

NSC Directorate for Nation Building—Good News for S/CRS

By LTC Linwood Ham

On February 8, 2009, the *Washington Post* reported that President Obama's impending directive on the National Security Council (NSC) establishes a directorate for Nation Building. If he makes such a decision, the NSC staff should define the portfolio of this new directorate to assume all strategic planning, decision making, and assessing of stabilization and reconstruction activities heretofore supervised by the State Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS). Created in July 2004, in the wake of the Coalition Provincial Authority experience in Iraq, S/CRS has become the face of U.S. civilian response for global stabilization and reconstruction requirements. In National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD) 44, then President George W. Bush identified S/CRS as the lead entity for U.S. planning, implementation and execution for a civilian response to complex crises. If the goal of the Obama Administration's NSC directive is to centralize national security functions, then a related review is needed to identify the tasks S/CRS should no longer perform.

The challenges recognized as inherent with Nation Building—or Stability and Reconstruction—are not new to the U.S. government. President William Clinton addressed the phenomenon of “complex contingencies” in his second term in respect to the same or similar issues. With the promulgation of Presidential Decision Directive (PDD) 56, “Managing Complex Contingency Operations,” the Clinton Administration sought to reorient the NSC staff and provide direction to U.S. agencies regarding how the United States would organize national resources to address peace operations. PDD-56 cited the experiences in Haiti, Somalia, Northern Iraq, and Yugoslavia as reasons to direct the national security agencies to approach such missions in a fundamentally different way. PDD-56 established an Executive Committee (commonly referred to as the ExCom) to assist the Deputies Committee and to achieve greater civilian and military synchronization of efforts during a complex contingency. The PDD-56 also established a “political-military implementation plan” as the synchronizing tool for all U.S. agency actions during such contingencies. The two immediate challenges inherent to this PDD were the potential supervision of multiple ExComs operating in order to achieve the “day-to-day management” goal as outlined in the directive, and the gaining of full agency conformity through complex contingency planning when



the culture of planning was non-existent in most civilian agencies.

PDD-56, in essence, created an ad-hoc system for managing complex contingencies, with an ExCom established for each discreet event. Multiple ExComs still vied for Deputies' attention and duplicated the work of standing regional directorates. The political-military implementation plan placed a heavy emphasis on the diplomatic and military instruments of power, despite acknowledging the contingency mission may require skillful implementation of many other U.S. government agencies whose capabilities (e.g. development, financial, judicial, law enforcement) may be critical to success of the activity. Despite this criticism, the political-military implementation plan model was a significant first step toward identifying and addressing the myriad challenges within a complex contingency. Sadly, this is the proverbial cart in need of a horse. The horse should have been a strategic plan that clearly expressed the policy and strategic goals to be achieved through participation in a complex contingency. Without such a document, the ExComs lacked strategic vision from which to craft a comprehensive, and workable, implementation plan.

President George W. Bush published National Security Presidential Directive 1 in February 2001, restructuring, yet again, the National Security Council and interagency processes. One of the first reorganization actions listed was the dissolution of Clinton Administration interagency working groups (IWGs), which included ExComs. NSPD-1 instructed the regional NSC Policy Coordination Committees to assume the management of any ongoing contingency missions. This decision remedied the problem of ad-hoc ExComs but saddled the regional directorates with managing complex contingencies and the inherent multifunctional activities, as well as supervising normal regional policy issues. Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom again tested the limits of post-conflict policymaking, strategic planning, and integration across the U.S. government. In testimony before the Senate in March 2004, Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) President John Hamre endorsed legislation calling for the creation of a “Directorate for Stabilization and Reconstruction Activities,” to provide the NSC system with a permanent, enduring capability for creating and managing post-conflict policy. Such a move would have institutionalized stabilization policy within the NSC structure. Instead, the Bush Administration, with the publication of NSPD 44, formalized the ExCom system of the Clinton Administration with the creation of the Department of State Coordination for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS). NSPD 44 designated the Secretary of State to “coordinate and lead” U.S. reconstruction and stabilization (R&S) efforts and authorized S/CRS to assist the Secretary of State to develop and

approve R&S strategies, coordinate the efforts of all U.S. government agencies and international governments or organizations, develop partner security capabilities, lead U.S. development of a civilian response capacity, assess progress and capture lessons learned, and resolve policy or program disputes among the various stakeholders. NSPD 44 marks a greater understanding of the enormity of such operations, and the creation of a standing office is a significant improvement to the ad-hoc nature of an ExCom. The decision to establish a reconstruction and stabilization office within an agency, however, rather than within the NSC structure, reduced the ability to reach the important goals of intergovernmental collaboration toward a particular U.S. stabilization and reconstruction mission. Moreover, State had to staff the office with Foreign Service officers with years of diplomatic experience and transform them into strategic and operational stabilization/reconstruction strategists, planners, executors, and managers with little training or education in these new tasks. These two requirements are obstacles to establishing a full-up intergovernmental capability to provide a civilian response to the R&S situations. NSPD 44 also called for the creation of a Country Reconstruction and Stabilization Group (CRSG), a Policy Coordination Committee-like entity, co-chaired by the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization and a member of the NSC staff. In addition, the Department of State regional bureau will typically seek a significant role in the CRSG. This leads to an indelicate parsing of policy responsibilities among three distinct organizations rather than one entity leading the policymaking, policy implementation, and policy assessment activities for the NSC system. Moreover, the NSC system was designed for optimal congruence on policy matters where the NSC staff leads, facilitates, and coordinates policy efforts, to include the identification of roles for agencies and the resolution of policy disputes among agencies. NSPD 44 weakened the CRSG by creating two to three “leads” on the matter of complex contingency policy.

Since its creation in 2004, S/CRS has developed a vast capacity for reconstruction and stabilization implementation planning. The staff includes, and partners with, representatives of all of the Executive Departments, to include the Department of Defense (DoD) and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), which have years of practical experience with such activities. Together, the S/CRS has developed methods for expressing how U.S. government civilian capacity can be marshaled in response to, or to prevent, an instability situation that threatens U.S. interests and made significant advancements in three key components to reconstruction and stabilization policy implementation. The first component is a comprehensive stabilization and reconstruction management scheme, the Interagency Management System (IMS),

which organizes the process and civilian capabilities for stabilization and reconstruction activities to take place at the strategic or policy level, implementation or operational level, and field or tactical level.⁶ IMS is an important innovation in controlling R&S activities at all levels. The second S/CRS-developed component is a stability analysis tool, the Interagency Conflict Assessment Framework (ICAF) that allows agencies to contemplate stability environments and establish a common understanding of the factors that could lead to or have contributed to instability.⁷ The third component is a structure for continued civilian-military coordination. In support of this structure, DoD Directive 3000.05, Military Support for Stability, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction (SSTR) Operations, commits Defense elements to support U.S. government civilian efforts in leading such operations or complementing U.S. military SSTR actions.⁸ Through IMS, S/CRS established a common operational planning framework for civilian action and a civilian agency planning cell for combatant commands (COCOMs), providing civilian agencies a planning tool and operational planning staff that complements COCOM contingency planning.

More recently S/CRS has assumed the responsibility for the management of civilian response. Secretary Rice inaugurated the Civilian Response Corps in July 2008, which is comprised of active, standby, and reserve components of federal/state/local government employees or private sector individuals who can provide a tailored and sustained civilian response to a stabilization or reconstruction situation.⁹ S/CRS employs a quarter of its 108 person staff on the supervision of CRC activities, as well as nearly a third of the staff on stabilization and reconstruction planning matters. With the addition of staff dedicated to conflict prevention activities, and one quickly understands that the S/CRS plate is overflowing with implementation and field activities. It makes sense to relieve the burden of leading policy committees and strategic planning activities.

In summary, since the end of the Cold War, two successive U.S. government administrations advanced the notion of instability as a direct threat to U.S. interests and national security. Both the Clinton and George W. Bush administrations sought to rationalize how their NSC systems would manage the U.S. response to such missions. An enduring lesson learned has been the need to not only direct such commitment of U.S. national power at the highest level of our national security system, but also to maintain an office that has the weight and backing of the White House to reach across agency boundaries in the crafting of true whole-of-government responses to stabilization and reconstruction challenges.

R&S requirements stretch the ability of any one agency to lead strategy, implementation, and execution efforts. The Project on National Security Reform report, “Forging a New Shield,” criticized the S/CRS for deriving its power through “advocacy and persuasion” and being powerless to compel agency complicity in R&S activities, a crippling assessment given the vast amount of tasks it must fulfill under NSPD44.¹⁰ The “three Ds” of diplomacy, development, and defense are necessary components to nation building, but require the full scope of national capabilities. DoS, DoD, and USAID would be well served by a reformed national security system where the NSC staff forges, manages, and assesses nation building policy and leads the formulation of whole-of-government strategies that address future stabilization and reconstruction activities. S/CRS has blazed a vast trail with the close collaboration of DoD and USAID and, with an NSC directorate for Nation Building solely responsible for NSC system activities, can deepen this interagency partnership and expand on the important work initiated with other civilian agencies, combatant commands, embassies, and fielded military forces to implement and execute R&S tasks.

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3. George W. Bush, “NSPD-1 Organization of the National Security Council System,” February 2001, <http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/nspd/nspd-1.htm> (accessed February 11, 2009).
4. John Hamre, “Civilian Post-Conflict Reconstruction Capabilities,” Testimony before the Committee on Foreign Relations United States Senate, March 3, 2004, <http://foreign.senate.gov/testimony/2004/HamreTestimony040303.pdf> (accessed February 17, 2009).
5. George W. Bush, “NSPD-44 Management of Interagency Efforts Concerning Reconstruction and Stabilization,” <http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/nspd/nspd-44.html> (accessed October 30, 2008).
6. State Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization, “National Security Presidential Directive 44: Frequently Asked Questions,” <http://www.crs.state.gov/index.cfm?fuseaction=public.display&shortcut=49QT> (accessed February 12, 2009).
7. State Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization, “Principles of Interagency Conflict Assessment Framework,” <http://www.crs.state.gov/index.cfm?fuseaction=public.display&shortcut=CJ2R> (accessed February 12, 2009).
8. Department of Defense, “Department of Defense Directive Number 3000.05: Military Support for Stability, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction (SSTR) Operations,” <http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/corres/pdf/300005p.pdf> (accessed October 30, 2008).
9. State Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization, “Introduction to the Civilian Reserve Corps,” <http://www.crs.state.gov/index.cfm?fuseaction=public.display&shortcut=4QRB> (Accessed February 12, 2009).
10. Project on National Security Reform, “Forging a New Shield,” November 2008, <http://www.pnsr.org/data/files/pnsr%20forging%20a%20new%20shield.pdf> (accessed November 14, 2008).

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Strategic Partners for Health Care Stability and Reconstruction Operations

by *CDR Bruno Himmler*



While currently serving as the Health and Humanitarian Assistance Advisor at the U.S. Army Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, I am often asked to describe or define key partners who play active roles in economic development and reconstruction regarding the health sector. Consequently, I developed this overview of some of the health care organizations in which we regularly coordinate and correspond. This list is by no means all-inclusive of the plethora of motivated and inspired agents and agencies that conduct operations in support of the many worthy causes world-wide. Instead, it is a small representation of the larger or better-known among the International Organizations (IO), Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO), and Governmental Organizations (GO).

Included in the complete article are each organization’s charter, mission statement, priorities or guiding principles as well as their primary funding sources and web site. Please contact me at E-MAIL to be added to our list.

[\[Go to complete article with notes\]](#)

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