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STUDIES

Contracting Under Fire: Lessons Learned in Wartime Contracting and Expeditionary Economics

December 18, 2012 | **Todd Harrison, John Speed Meyers**

Resources: Budget & Resources

Expeditionary Economics, a field encompassing the many diverse reconstruction efforts and wartime contracting practices, has become a key "weapon" in the Pentagon's stability operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Significant resources have been dedicated to such efforts over the past decade, with hundreds of billions of dollars spent in the two countries. However, little is understood about the expeditionary economics' mechanics, best practices and effectiveness.

In this report, Todd Harrison and John Speed Meyers assess the U.S. Expeditionary Economics effort employing four case studies: *Iraq's State-Owned Enterprises*, *Local-First Programs*, *the National Solidarity Program* and *Commander's Emergency Response Programs*.

Through the analysis of these case studies the report articulates the limitations of contracting in a war-torn economy and identifies a number of important lessons. The study finds that creating the capability to evaluate reconstruction programs in near-real-time and doing so by employing the proper metrics would enhance their effectiveness. It concludes that if the U.S. military is to continue using money as a weapon system, it must develop a robust method of "battle damage assessment". Harrison and Meyers believe that focus on field experiments and empirical methods must become the norm in determining what types of Expeditionary Economics are most effective. To facilitate this process, it must find an institutional home within the military.