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## Chapter 5: Conclusion

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This handbook described a framework for how the interagency should plan, monitor, and assess U.S. participation in complex contingency operations. These procedures will help ensure that the interagency is able to provide timely, integrated strategic guidance to those who are executing the operation on the ground. Without clear guidance from Washington, the job of those in the field is much more difficult, if not impossible.

This integrated planning process provides the interagency with a set of tools that can be used to overcome many of the difficulties that plague the Washington interagency process and surface in times of crisis. These procedures were developed in response to lessons from past operations and have, to a large extent, already been tested in some of the most recent U.S. operations.

Succinctly put, the chances that the U.S. response to a complex emergency will be successful are greatly increased if Washington can provide integrated guidance to the field. This guidance:

- Clearly states our purpose, mission, objectives, endstate and concept of operations
- Integrates the planning and operations of all involved USG agencies
- Clarifies agency roles and responsibilities for each mission area
- Assigns accountability for specific functional element plans
- Raises key issues early on in planning an operation
- Captures lessons learned to aid planning for future operations

Although the pol-mil planning process has proven its worth in actual operations, it is not yet a universally accepted procedure. The knowledge of the process and the tools described above rests largely with those few who have used them in planning recent U.S. operations or those who have been exposed to them through interagency training simulation. The purpose of the PDD and this handbook is to assist in institutionalizing these successful procedures and policies.

### **Interagency Training**

The final part of institutionalizing this integrated planning process is the training program called for in PDD-56 (see description of training at Appendix E). The training program familiarizes key members of the interagency, at the DAS- and Office Director-levels, with the lessons learned from previous operations and the most essential planning tools and procedures in the pol-mil planning process. It also gives them an opportunity to actually exercise these tools while planning and monitoring a simulated operation. The first of these training programs was very successful; those who participated gained: 1) a better collective understanding of interagency tasks, responsibilities and challenges; and 2) experience with the planning tools used in crafting integrated policy guidance for a complex contingency operation. This training

will continue to be held on a regular basis, as directed in PDD-56, by the National Foreign Affairs Training Center, the National Defense University, and the Army's Peacekeeping Institute at the U.S. Army War College.

Institutionalizing these processes is key to ensuring the effective performance of the interagency in complex contingency operations. Yet it is important that the processes discussed above not be written in stone—just as they were derived from the lessons of actual operations, so should future procedures be guided by future operations. This is why the interagency after-action review is a critical part of the process described. Obviously, the AAR does not influence the planning or monitoring of the operation it reviews, however, it can significantly improve interagency performance in a subsequent operation. Without constant feedback and updating, the pol-mil planning process described in this book will soon be outdated and will no longer provide for the effective interagency management of these operations. Each time the United States plays a significant role in a complex contingency operation, this handbook will need to be updated to include the experiences of those that planned and participated in the operation. New lessons must be incorporated into our thinking and disseminated widely. New tools may be used and, if effective, they too should have their place in an updated handbook.

The last few years have seen the United States engaged in a large number of significant complex contingency operations. Not only has the number of deployments increased, but the complexity of the issues that these operations attempt to tackle is increasing as well. The decision to participate in any of these emergencies will always be a difficult one, as it should be—the decision to commit the resources and citizens of the United States to an operation is among the most difficult and important decisions the President has to make. Having the mechanisms and tools that make the interagency more effective in planning and monitoring these operations will not make the decision to intervene any easier. They will increase the likelihood that any participation will achieve its objectives and further the interests of the United States.