict priorities in the region following the American attacks in 2001. The Bonn Agreement produced a carefully balanced agreement for a transitional government and a post-war future. They agreed on provisions for emergency and constitutional Loya Jirgas, on interim power-sharing arrangements, and a schedule for new elections. Furthermore, Afghanistan has not lapsed into full-scale civil war, cash-for-work and food-for-work programs have created millions of jobs, the rehabilitation of hospitals, schools, and teacher training programs are under way, civil liberties have improved, and the training of a new Afghan army is well underway. Although these are all cases for optimism, as I have discussed in the Afghanistan section, in the absence of countrywide security, the prospects for widespread economic recovery or political development are very limited.

## Lessons Learnt

- The most important lessons from the US occupation of Germany is that military force and political capital can, at least in some circumstances, be successfully employed to underpin democratic and societal transformation. Furthermore, such a transformation can be enduring.[112] The same, too, is similar for the case of Japan. However, it remains to be seen in the case of Afghanistan.
- Due to the large number of military involved in the German and Japanese occupations there was no armed resistance. Thus, providing adequate security and allowing the nation-building efforts to proceed relatively smoothly. The opposite is the case in Afghanistan. Furthermore, the scale of the German and more importantly the Japanese defeat, where years of total war had wrought devastation and two nuclear attacks, resulted in the surviving population being war weary and disinclined to contest defeat. In conflicts that have ended less conclusively and destructively, as in Afghanistan, the post-conflict challenges are more difficult. Indeed, it seems that the more swift and bloodless the military victory the more difficult post-conflict stabilisation can be.[113]
- The purges and institution of war crimes tribunals in Germany and Japan, while occasionally messy and controversial, consolidated the democratisation process by removing any threat. Such efforts on a huge scale have not been implemented in Afghanistan.
- In the case of Japan, occupation authority centred on one nation, America. Similarly in the case of Germany the US ran their sector without any interference. This resulted in the reconstruction being less troublesome. Unilateralism allowed the Americans to spend more time and energy on overseeing the smooth running of their nation-building efforts. In the case of Afghanistan, multilateralism resulted in policy confusion which, in turn, made the reconstruction more problematic. In other words unilateral nation-building can be much easier than multilateral efforts.
- Sufficient economic assistance is essential to ensure the overall success in nation-building. In Germany General Clay and OMGUS helped restart government services and economic activity. This was followed by the Marshall Plan, the introduction of a new currency, and fiscal reforms which were the crucial ingredients for the economic boom of the 1950s and 1960s. In Japan SCAP introduced land reform and dismantled the large industrial conglomerates. Eventually the Dodge Plan and the onset of the Korean War set Japan on the path to its economic miracle. However, in Afghanistan economic assistance and recovery has been slow to say the least. The US provided much less financial assistance than it did to its military objectives of defeating the Taliban.[114] Furthermore, international donors were hesitant to invest in such an unstable economy, and the amount they did invest was well short of what was actually needed to ensure a successful economic recovery.
- The duration of the nation-building effort is important. While staying long does not guarantee success, leaving early ensures failure. To date no effort by the US at enforced democratisation has taken hold in less

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than five years. Nation-building requires long-term commitments – particularly in ‘ground zero’ type situations such as Afghanistan.[115] Like Germany and Japan, Afghanistan signed a security treaty with the US. In May 2005 Afghan President Karzai signed a strategic partnership with President Bush. In this declaration, the US promises support for Afghan democratisation and good governance, security, and prosperity, in return for which the US will retain rights to military bases in Afghanistan and enjoy ‘freedom of action’ for its forces.[116]

- The internal characteristics of a country are very important in determining whether the nation-building will be successful. Societies such as Germany and Japan, with a strong national identity and high degree of ethnic homogeneity and relative socioeconomic equality are more suited to nation-building. They were nation-states in the liberal sense of the term – they were ethnic and cultural countries as well as political states.[117] Societies, like Afghanistan, which does not share the same degree of homogeneity, are inherently resistant to political engineering from outsiders.

Given that the Afghanistan nation-building efforts are much more complex than that of Germany and Japan, and that some of the lessons that could have been applied to the Afghan case, were not, it could be argued that the US is content on stabilisation rather than nation-building. We can point to the fact that in the initial stages of the Afghan operation America used the ‘light footprint’ approach rather than using its full military force to underpin democratic transformation. According to Fukuyama, Nations – that is to say, communities of shared values, traditions, and historical memory, are never built, particularly by outsiders rather, they evolve out of an unplanned historical evolutionary process. What Americans refer to as nation-building is rather state-building – that is, constructing political institutions, or else promoting economic development.[118] With the cases of Germany and Japan, he claims that the influence of America is exaggerated as they did relatively little state-building as both countries possessed state bureaucracies that survived the war weakened but structurally intact. What did occur was the re-legitimation of new governments on a democratic basis. What went on in both cases under the rubric of nation-building looks quite different from that of Afghanistan where the state itself has ceased to exist.

Germany and Japan were both strategically and economically important to the US in the Cold War. It was imperative to the US that both were reconstructed democratically to ensure a peaceful world order. What is important is that the US never promised it would turn Afghanistan into a model democracy. The objective rather, was to end the country’s legacy as a haven for terrorists and to bring a modicum of stability to its population. Hence the ‘light footprint’ approach and lack of commitment. In Afghanistan post-war peace remains precarious. The country is not quite at peace and not quite at war. America continues to show reluctance to commit adequate resources to close the security gap that fuels social, political, and economic instability. It is clear the lessons of nation-building from Germany and Japan have not been implemented in Afghanistan.

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