



July 2001

Issues Paper 7-02

CHAIRMAN OF JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF 7TH ANNUAL SEMINAR ON PEACE OPERATIONS

An Interagency Approach Toward Complex Contingencies: Narrowing the Gaps Between Planning and Action

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Unrest around the world actually has increased since the end of the Cold War. International analysts attribute this increase in global crises to two factors: the reduction of competition between the East and the West and the end of colonialism. Small wars and proxy wars were limited because both the East and West used economic and military aid to influence and guide developing nations, which emerged from colonial domination. Essentially, Cold War tensions kept a lid on potential crises. Consequently, the 1990s saw a marked increase in small wars. Some were cross-border wars, but many were civil wars in which conditions for large-scale humanitarian catastrophes occurred. With the United States as the sole remaining super power, many nations look to the U.S. for leadership to solve these problems. American participation in operations (Somalia, Bosnia, Cambodia, Rwanda, Haiti, Kosovo, and East Timor) demonstrated a need for an integrated U.S. approach to these complex crises. U.S. participation by military forces was not the only answer. Many agencies of the U.S. Government had a role to play, and an integrated and synchronized approach was necessary.

The Chairman decided to focus this year's seminar, at the start of a new administration, on interagency planning and coordination in order to address the changing nature of complex crises since the end of the Cold War. In the past only rudimentary steps had been taken to synchronize all elements of national power toward a crisis. Concepts such as an interagency coordination committees and comprehensive political-military (Pol-Mil) plans were discussed, but only occasionally implemented. Thus, it was in the Chairman's desire to assist the new administration solidify its thoughts and processes toward the management of complex contingencies. From 10-12 July 2001, the U.S. Army Peacekeeping Institute (PKI) in conjunction with the National Defense University (NDU) hosted the 7th annual Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff seminar on peace operations which focused on this issue.

In February 2001, the National Security Council (NSC) published its first National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD). The purpose of NSPD 1 was to define the National Security architecture, and to provide guidance and direction to the various elements of the government in the management of issues related to national security. The Directive also established 8 regional and 11 functional Policy Coordination Committees (PCCs). The purpose of the PCCs is to provide a foray for day-to-day coordination of national security policy. In April a subsequent letter from National Security Advisor, Dr. Condoleezza Rice

established four additional PCCs. The letter also abolished the Peacekeeping Core Group, and transferred the role of this interagency working group to the Democracy, Human Rights and International Operations PCC. This PCC will be the coordinating body for most of the complex contingencies that the U.S. will face. During April, May, and June this PCC met several times to determine how to manage complex contingencies. In the course of these discussions, it was determined that a short 1-2 page National Security Guidance paper would begin the planning process, and a political-military concept plan, possibly as short as 8-12 pages, would be developed by members of the interagency community. These documents would synchronize and coordinate the United States' response to crises.

With this as background, it was the intent of the Chairman to assist those involved in management of complex contingencies to better understand this new process. The seminar was designed to build on the work that had already been done. The first goal was to outline a simple, yet useable format for the initial national security guidance paper. Second, the seminar was to discuss political-military plans and devise a methodology for bringing together the work of all departments in the U.S. Government. The final goal of the seminar was to discuss methods to help educate and train members of the interagency and discuss mechanisms to review past crises to garner lessons learned.



Ambassador Joseph Prueher at CJCS Seminar, 10 July 2001

Seminar participants came from key elements of the U.S. Government, Departments of State (DOS), Justice (DOJ), and Defense (DOD) combined with participation from the Joint Staff, CIA, the Services, and all regional Commanders in Chief (CINC) ensured a broad and open exchange of views. In all, 79 attended (37 from the DOD community, 26 from State, and 16 from NSC, Justice and the CIA). Faculty members from the Army War College, NDU's Institute for Strategic Studies, National War College, Industrial College of the Armed Forces, and a representative from the Department of State were used to facilitate work groups discussions and recommendations.

Vice Admiral Walter Doran, Assistant to the Chairman kicked off the seminar by stressing a need for more interagency cooperation. He did not see a need for a "super jointness" approach toward interagency management, but felt that members of the Government needed innovative methods for dealing with the complex contingencies. He charged participants to get beyond problem identification and implement action plans. Admiral Doran discussed the need for an effective system for decision-making, an accountable authority for planning, and the key role that training plays in maintaining an effective system.

Former U.S. Ambassador to the Peoples Republic of China, Admiral Joseph Prueher was the keynote speaker. He spoke from his experiences as both the Ambassador to the PRC during the recent crisis involving the EP3 aircrew held on Hainan Island and his time as CINC Pacific Command. Ambassador Prueher stressed that we

need to be proactive toward managing crises rather than reactive. He also highlighted the many dimensions to these complex global issues -- political, economic and military. Interagency members must avoid a myopic view of the problem. The interagency team must develop and coordinate responses and take the lead in finding solutions to complex crises. He also stressed that future crises may demand an international response, and the United States should not tackle these unilaterally.

According to Ambassador Prueher, the key to managing international crisis is to open channels of communication. Once communications have begun, then an understanding of each other's cultures and attitudes can be developed. Through communications and understanding, trust can be developed. The first step, however, is the most important, communicating with people from other nations.

Elliot Abrams, the Special Assistant to the President for Democracy, Human Rights, and International Operations, National Security Council, outlined NSPD 1. He stressed a need for a process to manage crises, and stated the PCCs had the primary role of providing early warning to the national security architecture. Other members stressed the need for both top down guidance during the early stages of a crisis and that the interagency process needs to be refined.

The second day of the seminar began with a presentation by Ambassador Ruth Davis, Director General of the Foreign Service and Human Resources for the State Department. Ambassador Davis is responsible for the education, training, and management of all Foreign Service personnel. She stressed the need for interagency cooperation in preparing for the next crisis. Secretary Powell charged her with the responsibility of ensuring personnel within the State Department undergo crisis training. He also told her that proper education of Foreign Service personnel is essential. Ambassador Davis went on to mention the role of the Crisis Management Office in the Foreign Service Institute. It is the key agency within the State Department for training personnel on crisis management and reviewing the lessons from past crises.

Two key representatives from past administrations then focused on lessons gleaned from previous crises. Ambassador James Dobbins, former Assistant Secretary (DOS) and Special Assistant to President Clinton, addressed his experiences managing Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia and Kosovo. Ambassador Dobbins analyzed each of these crises based on five factors: the mandate, communications, Washington crisis management, civil-military relations, and rule of law. Mr. William Martin, former Executive Secretary of the NSC under President Reagan, stressed every member of the administration, including the President, needs education on the management of complex contingencies. These problems require innovative solutions and one cannot expect the senior leaders to have a clear picture of what to do immediately. Therefore, it is necessary for the interagency team to develop concrete recommendations that employ all elements of national power.

At this point in the seminar, participants divided into three work groups. Group One discussed the need for a top down guidance and agreed that specific guidance is necessary to help the interagency members develop options to deal with potential crises. The guidance should come from the Principals Committee (PC), but will probably be drafted by the responsible PCC. The guidance should include the following elements: situation, strategic goals, conceptual strategic approach, planning factors, and planning coordination. The group also identified the need for guidance to identify a lead agency and what is expected from other agencies and departments, fully recognizing participation and lead will vary from one plan to the next.

Group two focused on Pol-Mil planning. Many members of the group were amazed that so many Pol-Mil plans were actually written in the last few years, but also that there was no agreed format. An outline of a

comprehensive Pol-Mil plan had been used within the interagency community for several years, but it had no formal basis. The group came to the conclusion that there is a definite need for a common planning framework, and also agreed there is a need for some top down guidance so planning can begin in the right direction. Consensus was reached that a Pol-Mil plan may vary in length. The group endorsed the extensive generic outline for a Pol-Mil plan but only as a guide, not as a template. The essential elements that are needed in every Pol-Mil plan include: an executive overview, a situation assessment, identification of U.S. interests, a concept of operation or options, preparatory tasks, major mission tasks, and agency plans. The group acknowledged that the generic Pol-Mil plan could serve to create anything from a 1-2 page plan outline to a much more detailed plan.

The third working group looked at education, training and an after action review process for interagency members. This group recommended that the National Defense University should act as the executive agent for these programs. The group also recognized that there is no need to create additional structures to perform these functions, but rather leverage existing institutions, e.g. War Colleges, National Foreign Affairs Training Center, U.S. Army Peacekeeping Institute, etc. The group stressed the need for multi-level training and education. Every department should support these events and stress continued interagency coordination and communication. In addition, existing institutions should use innovative techniques to enhance learning, such as distance learning. Finally, work group three recommended institutionalizing an interagency after action review process.

The seminar closed with general expressions of praise for the Chairman taking on this vitally important issue. Participants said this was the right subject at the right time.