
CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND

Historical Perspective

Recent U.S. engagements in northern Iraq, Somalia, Rwanda, Haiti and Bosnia represent what are now commonly referred to as complex contingency operations. Such operations are conducted in response to complex emergencies that adversely affect U.S. interests. They are *complex* because they combine diplomatic, military, political, humanitarian, public security, social, and economic dimensions. Since 1989, there has been a jump in the number and intensity of complex emergencies worldwide. Once relegated to the strategic sidelines of the Cold War, preventing and responding to complex emergencies are now important components of U.S. strategy for protecting and advancing national interests in the world.

Operation Restore Democracy (1994) in Haiti was the genesis of the advanced interagency coordination mechanisms and planning tools outlined in PDD-56 “Managing Complex Contingency Operations”. During deliberations of the Principals Committee, senior policymakers observed that agencies had not sufficiently coordinated their planning efforts. More specifically, they found gaps in civil-military planning, disconnects in synchronization of agency efforts, and shortfalls in resources needed to support mission accomplishment. As a result, the Principals Committee directed the interagency to prepare what is now called a political-military implementation plan (pol-mil plan). Given the subsequent success of the operation, this innovative interagency planning effort proved its worth in achieving U.S. policy objectives through unity of effort at all levels.

In subsequent operations, including those in Bosnia, Eastern Slovenia, and Central Africa, interagency officials prepared pol-mil plans to guide U.S. activities during execution. They managed these operations using the new coordinating mechanisms and found them to be helpful in strengthening situational awareness, interagency planning and civil-military coordination. Experiences in these subsequent operations produced additional lessons for improved interagency management. As a result of these and other ongoing efforts, interagency management has been strengthened through continuous adaptation and improvement.

The PDD-56 Process

“Success” in complex contingency operations requires that the interagency address all aspects of a crisis -- diplomatic, political, security, humanitarian, economic -- in a coordinated fashion nearly simultaneously. Early operations, such as Restore Hope in Somalia, were plagued by the absence of any integrated planning and by communication and coordination difficulties that resulted from unclear lines of responsibility. These problems were exacerbated by the fact that some of the agencies involved were not regular participants in the national security management structure and most civilian agencies were not organized to respond rapidly to crisis situations. Although the interagency process will never be free of these types of

problems, we must find ways to minimize them. Failure to integrate planning early on can cause delays on the civilian side, increase pressure on the military to expand its involvement in non-military tasks, and jeopardize the overall success of an operation.

Nearly all participants in the interagency process recognize that coordination problems exist, and many have first hand experience of the difficulties that arise when these problems are not addressed. Many have also learned important lessons over the past several years and have developed innovative techniques to improve interagency coordination and accountability during these operations. The purpose of the Presidential Decision Directive on Managing Complex Contingency Operations (see Appendix A) is to make integrated political-military planning a formal part of the interagency process; this handbook explains and further codifies those planning procedures.

This handbook describes the integrated pol-mil planning process and mechanisms called for in PDD-56. The planning process is designed to yield strategic level guidance for the departments and agencies tasked to execute a complex contingency operation. As described in the PDD, the planning process can:

- accelerate planning and implementation of the civilian aspects of the operation
- intensify early action on critical preparatory requirements such as diplomatic efforts or funding
- integrate civilian, military, police, and aid functions at the policy level and facilitate the creation of coordination mechanisms at the operational level
- rapidly identify issues for senior policy makers and ensure expeditious implementation of decisions.

This effort involves a wide variety of agencies that engage in numerous activities, including diplomacy, military security, humanitarian assistance, political transition, public security, intelligence collection and analysis, human rights, social reconciliation, and economic restoration. The PDD goals for strengthening interagency management are comprehensive: gaining a complete situation assessment; formulating integrated United States Government (USG) policy guidance; making agency planning activities transparent to other agencies; increasing individual accountability for implementation of assigned agency responsibilities; and anticipating and keeping pace with events during operations. To accomplish these goals, PDD-56 addresses the following interagency coordinating mechanisms, planning tools, and preparedness activities:

- *Executive Committee (ExComm)* provides unified planning guidance and improves day-to-day crisis management.
- *Political-Military Implementation Plan (Pol-Mil Plan)* lays out a coordinated multi-dimensional strategy to achieve mission success.
- *Interagency Rehearsal* refines mission area plans to achieve unity of effort.
- *Interagency After-Action Review* assesses interagency planning efforts and captures lessons for dealing with future complex emergencies.

- *Interagency Training* creates a cadre of USG officials familiar with improved interagency management and establishes working relationships among key offices across the interagency to strengthen overall interagency readiness.

Complex contingency operations, by definition, involve many actors other than the United States government. In any situation there will likely be a number of international actors, including other nations, agencies of the United Nations, international organizations, regional organizations, neighboring states, private non-governmental organizations, and international organizations involved in the geographic area or planning to get involved in response to the crisis. We recognize that others will play critical roles in any response to a complex emergency and the United States will need to have effective coordination mechanisms with them. The process described in this handbook does not attempt to address these broader coordination issues. Nevertheless, the United States will be better able to cooperate with others if its own planning and operations are more effective.

The mechanisms and planning tools mandated by of PDD-56, which are described in the following pages, will not guarantee success in every operation that the United States undertakes. They will help, however, to ensure that when the President determines that it is in our national interest to participate in a complex contingency operation the interagency will be able to fashion coherent, coordinated guidance for the men and women who will be conducting the mission on the ground.