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## CHAPTER 5

### STRATEGIC BRIDGE TOWARDS COMMUNITY BUILDING: THE MILITARY'S ROLE

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The phrase “nation-building” – and the U.S. military’s role in the concept and its related activities – is an anathema for many in the U.S. military itself, our U.S. Government (USG), elements of civil society at large, and, even among some private commercial enterprises. In general, we prefer terms such as “defense support to civil authorities” or “stabilization, security, transition, and reconstruction (SSTR)” operations to describe the U.S. military’s role and responsibilities in regard to civil governance. However, no matter how we frame the concept, it remains that the U.S. military’s resources, including its equipment, people, and energy, are now and will continue to be in direct or indirect support of civil governance activities, in both the global and domestic arenas.<sup>1</sup> Although many of the functions of effective governance – especially nation-building – may indeed be the legitimate province of other agencies or entities, the U.S. military is often the first on the scene with the resources to address immediate needs as well as to foster the positive future environment supportive of national interests. Yet, it is equally clear that the contemporary complex world that exists even within our own national borders requires much more than a mere military solution for security, effective governance, and economic prosperity. The U.S. military may initiate the collaboration between agencies and entities of societal sectors, but it may not – and should not – retain a lead role in the process. As indicated in the *Joint Operating Concept, Military Support to Stabilization, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction Operations*:

Whether responding to a devastating natural disaster or assisting in rebuilding a new domestic order, U.S. military efforts in SSTR operations will be focused on effectively combining the efforts of the . . . militaries with those of USG agencies and multi-national partners to provide direct assistance to stabilize the situation and build self-sufficient host nation capability and capacity. . . .<sup>2</sup>

Given the expectation for the U.S. military to coordinate its efforts with those of other-than-military partners, it behooves the military strategist to do more than simply recognize the complex environment. Instead, the strategist must seek a comprehensive understanding of the other societal actors that may comprise an effective partnership as well as the U.S. military’s role in creating or fostering such relationships. In addition, the strategist must review potential organizational models for the collaborative engagement necessary for an environment that is, eventually, independent of U.S. military direct involvement in concert with our own national values. To further that study, this chapter briefly examines the contemporary global environment (which includes our domestic environment) and suggests a collaborative engagement model, the *megacommunity*. It describes the participating entities and proposes the circumstances for building such a community while highlighting the challenges and opportunities in megacommunity collaboration. Finally, it asserts that the USG should continue to expect this type of

collaborative engagement by the U.S. military in order to leverage the positive aspects of globalization as “soft power” in a direction that supports our national security interests.

Thomas L. Friedman, in his influential work, *The World is Flat*, proposes that our contemporary global environment is in a newer form of globalization known as Globalization 3.0. Beyond the integrative effects of the Internet and economic programs and policies, Globalization 3.0 empowers the individual to both *compete* and to *collaborate* in the global environment, with related impact on civil society as well as business.<sup>3</sup> Although Friedman does not use the term *civil society* and makes only a few references to multinational corporations (MNCs), he simply and accurately describes the phenomenon of increasing horizontal—that is, flat—partnerships between government, MNCs, and civil society due to overlapping influences, interests, and ideals. This is an environment that includes the increasing influences of private commercial enterprises, often represented by multinational corporations, in partnership with the rising local and global civil society, represented by nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) as well as individual citizens. A scan of headlines and other news stories confirms the complexity and confusion regarding the overlapping roles, responsibilities, and jurisdictions of the various sectors of 21st century society. *The New York Times* recently identified Wal-Mart as “The New Washington,” suggesting that “Wal-Mart now aspires to be *like* the government, bursting through political logjams, and offering big-picture solutions to intractable problems.”<sup>4</sup> Certainly on the surface, in the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in 2005, it appeared that private commercial enterprises working together served as a private-sector Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), providing the most basic of services to the disaster-impacted people more effectively and efficiently than the over-burdened, under-resourced, and slow-to-respond government agencies.<sup>5</sup> Yet, does Wal-Mart really want to replace the government? Probably not. However, what should the strategist consider when a MNC such as Wal-Mart publicly avows—backed up by real action in free-enterprise ways not easily matched by the government—to address in its own way some significant domestic and global issues not normally associated with the private sector, such as reducing health care costs for individuals and reducing energy demands on the environment?<sup>6</sup>

In 2008, the acclaimed director, Steven Spielberg, publicly rejected his previous appointment as “artistic consultant” for the Beijing Organizing Committee for the 2008 Olympics. In his statement, Mr. Spielberg specifically protested that “the international community, and particularly China, should be doing more to end the continuing human suffering” in Darfur, where the Sudanese-backed Arab forces have killed and displaced hundreds of thousands of Africans.<sup>7</sup> When Mr. Spielberg speaks, does he represent the USG? No, not likely. Yet, what does it mean to the strategist when a media artist publicly will take on an internationally inflammatory issue that governments appear to tread lightly around?

In this context, Mr. Spielberg serves as a prominent example of “civil society,” which is often represented by NGOs and private volunteer organizations (PVOs). Mr. Spielberg is also clearly a *Thought Leader*, an ill-defined term but one that generally describes a person of both innovative ideas and the confidence to promote them.<sup>8</sup> Interestingly, individuals like Mr. Spielberg and other “virtual tribes,” with little or no formal affiliation with the traditional NGOs and PVOs, also represent an increasingly global civil society, advocating for their particular social interests separate and distinct from government or private commercial enterprise sectors.<sup>9</sup>

It is not unreasonable to deduce from these examples that private commercial enterprises and business interests, such as MNCs, and civil society, whether an organization or an individual, may perform better than government in advocating, promoting, and potentially resolving selected and complex areas of concern that impact local and global societies — or even that they already perform better than government in particular areas. It is certain that in the near-term, those societal sectors will continue, for their own reasons, to address issues and concerns that may have previously depended upon government endorsement in order to be resolved. Does this mean that the government sector has fallen behind and needs to catch up? Not at all. It does mean that government must recognize the phenomenon and include those actors in planning for functional solutions. When the government sector can collaboratively engage the other sectors of private and civil societies, then together their focused efforts can serve as a component of national soft power, because the very act of collaboration and partnership may reinforce the USG's "ability to attract others by the legitimacy of U.S. policies and the values that underlie them."<sup>10</sup>

In the domestic arena, the USG clearly identifies the requirement for "engaged partnerships at and across all levels" of government and private sectors, as articulated in *The National Strategy for Homeland Security*.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, it recognizes that our citizens, businesses, and civil society "are our society's wells of creativity, innovation, and resourcefulness" and should therefore be included in addressing comprehensive community revitalization after a domestic disaster.<sup>12</sup> In the global arena, the USG's recognition of the value of partner relationships with the private sector or civil society is not as distinctly stated. However, the USG's continued heavy investment and involvement in many successful international aid programs, such as the African-focused HIV/AIDs assistance, implies an awareness of the positive aspects of collaborative engagement with all other societal sectors. More specifically, the U.S. Department of State's *Advisory Committee on Transformational Diplomacy* suggested in its working group's final report that continued development of the capacity to partner with multilateral organizations as well as "engage nonstate actors," such as private sector and NGOs, is necessary to meet the needs of the State Department of 2025.<sup>13</sup>

Accepting the USG's awareness of the value of combined efforts and resources of the various societal sectors to address solutions for local and global challenges, what might this collaborative engagement look like and how is it achieved? One discernible approach is the *megacommunity* model in which private commercial enterprise, government, and civil society work collaboratively. Megacommunity building and engagement has been described as "a practice ahead of the theory."<sup>14</sup> However, there is existing relevant theory. In 2005, an article in *The Journal of Management* described the collaborative engagement between "the three main societal sectors" — business, government, and civil society — with the unwieldy phrase of "cross-sector partnerships to address social issues (CSSPs [cross-sector social partnerships])."<sup>15</sup> The authors provided a useful model of two primary types of social projects that characterize the CSSPs. The first type is a "transactional" project, which is characterized as short-term, limited in scope, and focused on each partner-entity's self-interest. The second project type is "integrative" or "developmental," characterized as long-term, unconstrained in scope, and more common-interest oriented as regarded by the partner-entities.<sup>16</sup> We fit the megacommunity in the province of this last CSSP type: the integrative, long-term, unconstrained in scope, and more common-interest oriented in the view of the societal sector partners.

Megacommunity model adherents define the term “megacommunity” as “a public sphere in which organizations and people deliberately join together around a compelling issue of mutual importance, following a set of practices and principles that will make it easier for them to achieve results.”<sup>17</sup> They suggest five critical elements to the megacommunity model. Two elements are essentially preconditions; these include having “three-sector engagement” (that is, involvement of all three sectors of society) and having “an overlap of vital interests” by the three sectors.<sup>18</sup> The three remaining critical elements are essentially enabling conditions, or those conditions necessary to create a sustainable megacommunity: structure, adaptability, and convergence of effort.<sup>19</sup>

The megacommunity concept identifies the societal entities of the three-sector engagement as the following: private commercial enterprises, providing resources and capital to fund projects; governments, generally bringing sovereignty as well as the rule of law (and, in most cases, this author suggests that governments bring security to the relationship); and civil society, which provides accountability and “credibility in arenas where business and government fall short.”<sup>20</sup> While there are numerous perspectives regarding the strengths and weaknesses each entity or sector brings into the megacommunity, it is generally understood that private commercial enterprises, usually MNCs, can provide collaboration, money, hard infrastructure, technical or knowledgeable people, and local and global economic understanding. On the other hand, MNCs are by nature profit-driven actors, and, as Thomas Friedman indicates: “The cold, hard truth is that management, shareholders, and investors are largely indifferent to where their profits come from or even where the employment is created.”<sup>21</sup> Yet, as Max Caldwell of Towers Perrin suggests, companies are increasingly willing “to invest in people and the environment *today*, in order to ensure a viable marketplace in the *future*.”<sup>22</sup> This remark begins to explain why corporations are increasingly disposed and perhaps even eager to get involved in local and global societal issues not previously associated with business. One reason may be to counter adverse publicity that depicts MNOs as exploiters of labor and natural resources, concerned only with bottom line profits. A second reason, supportable by the evidence, is that “doing good was, in fact, good for business.”<sup>23</sup> Certainly a short review of only a few of the large multinational corporations’ annual reports with their related “corporate responsibility reports” or “corporate citizenship reports” reflect this latter paradigm.<sup>24</sup> In summary, the strategist must recognize that the motivations of MNCs and their reputations are sometimes two-edged, perceived as both exploiters as well as developers. Perhaps a more surprising observation, however, is that some individuals or groups, in selected cases, may perceive the MNCs as more legitimate than a particular local government due to requirements for corporate governance transparency lacking in the government sector.

The government sector is more clearly recognized as having social welfare responsibilities. Regardless of form or type, governments are the public face of a legally-defined community or country. Governments can provide legitimacy, oversight, access, and security in ways private commercial enterprises or civil society cannot. However, even where government functionally exists, government members are discovering they “can no longer spend or regulate their way into requisite solutions” and therefore need the resources and talent that is available through the private sector or the support of civil society.<sup>25</sup> At the same time, in some functional or geographical arenas, governments no longer retain their legitimacy – or never had it. As H. Lee Scott Jr., Wal-Mart’s Chief



Executive Officer (CEO), observed recently to his employees, “We live in a time when people are losing confidence in the ability of government to solve problems.”<sup>26</sup> This observation is especially true, obviously, in the situations where the government sector is weak, corrupt, incompetent, or simply does not exist.

As described above, private and government sectors are easily recognized in most cases by even a lay observer. Civil society, however, seems more amorphous. The World Bank provides a definition of civil society that, while not succinct, is certainly comprehensive. According to the World Bank, *civil society* is represented by:

. . . the wide array of non-governmental and not-for-profit organizations that have a presence in public life, expressing the interests and values of their members or others, based on ethical, cultural, political, scientific, religious or philanthropic considerations.<sup>27</sup>

Certainly the NGOs and PVOs bring to the megacommunity passionate people, talent, potential for local or functional information and intelligence, long-term outlook, and often a legitimacy that neither government nor the private sectors can always attain. On the other hand, NGOs and PVOs also suffer from a dual-edged reputation in certain areas, often depicted as idealistic and naïve in their parochial approaches. Yet, even the NGOs and PVOs have discovered that although globalization, especially through the effect of the Internet and other global media, has given them a greater voice than ever before, there is also a corresponding increase in demand for their own expertise and energy. They too are competing for funding and donations, moving towards private commercial enterprises and the government sector to better pursue their own interests and concerns on behalf of their constituents and causes.<sup>28</sup>

The requirement to leverage the strengths, and compensate for the weaknesses, of each of the societal sectors leads to the special collaboration advocated in the first precondition of the megacommunity model, three-sector engagement. The second precondition to megacommunity formation is obvious. For the three sectors to engage, they need to have an overlap of interests, sometimes described as shared issues or mutual concerns, as well as a shared sense of moral concern, local impact, and overall responsibility. In many cases, but not all, such interests will reflect a geographic or demographic focus, such as regional water rights or women’s education. Further, megacommunity adherents propose that where there is an interest or concern shared by the three societal sectors, a latent megacommunity already exists.<sup>29</sup> However, the conditions needed for a megacommunity to exist—latent or overt—are not enough to sustain the relationship. Therefore, the megacommunity model also proposes three additional elements for long-term community sustainment—structure, adaptability, and convergence.

These critical elements serve as enabling conditions and are important to note in order to obtain the full benefits of this collaborative engagement, especially for the military strategist considering this approach. *Structure* suggests that the megacommunity must have an explicit formative stage with clearly defined properties, terminology, protocols, objectives, and understanding of each other’s social networks, thereby facilitating the common effort. In other words, although the collaboration may be latent, or appear naturally occurring, at some point each actor must concur with a given overarching purpose and means to communicate in order to sustain the megacommunity. *Adaptability* ensures that the megacommunities remain open to new ideas, members, and activities;

no closed organization can remain healthy and, therefore, sustainable in the long-term.<sup>30</sup> The *convergence* of commitment toward mutual action, which may occur spontaneously, such as during a natural disaster, or deliberately, focuses on the specific overlapping interest. However, the model suggests that rarely will the various sectors come together as a sustainable megacommunity on their own, “they must be consciously made to converge.”<sup>31</sup> One actor or subgroup must initiate the convergence, *serving as a strategic bridge that connects the separate societal sectors to form the collaborative engagement of a megacommunity.*

Therefore, the role of a strategic bridge is critical to megacommunity formation and for leveraging the benefits of the subsequent collaborative engagement. Strategic bridging organizations function to connect diverse entities to work on social or developmental issues. Strategic bridging is vital when other parties cannot work directly with each other for physical or logistical reasons; or choose not to collaborate initially due to human dynamic concerns such as lack of trust or cultural tradition. However, strategic bridges are more than mediators or mere facilitators; they have their own agendas as well. According to Sanjay Sharma *et al.*, “unlike mediators, bridges enter collaborative negotiations to further their own ends as well as to serve as links among domain stakeholders” and have motivational factors that are egoistic (voluntary or self-serving), altruistic (mandated or problem focused), or a mix of the two factors.<sup>32</sup> A collaborative engagement proposal that is transnational, or trans-sector, in geography or function will likely require a strategic bridge to create the opportunity for commitment convergence among the diverse societal sectors.

A strategic bridge organization serves to synthesize “the problem domain for the island organizations in terms of the bridge’s own interests.”<sup>33</sup> The bridging organization seeks to control the actions and influence the results of a collaborative engagement in a manner that best suits the bridge, egoistically, altruistically, or both, even as the bridge recognizes and appreciates the shared interests and agendas with other organizations. Consequently, the strategic bridge often will be the initiator of the megacommunity convergence as well, in order to define the environment and the range of potential solutions in a manner that favors or ensures the achievement of its own aims and interests.

The United Nations (UN) offered itself as a strategic bridge in its report, “Strengthening of the United Nations System,” which states that “the convening power and moral authority of the United Nations enable it to bring often conflicting parties together to tackle global problems” which includes nonstate actors such as members of private and civil societies.<sup>34</sup> The report highlights UN efforts to initiate megacommunity approaches to a wide-range of global issues and shared concerns, but there are other examples of strategic bridge organizations in recent years as well. For example, the U.S. military often serves as a strategic bridge in both domestic and global arenas, initiating the collaborative engagement that forms the megacommunity. Why the military? One reason may be that the U.S. military is perceived as readily available, such as in regional combatant commands, or can be made available, such as our National Guard. Often the U.S. military is already in place and very aware of the overlapping vital interests necessary to form a megacommunity collaboration that addresses a complex issue. Another reason the U.S. military becomes a strategic bridge is its capability to provide the security that is an essential prerequisite for collaborative engagement to flourish, particularly in areas with

dysfunctional governments or immature civil societies. However, a final reason is that at this time the U.S. military remains better resourced than any other agency within the USG. As Conrad Crane states:

... the harsh historical reality is that the world's greatest nation building institution, when properly resourced and motivated, is the U.S. military. . . the United States has rarely accomplished long-term policy goals after any conflict without an extended American military presence to ensure proper results from the peace.<sup>35</sup>

How does a strategic bridge, U.S. military or otherwise, "begin a responsiveness-oriented megacommunity"?<sup>36</sup> The megacommunity model proposes the following six "guideposts":

1. *Identify and empower the stakeholders* – know who should be in your "full panorama of allies" but also how to provide space for their own participation style;
2. *Be an initiator* – do not hesitate to seek players who can assist in resolution, and engage them "as full partners";
3. *Embrace interdependence* – "plan, train, and rehearse the methods by which these separate but interrelated organizations will function together";
4. *Allow for ambiguity* – accept the confusion that may exist when organizations may perceive themselves as having overlapping responsibility, and continue communication;
5. *Reward collaboration* – do not punish cooperative behavior, but "create incentives that encourage it"; and,
6. Strengthen your social networks – develop your contact list!<sup>37</sup>

The model suggests that these guideposts free leaders of societal sectors "from the notion that they must control outcomes and events unilaterally" when it is obvious that the complexity of the issue or situation makes single-point authority impossible, and ensures a work environment that permits the entire megacommunity to continue developing "an ever-expanding circle of resources, capabilities, and talents."<sup>38</sup>

It is important to note the challenges that are inherent in megacommunity collaborative engagement. Resistance to collaborative engagement is generally based on two dominant concerns: the structure and the ideology. The structural concern is founded on the belief that "there is no institution with the capability and responsibility to design a coherent . . . approach . . . and to connect it to the essential players."<sup>39</sup> Certainly the megacommunity model, as described earlier, also identifies the need for deliberate structure as an enabling condition for megacommunity sustainment. However, this concern can be resolved by the development of a common partnership culture. A partnership culture will likely have many components to ensure its viability, but the most important may be a common vocabulary or terminology.<sup>40</sup> Larry Cooley suggests that common terminology might start with a definition of *partnership*, which he believes "is generally understood to entail a voluntary pairing of two or more entities working together to achieve a result beneficial to each party . . . a sharing of risks and rewards."<sup>41</sup> He also identifies topic areas that must be addressed for any partner-organization relationship to be successful, many of which apply to the megacommunity concept as well:



- Alignment of the participating organizations' expectations.
- Development of codified "best practices."
- Recognition of work required that is either within or outside of the participating partners' "core interests."
- Recognition of resources that may be "tied" by regulation or tradition.
- Addressing problems of scale.
- Determining the role of trust and relationships between partners.
- Acknowledge the emerging problems of intellectual property and competition.<sup>42</sup>

Despite the difficulties inherent in some of these topic areas, Cooley asserts there is a "growing recognition that success is most likely when partnerships have strong and evident links to partners' core interests, when partners invest significant time and effort in understanding one another's motives and methods, and when partners retain a clear exit option."<sup>43</sup> Given the scope of the challenges of developing agreed-upon structure, the role of a strategic bridge organization is even more apparent. Without the initiating actor, the diverse societal sectors may not overcome their differences to find enough similarity in interests and approach to address the complex issue at hand.

The other main area of resistance to collaborative engagement is ideological. For example, even advocates for the increasing influence of civil society express concern that "the notion of global civil society only partially overcomes the limitations civil society at the national level faces with regard to ensuring development and democracy."<sup>44</sup> Ironically, cooperation and collaboration with either government or private sectors may challenge NGO and PVO legitimacy as well as regulate traditional civil society "to a marginal, merely nominal role in the greater scheme of things."<sup>45</sup> Other observers express concern that the involvement of MNCs in corporate social responsibility (CSR) projects in weak states, such as those in Africa, may actually undermine local and national governments by providing those services that "governments ought to be doing."<sup>46</sup> Megacommunity adherents, however, argue that ideological mistrust and miscommunication among sectors can be resolved with education and experience, and the benefits of collaborative engagement vastly outweigh the risks to the separate societal entities.

Given the advantages of the three societal sectors of collaborative engagement, what are the circumstances for the military strategist that lend themselves to megacommunity formation? One framework for analysis is embedded in *The National Security Strategy*, which addresses three levels of engagement: conflict prevention and resolution; conflict intervention; and post-conflict stabilization and reconstruction.<sup>47</sup> Using these three levels, it is possible to address megacommunity formation, substituting the term *crisis* in place of *conflict*. The term *conflict* is not encompassing enough to address the impact of natural or manmade disasters such as storms, floods, or drought situations. Therefore, *crisis* is a more inclusive term.

In a U.S. military-initiated megacommunity, we are invariably preventing or resolving crises. As the historical cliché of the Treaty of Versailles reminds us, in practice, the post-crisis period is often simultaneously a pre-crisis period. The *Joint Operation Planning Guide* defines the activities of the pre-crisis (conflict) prevention and resolution level of engagement as *shaping*, designed:

... to dissuade or deter potential adversaries and to assure or solidify relationships with friends and allies. . . . executed continuously with the intent to enhance international legitimacy and gain multinational cooperation in support of defined national strategic and strategic military objectives.<sup>48</sup>

In another U.S. military reference, *shaping operations* “describe the long-term, integrated joint force actions taken *before or during crisis* to build partnership capacity, influence nonpartners and potential adversaries, and mitigate the underlying causes of conflict and extremism.”<sup>49</sup> These military sources refer to the myriad of programs a megacommunity collaborative engagement can address in selected regions to prevent crisis. Many, if not most, of the geographic combatant commands’ Theater Security Cooperation programs may be examples of the U.S. military serving as a strategic bridge to a latent megacommunity collaborative engagement in a pre-crisis period. For further illustration, Thomas P. M. Barnett describes the security concerns of the Non-Integrating Gap—the countries and regions where the positive influences of globalization have yet to reach. As he explains, Gap regions are prone to crisis and conflict; therefore, getting Gap countries “above the line” (which he defines as an annual per capita Gross Domestic Product [GDP] above \$3000) may increase the probability for a stable and secure environment that reduces the penchant for crisis and conflict. However, that level of financial commitment requires significant foreign direct investment (FDI); it cannot be done with the constrained resources of either government or civil sector programs.<sup>50</sup> It requires a megacommunity.

The military strategist can refer to the well-documented Hewlett-Packard (HP) Company investment in engineering education and infrastructure in Africa as an example of building a megacommunity to address under-resourced Gap regions. After an earlier success in Latin America in addressing engineering education in a multistakeholder collaboration, in 2006 the concept was turned to Africa. According to Barbara Waugh, the director of University Relations at HP Company, knowledge may be the only factor of production available for small and land-locked countries with negligible natural resources, and therefore knowledge production is a natural fit for the developing economies of many Non-Integrating Gap countries and regions, such as those found in Africa.<sup>51</sup> As previously observed in Latin America, all societal sectors in Africa benefited from the HP-initiated megacommunity. HP, as a MNC, was able to partner with the World Federation of Engineering Organizations (WFEO), representing over 90 countries as a civil society organization. Because the partnership was not HP-led, simply HP-initiated, the collaboration eventually included other MNCs, some small companies, and engineering academics that normally avoided corporate partnerships, “to join an effort in a manner that also had subsequent reciprocal benefits outside of the African-focused megacommunity.”<sup>52</sup> Civil society, represented by the engineering society and academics, benefited from the regional access the HP-initiative provided to them. Finally, the local governments that participated in the programs achieved greater indigenous knowledge capacity, thereby increasing potential for improved economic status. This case study illustrates for the military strategist how the three societal sectors working together in a megacommunity at both regional and functional levels (Africa and technology

development), impacted the developing African nations and may have assisted those countries to get above the \$3,000 per capita GDP mark that Barnett references, thereby reducing the factors that create an environment ripe for crisis.

Another level of engagement is crisis intervention and its immediate aftermath. Sometimes referred to as the consequence management or response period, the *National Strategy for Homeland Security* definition of *incident management* is “a broader concept that refers to how we manage incidents and mitigate consequences across all . . . activities, including prevention, protection, and response and recovery.”<sup>53</sup> This statement describes the classic environment for megacommunity collaborative engagement, and the events surrounding Hurricane Katrina in 2005 provide a prime case study of a megacommunity formed in response to crisis. Arriving as a Category V hurricane to the Gulf Coast on August 29, 2005, Katrina ultimately displaced over one million people, with a death toll of more than 1,700, and still untotaled damage to three states in the billions of dollars.<sup>54</sup> Megacommunity model advocates remind us that although FEMA and various local and state authorities are criticized for lack of preparation and an inadequate response to the situation, it was not these governments that failed. It was the megacommunity that failed because it failed to preexist or to converge appropriately.<sup>55</sup>

According to some sources, there were attempts in the pre-landfall hours and in the immediate aftermath to establish a megacommunity approach to the emerging crisis. Perhaps due to the unavailability of local government or civil society sectors, themselves devastated by the storm, the private sector commercial enterprises emerged as the strategic bridge, initiating a megacommunity response. Leveraging existing relationships among selected corporations and their leaders, the private sector eventually contributed over \$1.2 billion dollars and hundreds of thousands of employee volunteer hours to recovery efforts.<sup>56</sup> Although many corporations can rightly claim hero-status for their individual and collective efforts to assist in the immediate aftermath and subsequent recovery in the region, two companies have emerged as icons in the Katrina pantheon: Wal-Mart and Home Depot. Serving in a limited way as the strategic bridge organization, the private sector, represented in part by these corporations, utilized their vast databases, transportation, and storage facilities to anticipate the requirements of and respond to a regional community readying for survival and recovery. These organizations openly shared their information to government sectors at the local and federal level and civil society as represented by the traditional NGOs and PVOs in an attempt to facilitate collaboration and to leverage individual efforts.

Although, by many accounts, the megacommunity approach above state level may have been problematic during the Katrina crisis, it appears that the ad hoc megacommunity enjoyed great success at local levels. The private sector provided resources to the civil sector for disbursement while the government—represented in this case by the U.S. military—provided increasing security for the immediate survival and recovery periods. The Katrina case study further demonstrates how interdependent the societal sectors are in regard to each other while achieving the most effective solutions. Without the contribution of civil society and the security provided by a government, the vast capacities and resources of the private sector can literally sit idle in parking lots or warehouses, untapped and unused.

The reconstruction period of the Hurricane Katrina megacommunity case study is still in progress. Such a period reflects the last level of engagement, post-crisis, which paradoxically may be simultaneously the pre-crisis period for a follow-on crisis event or series of events. Home Depot, as a continuing example, remains engaged in a classic megacommunity—working recovery and revitalization efforts at all levels, from individual home owner discounts to local school playgrounds to reforestation efforts of state parks throughout the Gulf Coast region—remaining in close coordination with government and local civil society to determine the appropriate methods to employ combined resources.

One of the challenges for megacommunity formation is that in the crisis period, any one of the three societal sectors may not be immediately responsive to establish a collaborative relationship. For example, many failed or failing states may have a dysfunctional government that inhibits or prohibits the provisions of services to the people, including security.<sup>57</sup> Some states may have a significant lack of private commercial enterprises, because, as Barnett reminds us, FDI “does not flow into war zones, because it is essentially a coward.”<sup>58</sup> That is, companies may be eager to take advantage of available labor and resources, but not at risk to their assets and personnel.<sup>59</sup> Finally, a state may have an immature or nonexistent civil society, complicating the three-sector engagement expected of megacommunity collaboration. Yet, the absence at the local or regional level of any particular societal sector does not have to prohibit the formation of a megacommunity. It may only mean that the strategic bridge organization needs to look to another level of that societal element to bring into the megacommunity the requisite expertise and energy.

The recent Kenyan post-election crisis and its apparent resolution provide insights into post-crisis megacommunity formation, to include the multilevel approach to the three-sector engagement. In January 2008, President Mwai Kibaki and the opposition leader Raila Odinga became the *de facto* rival leaders of warring tribes masquerading as political factions. The tensions began shortly after the disputed late December 2007 elections when it appeared the votes may have been rigged in favor of Kibaki, although both sides claimed vote fraud. Street protests became violent as the police tried to assert control. Ultimately, more than 850 people were killed and 250,000 displaced in less than 30 days.<sup>60</sup> Sixty days later, Kenya was again quiet due in significant part to a megacommunity approach to the crisis resolution: the strong Kenyan civil society, the influence of the private sector, and, in this case, international governmental pressure and political intervention in the place of a functional state government. To illustrate, Ambassador Michael Ranneberger, U.S. Ambassador to Kenya, credited the crisis resolution to Kenya’s strengths: “a dynamic civil society . . . the enormous democratic space . . . an increasingly modern and booming private sector. . . .”<sup>61</sup> He reiterated that four factors brought the warring parties to the current peace: the people’s voices, “heard through civil society”; the international economic and diplomatic pressures; the pragmatism of the opposing parties’ leaders; and “the skilful and forceful direction of Kofi Annan,” representing the international government sector as a strategic bridge organization.<sup>62</sup> The value of the megacommunity collaborative engagement does not end at this point, however. Ambassador Ranneberger is among other Kenya-based voices that clamor for Kenya to utilize the new opportunities provided by peace to develop long-



term solutions to continuing Kenyan challenges “through the Government, the corporate sector, civil society organizations and Kenya’s international partners.”<sup>63</sup> While it is too early to determine if the megacommunity model will be sustained and result in long-term stability and continued modern economic and democratic development in Kenya, it certainly seems to be the most appreciated approach at this juncture.

Although it is important to study the megacommunity successes, it is as important to consider the conditions that are not conducive to this collaborative approach. A megacommunity approach, which by nature requires an inherent sense of the greater good by all actors and an ability to consider and appreciate the agendas of other entities, is at greatest risk of failure when the sector actors are unreasonable or uncompromising, perhaps represented by rigid or self-interested leaders, or with irreconcilable interests or unbridgeable culture gaps. An example of a culture gap was presented in a study in *The Journal of Corporate Citizenship* of oil company collaboration while addressing CSR issues in Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan. The authors began their study by asking if international oil companies (IOCs) should be expected – by themselves or with any other societal sector – to be involved in nation-building activities or concerns. They concluded that the IOCs were inherently engaged in the micro-CSR activities such as local labor use, provision of local services, and in some cases, cultural institution or research sponsorship. However, in almost all cases, they noted the IOCs remained clear of any indication of interference in host-nation government policy formation. The authors refer to macro-CSR activities as those that would appear to directly involve IOCs in sensitive host-nation policies, such as social equality, good governance, and transparency regarding oil production revenue. The paradox of participation, according to the study authors, is that international civil society, often represented by NGOs, expects more direct involvement in these sensitive government policies by the MNCs. Yet, as the study indicates, any public advocacy by the IOCs of those same issues can result in MNC loss of operating freedom, and potentially, their corporate assets in the host-nation.<sup>64</sup> Therefore, in this study the limited IOC CSR-initiatives established in these emerging petro-states failed to survive. The MNCs found it difficult to overcome the cultural barriers of operating in countries with no tradition of nongovernment sector inclusion in governmental affairs. The companies were also unprepared to accept the risk inherent with offending the uncompromising host-nation government regarding CSR-initiatives. Still, the authors suggest that IOCs’ ultimate sustainability for the future in those petro-states resides in their ability to address macro-CSR issues either unilaterally or in alliance with NGOs, other multilateral development organizations, and government, where the MNCs, the NGOs, and others use each other’s strengths to offset their own organizational short-comings.<sup>65</sup>

The ongoing drama that characterizes the President Hugo Chavez-led Venezuelan government may be an example of uncompromising public sector leadership that could frustrate the value of megacommunity approach. Among his various posturing, he recently entwined his state oil company in a legal dispute with Exxon Mobil, a U.S.-based corporation that shares the same two Louisiana refineries with the Venezuelan company.<sup>66</sup> He has tried – and succeeded in varying degrees – to limit the interaction of civil society in his country by ensuring that all their funding flows through his governmental agencies for disbursement.<sup>67</sup> On all fronts, Chavez seems to defy the pragmatic logic implied in megacommunity formation and sustainability. Therefore, while Chavez leads Venezuela,

the megacommunity concept may not work in addressing the economic well-being of the people or the regional security and stability. However, any strategic approach to Venezuela—as well as with similar geographical or functional challenges—must include all the sectors of the collaborative engagement model. A unilateral approach, while appealing for its near-term appearance of efficiency, is unlikely to be effective in our globally-linked world and less likely to be in our long-term national interest.

Should the private sector or civil society advocacy replace the governmental sector? No, it is unreasonable to expect that a MNC, or a Hollywood director as a representative of civil society, alone can resolve the Darfur crisis or similar concerns, no matter how well-connected or resourced. Yet, in combination with other megacommunity entities, such as the government sector, their actions may enhance the use of the USG's soft power and lead to solutions that are appropriate for our long-term interests. Does the government sector have to be able to function like a private commercial enterprise? No, for as *The Wall Street Journal* indicated in 2005, "FEMA is never going to operate with the agility of a FedEx . . . that's the nature of competition."<sup>68</sup> Even Scott reported that Wal-Mart "can't do more than our own part, we are not the federal government, there is a portion we can do, and we can do it darn well."<sup>69</sup> However, the government must promote efforts to move beyond mere recognition of "unleashing the power of the private sector," and build megacommunities that forge partnerships with private and civil societal sectors to address our domestic and global interests and goals.<sup>70</sup>

As part of this promotion, the U.S. military must be prepared to be the initiators, or strategic bridges, for megacommunity formation. In the past, especially in the realms of failed states or in the absence of fully functioning government, the U.S. military acting as a strategic bridge initiator often had the secondary role of arbitrator between the civil society and private commercial enterprises. Now, with the burgeoning positive relationships between civil society and private sectors, the military must not become the outsider in a megacommunity. Therefore, it is imperative that the military strategist have a more comprehensive understanding of the megacommunity concepts and the other societal actors in order to understand their own agendas and to leverage their capabilities towards collaborative solutions. The U.S. military continues to be the critical strategic bridge organization, often as the only member of the megacommunity with the capacity and knowledge to "understand how to intervene and influence others in a larger system that [we] do not control."<sup>71</sup> At the same time, the U.S. military must not only be prepared to relinquish the initiating leadership role as the megacommunity convenes, but should actively seek to create the conditions for other entities to lead and monitor the continued three-sector engagement.<sup>72</sup> After all, "good strategy flows from understanding the nature of the environment and *creating a symmetry and synergy of objectives, concepts, and resources* that offer the best probability of achieving the policy aims," and the military remains at the center of U.S. national security, at home and abroad.<sup>73</sup>

## ENDNOTES - CHAPTER 5

1. The author leaves to others the argument of whether nation-building or its ilk is a traditional, but forgotten, aspect of the U.S. military's *raison d'être*, or whether it is a novel concept to address. For the purposes of this chapter, she accepts that the U.S. military is now and will be engaged in the activities that are often associated with nation-building. For a summary of the discussion, see David B. Haight, *Preparing Military Leaders for Security, Stability, Transition, and Reconstruction Operations*, Strategy Research Project, Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College, March 12, 2007.

2. *Military Support to Stabilization, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction Operations*, Joint Operating Concept, V. 2, Washington, DC: The Joint Staff, December 2006, p. iii.

3. Thomas L. Friedman, *The World Is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century*, 2d Ed., New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2006, p. 11.

4. Michael Barbaro, "Wal-Mart: The New Washington," *The New York Times*, February 3, 2008, Sunday Opinion section, p. 3.

5. "Private FEMA," *The Wall Street Journal*, September 10, 2005, available from [www.opinionjournal.com/forms/printThis.html?id=110007238](http://www.opinionjournal.com/forms/printThis.html?id=110007238).

6. Barbaro.

7. Frederik Balfour, "China: Spielberg's Olympic-Sized Snub," *Business Week*, February 13, 2008, available from [www.businessweek.com/print/globalbiz/content/feb2008/gb20080213\\_989993.htm](http://www.businessweek.com/print/globalbiz/content/feb2008/gb20080213_989993.htm).

8. *Thought Leader*, available from [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thought\\_Loader](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thought_Loader). Although various other definitions of the phrase "Thought Leader" exist, the Wikipedia entry most characterizes the influence of Mr. Steven Spielberg on his professional community and perhaps civil society writ large. Lieutenant Colonel Richard C. Coplen, U.S. Army, Retired, used the term during discussion with the author on February 16, 2008, regarding Mr. Spielberg's protest announcement about Darfur.

9. This example also illustrates another growing phenomenon of the civil society sector. The increasing influence of contributing members that advocate and share their opinions in ways that are individual-based, personalized, and inventive, usually through global technological and media means.

10. Joseph S. Nye, Jr., "The Decline of America's Soft Power," *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2004, available from [www.foreignaffairs.org/20040501facomment83303/joseph-s-nye-jr/the-decline-of-americas-soft-power.htm](http://www.foreignaffairs.org/20040501facomment83303/joseph-s-nye-jr/the-decline-of-americas-soft-power.htm).

11. George W. Bush, *National Strategy for Homeland Security*, Washington, DC: Homeland Security Council, October 2007, p. 33.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 38.

13. U.S. Department of State, Advisory Committee on Transformational Diplomacy, *Final Report of the State Department in 2025 Working Group*, available from [www.state.gov/secretary/diplomacy/99774.htm](http://www.state.gov/secretary/diplomacy/99774.htm).

14. Lieutenant Colonel Richard C. Coplen, U.S. Army, Retired, in private conversation with author, February 7, 2008. Coplen is a current employee of Booz-Allen-Hamilton, BAH, and participated as an audience member in a BAH presentation regarding Megacommunities, same date.

15. John W. Selsky and Barbara Parker, "Cross-Sector Partnership to Address Social Issues: Challenges to Theory and Practice," *Journal of Management*, Vol. 31, December 2005, p. 849.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 850.
17. Mark Gerencser, Fernando Napolitano, and Reginald Van Lee, "The Megacommunity Manifesto," August 16, 2006, available from [www.strategy-business.com/resilience/rr00035](http://www.strategy-business.com/resilience/rr00035).
18. Chris Kelly, Mark Gerencser, Fernando Napolitano, and Reginald Van Lee, "The Defining Features of a Megacommunity," June 12, 2007, available from [www.strategy-business.com/li/leadingideas/li00029](http://www.strategy-business.com/li/leadingideas/li00029).
19. *Ibid.*
20. *Ibid.*
21. Friedman, p. 245.
22. Max Caldwell, "Uncovering the Hidden Value in Corporate Social Responsibility," *The Journal of the EDS Agility Alliance*, Vol. 3, February 11, 2008, available from [www.eds.com/services/whitepapers/](http://www.eds.com/services/whitepapers/).
23. Barbaro.
24. Several examples are readily available for public reading at any library or on line. For this chapter, the author most closely read Chevron, Exxon Mobil, and Home Depot reports. See Chevron at [www.chevron.com/globalissues/corporateresponsibility/2006/](http://www.chevron.com/globalissues/corporateresponsibility/2006/); Exxon Mobil at [www.exxonmobil.com/Corporate/community\\_ccr.aspx](http://www.exxonmobil.com/Corporate/community_ccr.aspx); and Home Depot at [www.homedepotfoundation.org/](http://www.homedepotfoundation.org/). An illustration of selected MNCs' embrace of societal issue involvement can be found in Rex W. Tillerson's statement in his company's 2006 Corporate Citizenship Report. Mr. Tillerson is the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Exxon Mobil, and he begins his remarks with the following: "Exxon Mobil's primary responsibility is to produce the energy the world needs in an economically, environmentally, and socially responsible manner . . . global in scale. Our approach . . . is pragmatic, with a long-term perspective . . . that will help ensure reliable, affordable energy for people around the world." In another example, Home Depot's corporate responsibility is exercised through the Home Depot Foundation, and its report reads less global in focus but yet very attuned to domestic issues of housing and urban renewal in keeping with their product and service.
25. Gerencser, Napolitano, and Van Lee.
26. Barbaro.
27. The World Bank, "Approach to the World Bank's Engagement with Civil Society," available from [go.worldbank.org/3L5WS8C510](http://go.worldbank.org/3L5WS8C510).
28. Gerencser, Napolitano, and Van Lee.
29. *Ibid.*
30. Kelly *et al.*
31. *Ibid.*
32. Sanjay Sharma, Harrie Vrendenburg, and Frances Westley, "Strategic Bridging: A Role for the Multinational Corporation in Third World Development," *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, Vol. 30, December 1994, p. 461.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 470.



34. The United Nations General Assembly, *Strengthening of the United Nations System*, 58th session, June 11, 2004, p. 9.
35. Conrad C. Crane, "Phase IV Operations: Where Wars are Really Won," *Military Review*, May-June 2005, p. 28.
36. Douglas Himberger, David Sulek, and Stephen Krill, Jr., "When There is No Cavalry," *Strategy + Business*, Autumn 2007, available from [www.strategy-business.com/press/article/07309?pg=all&tid=230](http://www.strategy-business.com/press/article/07309?pg=all&tid=230).
37. *Ibid.*
38. *Ibid.*
39. George C. Lodge and Craig Wilson, "Multinational Corporations: A Key to Global Poverty Reduction – Part II," *YaleGlobal Online*, January 5, 2005, available from [yaleglobal.yale.edu/article.print?id=6672](http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/article.print?id=6672).
40. An example of the discrepancies with terminology is the use of the word *governance*. In the world of private or civil sectors, governance refers to management, policies, and transparent procedures. However, in government study, governance refers to the method of managing the institutional services and the political processes.
41. Larry Cooley, "2+2=5: A Pragmatic View of Partnerships between Official Donors and Multinational Corporations," Lael Brainard, ed., *Transforming the Development Landscape: The Role of the Private Sector*, Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2006, p. 109.
42. *Ibid.*
43. *Ibid.*, pp. 118-123.
44. Glenn Brigaldino, "Stepping Beyond Civil Society: Prospects for the Multitudes of Resistance," *Global Policy Forum*, April 5, 2007, available from [www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/intro/general/2007/0405stepbeyond.htm](http://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/intro/general/2007/0405stepbeyond.htm).
45. *Ibid.*
46. Witney W. Schneidman, "Multinational Corporations and Economic Development in Africa," *CSIS*, July 25, 2007, available from [forums.csis.org/africa/?p=44](http://forums.csis.org/africa/?p=44).
47. George W. Bush, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, Washington, DC: The White House, March 2006, p. 15.
48. *Joint Publication (JP) 5-0, Operation Planning*, Washington, DC: The Joint Staff, December 26, 2006, p. IV-35.
49. U.S. Department of Defense, *Irregular Warfare (IW), Joint Operating Concept, JOC*, Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, September 11, 2007, p. 16.
50. Thomas P. M. Barnett, *The Pentagon's New Map: War and Peace in the Twenty-first Century*, New York: The Berkley Publishing Group, 2004, p. 4. Barnett coined the phrase, "Non-Integrating Gap," to describe "the regions of the world that . . . constitute globalization's 'ozone hole' . . . where connectivity remains thin or absent." The connectivity he refers to includes "the flows of people, energy, money, and security," p. 205.

51. Barbara Waugh, "HP Engineers a Megacommunity," November 6, 2007, available from [www.strategy-business.com/li/leadingideas/li00050?pg=all&tid=230](http://www.strategy-business.com/li/leadingideas/li00050?pg=all&tid=230). She also highlights in her article that China, India, and several Middle East nations are already heavily invested in capacity building in the region.

52. *Ibid.*

53. Bush, *National Strategy for Homeland Security*, p. 31.

54. Business Roundtable, "Recent Disasters: The Partnership Response;" available from [www.respondtodisaster.com/mambo](http://www.respondtodisaster.com/mambo).

55. Himberger, Sulek, and Krill.

56. Business Roundtable.

57. Daniel Thurer, "The 'Failed State' and International Law," December 31, 1999, available from [www.icrc.org/Web/Eng/siteeng0.nsf/html/57JQ6U](http://www.icrc.org/Web/Eng/siteeng0.nsf/html/57JQ6U). While there are many definitions of a failed state, I prefer the one offered by Dr. Daniel Thurer of the University of Zurich and the International Committee of the Red Cross: "The 'failed State' is one which, though retaining legal capacity, has for all practical purposes lost the ability to exercise it."

58. Barnett, pp. 239-240.

59. *Ibid.*

60. Brian Hull, "FACTBOX-Facts about Kenya's Post-Election Crisis," *Reuters*, January 29, 2008, available from [www.reuters.com/articlePrint?articleId=USL294301368](http://www.reuters.com/articlePrint?articleId=USL294301368).

61. Michael Ranneberger, "Turning Political Crisis into Opportunity," *Daily Nation Online*, March 9, 2008, available from [www.nationmedia.com/dailynation/printpage.asp?newsid=118584](http://www.nationmedia.com/dailynation/printpage.asp?newsid=118584).

62. *Ibid.*

63. Sam Makinda, "Deal Should Go Beyond Power Sharing," *allAfrica.com*, March 6, 2008, available from [allAfrica.com/stories/printable/200803061050.html](http://allAfrica.com/stories/printable/200803061050.html).

64. Lars H. Gulbrandsen and Arild Moe, "Oil Company CSR Collaboration in 'New' Petro-States," *The Journal of Corporate Citizenship*, Winter 2005, p. 20, available from ProQuest.

65. *Ibid.*

66. "Venezuela's Chavez Says Could Sue Exxon Mobil," *Reuters*, February 17, 2008, available from [www.reuters.com/articlePrint?articleId=USN1764515220080217](http://www.reuters.com/articlePrint?articleId=USN1764515220080217); and "Exxon's Wrathful Tiger Takes on Hugo Chavez," *Economist.com*, February 14, 2008, available from [www.economist.com/world/la/PrinterFreindly.cfm?story\\_id=10696005](http://www.economist.com/world/la/PrinterFreindly.cfm?story_id=10696005).

67. Stephen Johnson, "Venezuela's New Chokehold on Civil Society," *The Heritage Foundation*, July 7, 2006, available from [www.heritage.org/Research/LatinAmerica/em1005.cfm](http://www.heritage.org/Research/LatinAmerica/em1005.cfm); and "Keep Venezuelan Civil Society Free," *Transparency International*, July 26, 2006, available from [www.transparency.org/layout/set/print/news\\_room/latest\\_news/press\\_releases/2006](http://www.transparency.org/layout/set/print/news_room/latest_news/press_releases/2006).

68. "Private FEMA."

69. Michael Barbaro and Justin Gillis, "Wal-Mart at Forefront of Hurricane Relief," *Washington Post*, September 6, 2005, available from [www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/09/05/AR2005090501598.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/09/05/AR2005090501598.html).

70. Bush, *National Strategy for Homeland Security*, p. 32.

71. Gerencser, Napolitano, and Van Lee.

72. Kelly, *et al.*

73. Harry R. Yarger, *Strategic Theory for the 21st Century: The Little Book on Big Strategy*, Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, p. 31.