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TRAIN LIKE YOU FIGHT . . .

THE NEED FOR AN INSTITUTIONALIZED EXERCISE PROGRAM
FOR
UNITED STATES INTERAGENCY RECONSTRUCTION AND
STABILIZATION CAPABILITIES

by

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On 7 December 2005, in response to concerns about the ability of the United States (US) to effectively conduct Reconstruction and Stabilization activities in Afghanistan and Iraq, President George W. Bush issued National Security Presidential Directive 44, Management of Interagency Efforts Concerning Reconstruction and Stabilization (NSPD-44). The directive explicitly tasks the US State Department to lead the US Government (USG) interagency in planning, preparing for, and conducting Reconstruction and Stabilization (R&S) efforts. As with any large-scale activity, success in planning, preparation, and execution is often contingent upon an institutionalized exercise program to ensure the readiness and appropriateness of personnel, equipment, and procedures. In the four years since President Bush signed NSPD-44, however, the State Department has yet to establish a formal exercise process for interagency R&S efforts. This paper evaluates USG interagency R&S exercise activity to answer the following question: Are USG R&S exercise activities adequate to ensure an effective interagency R&S capability? The paper begins with an overview of USG R&S capabilities, including a summary of the mission, agencies involved, governing directives, and key processes or R&S. It then reviews the exercises in which USG R&S capabilities were exercised since the State Department established its office for R&S. Based on that review, the paper identifies shortcoming in the R&S exercise process and then offers recommendations to resolve these shortcomings. Ultimately, the paper concludes that in order for the USG to develop and maintain effective R&S capabilities, the State Department must lead the interagency in developing an institutionalized R&S exercise program.

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Preface

As an Air Force officer on Fellowship with the US Department of State, I was fortunate to be working in the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS) in the spring of 2009 as the Department prepared for a significant expansion of reconstruction and stabilization (R&S) activities in Afghanistan. The build up was an enormous undertaking as the Office orchestrated the R&S efforts of over 15 organizations from nine US Government (USG) departments and agencies. That task was made even more challenging by the inherent complexity of R&S activities.

Reconstruction and stabilization activities are complicated because they require a large number of diverse organizations to work with common purpose in unsettled environments to build or strengthen elaborate social and government institutions. Achieving desired outcomes under such complex conditions requires deliberate, focused, and repeated practice. For the US government, structured exercises are the traditional venue for conducting such practice. Unfortunately, as the USG interagency R&S program enters its fourth year of existence, it still does not have an institutionalized method of exercising its R&S capabilities.

As I began this paper, President Obama's administration came to office with a clear message that Afghanistan would be one of its top priorities.¹ Given this, and the widely-held belief that R&S must be the major component of any successful campaign in Afghanistan, the ability of the United States (US) to develop effective R&S capabilities through an institutionalized exercise

program would seem to be particularly relevant if the US is to successfully achieve one of its top national security objectives. As such, the subject seemed a natural topic for a research paper.

Many talented and dedicated people provided invaluable assistance to me while writing this paper. Mr. Matt Cordova, the State Department's Deputy Director for Civilian-Military Planning in the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization offered invaluable guidance based on his five years experience conducting R&S activities for the USG; and Col Baltrusaitis at Air University was a constant source of perspective. And, as always, my family was exceedingly patient and supportive as I used many hours of their time to complete this paper.

Abstract

On 7 December 2005, in response to concerns about the ability of the United States (US) to effectively conduct Reconstruction and Stabilization activities in Afghanistan and Iraq, President George W. Bush issued *National Security Presidential Directive 44, Management of Interagency Efforts Concerning Reconstruction and Stabilization (NSPD-44)*. The directive explicitly tasks the US State Department to lead the US Government (USG) interagency in planning, preparing for, and conducting Reconstruction and Stabilization (R&S) efforts. As with any large-scale activity, success in planning, preparation, and execution is often contingent upon an institutionalized exercise program to ensure the readiness and appropriateness of personnel, equipment, and procedures. In the four years since President Bush signed *NSPD-44*, however, the State Department has yet to establish a formal exercise process for interagency R&S efforts.

This paper evaluates USG interagency R&S exercise activity to answer the following question: Are USG R&S exercise activities adequate to ensure an effective interagency R&S capability? The paper begins with an overview of USG R&S capabilities, including a summary of the mission, agencies involved, governing directives, and key processes or R&S. It then reviews the exercises in which USG R&S capabilities were exercised since the State Department established its office for R&S. Based on that review, the paper identifies shortcoming in the R&S exercise process and then offers recommendations to resolve these shortcomings. Ultimately, the paper concludes that in order for the USG to develop and maintain effective R&S

capabilities, the State Department must lead the interagency in developing an institutionalized R&S exercise program.

Chapter 1

Introduction

"...we've got to get our arms around . . . what is now becoming increasingly important -- that's reconstruction, stability, conflict resolution, peacekeeping challenges that we face. "

Secretary Hillary Clinton, January 13, 2009

The United States has expended considerable resources to achieve its objectives in Afghanistan and Iraq. In both cases, the adversary's major combat forces were defeated in relatively short order. Despite this, however, in neither case has the United States (US) been able to completely realize its desired outcome. Many believe the reason for this lays in the inability of the US to properly execute reconstruction and stabilization (R&S) activities.² At the same time, world events such as the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami and on-going unrest in the Sudan and Lebanon reinforce the need of the United States to effectively conduct R&S-type activities to prevent the collapse of governments, which, as identified in the 2002 and 2006 US *National Security Strategies*, can serve as breeding grounds for terrorists.³

Following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the United States defined a linkage between weak and corrupt government institutions and security threats to the United States.⁴ In 2004, recognizing that effective R&S was needed to strengthen and legitimize governments, and thus promote US security, the US Department of State (DoS) created the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS). The following year, President

George W. Bush, issued *National Security Presidential Directive 44, Management of Interagency Efforts Concerning Reconstruction and Stabilization (NSPD-44)* to consolidate the management of all USG R&S efforts under S/CRS to “achieve maximum effect” with USG R&S capabilities.⁵

Developing and fielding effective R&S capabilities requires more than these changes, however. It also requires that the multitude of United States Government (USG) organizations involved in R&S exercise together regularly to ensure they have proficient personnel and effective procedures. Yet, in the four years since it was created, S/CRS has yet to establish an institutionalized exercise program. This reality raises the question as to whether the USG is exercising its interagency R&S agencies and processes adequately to ensure it has and can maintain an effective interagency R&S capability.

This paper addresses that question. It begins by describing the interagency R&S system, including an overview of the R&S mission, the key USG agencies involved, and its core processes. Next, the paper examines the R&S exercises conducted to date and identifies associated shortcomings. The paper concludes by providing recommendations, drawn from the mature exercise programs in the Departments of Defense (DoD) and Homeland Security (DHS), that can be used to enhance USG R&S exercise activities.

As the paper explores the question of R&S exercises, it will focus on R&S as an interagency capability; and in most cases, it will be concerned with the civilian portion of the interagency. The paper uses the phrase “civilian R&S interagency” to describe the collection of non-DoD agencies involved in supporting or conducting R&S activities. Furthermore, since it is generally accepted that successful R&S requires a “whole-of-government” response, the paper will not

address exercise activities that are conducted exclusively within any single Department or Agency (e.g., DoS or Health and Human Services (HHS)).

In the end, the paper's findings – that the USG should institutionalize an R&S exercise program – may seem somewhat obvious. However, the fact that the USG has not established a formal exercise program for its R&S activities suggests that the answer may not be so obvious. By recounting the shortcomings in the US government's current approach to R&S exercises this paper offers an urgent reminder – within the context of an the anticipated civilian surge for Afghanistan – that an institutionalized exercise program is vital to the successful development of USG R&S capabilities.

Chapter 2

Overview of USG Reconstruction and Stabilization

The functions of the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization shall include the following: . . . Taking steps to ensure that training and education of civilian personnel to perform such reconstruction and stabilization activities is adequate and is carried out, as appropriate, with other agencies involved with stabilization operations.

2009 National Defense Authorization Act

In 2004, following the relatively expeditious defeat of the major adversary combat forces in Afghanistan and Iraq, the USG came to the conclusion that military force, while necessary, was, by itself, insufficient to achieve US objectives. The USG further determined that it needed to consolidate the successes of its military action by conducting a range of activities to enhance security, improve governance, provide humanitarian assistance, improve social well-being, rebuild economies and national infrastructure, reform justice systems and promote reconciliation. In short, the US needed to “reconstruct and stabilize” Afghanistan and Iraq.⁶

Description of USG Reconstruction and Stabilization

In recent years, there have been a variety of terms used by the numerous international government, non-government organization (NGO), and international organizations (IOs) involved in reconstruction and stabilization activities to describe their activities. The terms stability operations; peace operations; and security, stability, transition, and reconstruction (SSTR) are widely used to describe concepts that are more similar than different. This paper

uses the term “reconstruction and stabilization” as adopted by the USG’s Department of Defense Joint Forces Command to describe the broad tasks associated with R&S.⁷ More specifically, reconstruction is defined as: “The process of rebuilding degraded, damaged, or destroyed political socio-economic, and physical infrastructure of a country or territory to create the foundation for longer-term development.” Stabilization is defined as: “The process by which underlying tensions that might lead to resurgence in violence and a break-down in law and order are managed and reduced, while efforts are made to support preconditions for successful longer-term development.” There are fine-point differences in the various definitions for reconstruction, stabilization and similar activities, but on the whole, the definitions adopted above capture the essence of R&S as a distinct mission.

The US State Department has “operationalized” these terms by developing a list of essential tasks for R&S operations. The task list identifies specific actions that, when completed successfully, contribute to development of one or more of five “sectors” that represent the fundamental elements of a stable national environment. The five sectors are: security, governance and participation, humanitarian assistance and social well being, economic stabilization and infrastructure, justice and reconciliation.⁸ A summary of each sector, with its associated goals and tasks is contained in Appendix A.

For the USG, R&S tasks can be performed in a country before, during, or after conflict. If conducted before conflict exits, the objective is to identify and address the root sources of potential conflict early enough to prevent them from escalating to open hostilities. If applied during or following open hostilities, the objective of the R&S tasks is to address the drivers of conflict while building sufficiently effective indigenous institutions to facilitate transition to post-hostilities.

On the heels of major combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, the USG determined its existing structures, resources, and policies needed updating if it were to improve its R&S abilities. As a result, between 2004 and 2009, the USG implemented a series of deliberate organizational, policy, and resource actions designed to refine and enhance its “whole-of-government” R&S capabilities.

The USG’s first action occurred in the spring of 2004, when the National Security Council (NSC) authorized the State Department to establish an office to manage interagency support to post-conflict reconstruction and stabilization.⁹ Shortly afterward, Congress authorized the reprogramming of funds to support the office.¹⁰ In July 2004, then-Secretary of State Powell announced the creation of the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS) within the State Department “to enhance US institutional capacity to respond to crises involving failing, failed, and post-conflict states and complex emergencies.”¹¹

A little more than a year later, in December 2005, President George W. Bush issued *NSPD-44*, which directed the Department of State to lead USG interagency R&S efforts. Specifically, the directive charged the Secretary of State to “coordinate and lead integrated United States Government efforts, involving all U.S. Departments and Agencies with relevant capabilities, to prepare, plan for, and conduct stabilization and reconstruction activities.” It further tasked to Secretary of State to “coordinate such efforts with the Secretary of Defense to ensure harmonization with any planned or ongoing U.S. military operations across the spectrum of conflict.”¹²

As the Bush administration approached the end of its second term, it further institutionalized USG R&S initiatives. The concepts embodied in *NSPD-44* were added to the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) of 2009. Although the NDAA did not expand or modify USG R&S

structures it did ensure the concepts would endure beyond the change in administrations by codifying them into law when the Act was passed by Congress and signed by the Pres in October 2008. .

Although the USG began its efforts to expand its R&S capabilities in 2004, it was not until 2009 that Congress provided the financial resources necessary to support its efforts. The Fiscal Year 2009 Omnibus, passed on 9 March 2009 included \$75 million for USG reconstruction and stabilization programs.¹³ That funding gave USG agencies, for the first time, significant resources to begin a substantial expansion of civilian interagency R&S capabilities.

The office within the USG primarily responsible for overseeing that expansion is the State Departments Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization. Established in 2004, the office's mission is to "lead, coordinate, and institutionalize U.S. Government civilian capacity to prevent or prepare for post-conflict situations, and to help stabilize and reconstruct societies in transition from conflict or civil strife, so they can reach a sustainable path toward peace, democracy and a market economy."¹⁴ The office defines its core objectives as working "across the U.S. Government and with the world community to anticipate state failure, avert it when possible, and help post-conflict states lay a foundation for lasting peace, good governance and sustainable development."¹⁵ More specifically the office seeks to:

- Monitor and Plan: Develop clear policy options concerning states and regions of greatest risk and importance, and lead U.S. planning focused on these priorities to avert crises, when possible, to prepare for them as necessary.
- Mobilize and Deploy: Coordinate the deployment of U.S. resources and implementation of programs in cooperation with international and local partners to accelerate transitions from conflict to peace.
- Prepare Skills and Resources: Establish and manage an interagency capability to deploy personnel and resources in an immediate surge response and the capacity to sustain assistance until traditional support mechanisms can operate effectively.
- Learn From Experience: Incorporate best practices and lessons learned into functional changes in training, planning, exercises, and operational capabilities that support improved performance.

- Coordinate With International Partners: Work with international and multilateral organizations, individual states, and NGOs to plan, accelerate deployment, and increase interoperability of personnel and equipment in multilateral operations.

Under S/CRS leadership, the USG initiated a deliberate program to expand the agencies supporting R&S. Traditionally, R&S activities had been conducted almost exclusively by the Department of State, the Department of Defense, and the US Agency for International Development (USAID). These three agencies provide the Diplomacy, Defense, and Development (euphemistically know as the “the 3 Ds”) that had historically been the cornerstone elements of USG R&S. However, based on the lessons of Iraq and Afghanistan, and in recognition of the fact that there is considerable resident expertise in each of the five R&S sectors resident within the USG, S/CRS initiated an effort to expand the “3 Ds” of USG R&S to include a “4th D” – namely the Domestic agencies of the USG.¹⁶

As a result, USG R&S activities are currently supported by nine USG Departments, including:

- | | |
|---|--|
| - Department of State | - Department of Health and Human Service |
| - Department of Defense | - US Department of Agriculture |
| - US Agency for international Development | - Department of Transportation |
| - Department of Commerce | - Department of Justice |
| - Department of Homeland Security | |

These Departments are on call to support US R&S activities with dozens of sub-agencies and programs (e.g., Justice’s International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program (ICITAP) and Commerce’s Global Diversity Initiative (GDI)) as a way to enhance overall USG R&S capabilities.¹⁷

Fully exploiting the “4th D” has been problematic, however, because the domestic Departments traditionally have not been manned to support an international R&S mission. In

response to this challenge, Congress approved the Civilian Stabilization Initiative (CSI) in July 2007. The CSI was designed to create a civilian force to deploy in support of USG R&S operations using a three-tiered Civilian Reserve Corps (CRC) structure of specially trained and deployment-ready subject matter experts. The CRC-Active (CRC-A) is comprised of approximately 100 full-time federal employees ready to deploy on 48-hours notice for up to six month rotations in support of R&S operations. Depending on the size and scope of an R&S operation, the CRC-A can be augmented by the CRC-Standby (CRC-S). Standby component members are full-time federal employees whose primary duty is in the various Departments of the USG working issues other than R&S. However, if activated, their primary duty becomes supporting R&S operations. Members of the CRC-S can be deployed with 30-45 days notice for up to six months. The USG intends to hire approximately 2,000 Standby component members. If the mission necessitates, the CRC-A and CRC-S can be bolstered by the Reserve component of the CRC (CRC-R). The Reserve component would be manned by private citizens with unique skills and expertise relevant to R&S operations. Reserve members would work day-to-day in their private sector jobs until activated by the USG. Upon activation, Reserve component members would become employees of the federal government and prepare to deploy within 45-90 days for up to six months. Although the final size of the CRC-R has yet to be determined, the USG goal is to be able to deploy over one thousand skilled civilians to support R&S operations if necessary.¹⁸ As of March 2009, hiring of CRC-Active and Standby personnel was on schedule to have 100 Active members and 350 Standby members.¹⁹

As CRC members are brought on line, they will be trained to execute R&S tasks within a series of new interagency R&S processes that are meant to ensure appropriate conflict

assessment, effective interoperable planning, and USG-wide R&S unity of effort in support of broader US national security objectives.

In March 2007, the National Security Council approved the Interagency Management System (IMS) for R&S operations. The IMS is designed to give senior policy makers a mechanism to ensure unity of effort for interagency R&S efforts and to synchronize civilian and military R&S plans and operations. The IMS is designed to assist policy makers during complex crises and operations that are national priorities, involve widespread instability, may involve military operations, and where multiple USG agencies will be engaged in the policy and programmatic response.²⁰

The IMS consists of three components: the Country Reconstruction and Stabilization Group (CRSG), the Integration Planning Cell (IPC), and the Advanced Civilian Team (ACT). The CRSG is a Washington D.C.-based decision-making and central coordination entity that guides interagency R&S activities. The primary purpose of the CRSG is to prepare the whole-of-government strategic plan and coordinate the approval of the plan by the NSC Deputy's or Principal's committee as appropriate.

To ensure the CRSG-led interagency plan is consistent with the military plan being developed by the involved Geographic Combatant Command (GCC), the IMS includes an Integration Planning Cell. The IPC assists "in harmonizing the civilian and military planning processes and operations."²¹ Comprised of USG agency R&S planners and sectoral experts, the PIC deploys to the GCC headquarters to support the GCC commander in integrating civilian strategic and tactical plans with the military's.²² The IPC is an important element to help bridge the gap between the three levels of military planning (strategic at the Joint Staff, operational at

the GCC, and tactical at the Joint Task Force) and the two levels of civilian R&S planning (strategic in Washington DC and tactical in embassy of the affected country).

To ensure the CRSG-led interagency plan is consistent with activities being planned and conducted by the US Embassy and USAID Mission in the affected country, the IMS includes an ACT. The ACT will deploy to the embassy in the affected country to coordinate activities with the Chief of Mission (CoM) and to develop and oversee execution of tactical components of the interagency's R&S plan.²³

While not a directive command and control structure, the IMS facilitates unity of effort for R&S activities by providing a coordinating mechanism for Washington policy makers, GCC planners, and Embassy personnel in country. To accommodate the vast diversity of possible incidents requiring an USG R&S response, the IMS can be tailored as needed to most appropriately scope USG efforts; in other words, the USG R&S response may involve all, some, or none of the IMS components described above. It can also tailor the size, role, or composition of any individual part of the IMS based on the R&S scenario being addressed. The USG may elect to do this if activating a full IMS is undesirable due to international political sensitivities. In fact, in the two years since the IMS was approved as the formal process for managing R&S operations, the USG has not yet activated the system despite the fact that it has supported over 25 R&S operations worldwide.²⁴

Effectively employing the IMS requires considerable information about the nature and underlying issues of an R&S event. This is an extension of a central tenant of R&S operations, which holds that the fundamental drivers of conflict must be address before stabilization efforts can be successful. In recognition of this, in July, 2008 the National Security Council Deputies approved the use of the Interagency Conflict Assessment Framework (ICAF) as the method for

identifying the sources of conflict or other factors to produce civil strife.²⁵ Applying the ICAF involves conducting a comprehensive analysis of the cultural, sociological, ethnic, religious, political, and economic factors that form the context of on-going on conflict or strife. The information gained in that analysis is used to identify and develop mechanisms to address the factors driving conflict. The ICAF holds that if the core issues driving conflict can be addressed while local government institutional capacity is expanded, conflict environments can be transformed to stable environments.

Having sanctioned a conflict assessment mechanism and a method of coordinating interagency R&S plans, the NSC Deputies approved an R&S planning framework in July of 2008.²⁶

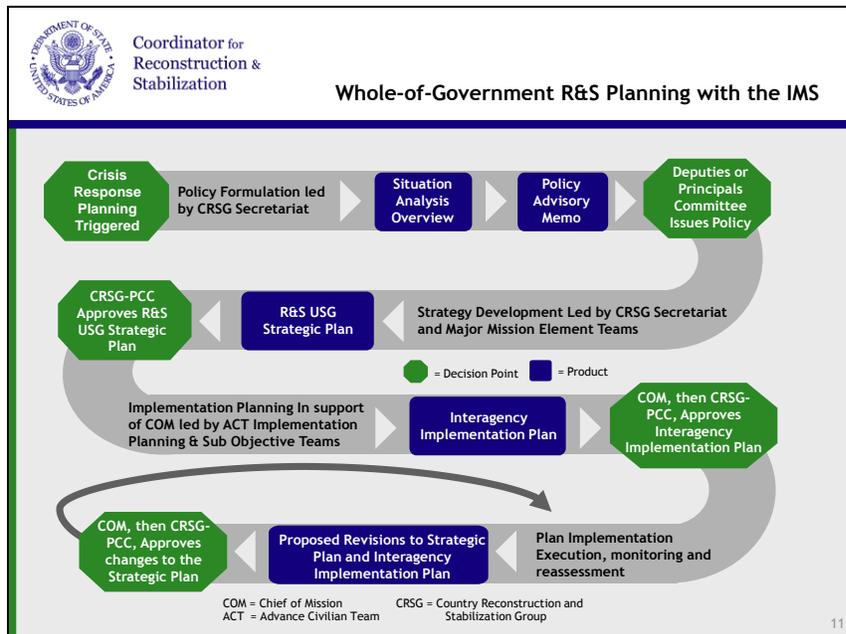


Figure 1 – USG Planning Framework for R&S²⁷

The whole-of-government planning framework leverages the ICAF and IMS to inform and guide USG R&S planning efforts. A detailed description of the entire R&S planning framework is beyond the scope of this paper; however, it is sufficient to say that the planning framework

defines the process by which the USG interagency assesses R&S situations; develops and obtains approval on a response policy; builds plans to achieve that policy; coordinates those plans with military planners; monitors the implementation of the plan; and coordinates adjustments to the plan as needed. An illustration of the planning framework flow is in Figure 1.

Collectively, the IMS, ICAF, and R&S Planning Framework constitute the formal doctrine of USG interagency R&S operations. This doctrine was developed as the result of deliberate efforts by the USG to expand and enhance its R&S capabilities in the aftermath of initial combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Even this high-level review of the R&S mission, the agencies involved, and the doctrine to be employed shows R&S to be a highly complex endeavor that requires a high degree of proficiency among participants.

Historically, the method used by the USG to ensure proficiency and effectiveness in complex endeavors is through exercises and simulations. The following chapter examines the USG's R&S exercises to assess whether they are helping ensure an effective USG R&S capability.

Chapter 3

Interagency R&S Exercises

In theory, there is no difference between theory and practice. In practice, there is.

— L.A. van de Snepscheut

In the five years since the State Department established its office for R&S, the USG interagency has participated in a number of exercises, experiments, training activities, and war games to develop and train R&S capabilities as envisioned and directed in *NSPD-44*. These efforts ranged from single individuals deployed as role players supporting other agency's training objectives to deployments of over 50 personnel in large-scale DoD joint exercises.

Although nearly all of these efforts have been treated as “exercises” by the USG civilian interagency, most of them are more properly classified as experiments. The distinction is important as the objectives, preparations, and execution for experiments are fundamentally different than those for exercises. Within the USG, there is general consensus on what constitutes an exercise.

The DoD defines exercises as “a military maneuver or simulated wartime operation involving planning, preparation, and execution. It is carried out for the purpose of training and evaluation. It may be a multinational, joint, or single-Service exercise, depending on participating organizations.”²⁸ The Department of Homeland Security, which oversees the largest civilian exercise program in the USG, defines exercises as: “an instrument to train for, assess,

practice, and improve performance in prevention, protection, response, and recovery capabilities in a risk-free environment. Exercises can be used for: testing and validating policies, plans, procedures, training, equipment, and inter-agency agreements; clarifying and training personnel in roles and responsibilities; improving interagency coordination and communications; identifying gaps in resources; improving individual performance; and identifying opportunities for improvement.²⁹

Although not precisely aligned, the DoD and DHS definitions are the same in general intent. For both agencies, exercises are used for training, evaluating, and validating the execution of *existing* procedures. Experiments, by contrast, focus on developing or evaluating new procedures or concepts with the goal identifying future enhancements to existing procedures.³⁰

To remain true to its research question, this paper will limit its examination of USG R&S “exercise” activities to those that adhere to the definition of exercise provided above.³¹ As described in Chapter 2, the USG did not approve the fundamental components of civilian R&S doctrine until 2007. Therefore, USG R&S actions prior to that could not have been exercise as defined by the DoD or DHS. This is consistent with the objectives defined for, and observations made by participants involved in, the activities before 2007. In general, the event objectives were to experiment with various components of IMS. Moreover, the after action reports for these events describe that the majority of effort was spent establishing building new relations and defining roles and procedures vice exercising established procedures.

According to this approach, then, USG has supported only two exercises, since 2005—both of which were sponsored and led by the DoD: US Southern Command’s (USSOUTHCOM) Blue Advance 2008 (BA08) and US European Command’s (USEUCOM) Austere Challenge 2009 (AC09).³² These exercises, summarized below, were significant events for the civilian

R&S community. Each represented a substantial investment in time, manpower, and effort and both met the traditional objective of an exercise; namely, to train, validate, or assess operational capabilities.

Blue Advance 2008

Blue Advance 2008 was the USG's first true interagency R&S exercise. For approximately 18 months leading up to the exercise, nearly 80 civilian and military R&S personnel planned and prepared to exercise a range of R&S doctrinal concepts across three geographically separated locations in the USSOUTHCOM area of responsibility.³³ The exercise scenario involved a number of R&S issues, including a natural disaster, mass migration, and an unstable political transition.³⁴

The BA08 script included a wide range of inputs meant to challenge players and stress R&S doctrine; including several components of the IMS and the Planning Framework. Perhaps most importantly, Blue Advance, which was the largest DoD and IA exercise in fiscal year 2008, included a significant number of fundamental, yet aggressive, operationally-focused training objectives, as shown in figure 2, below.

By all accounts, BA08 was a resounding success as a first attempt at a large-scale interagency R&S exercise. The event uncovered a number of valuable areas for improvement in the doctrine, procedures, and concepts for USG R&S. The same could be said for the USG's exercise planning and preparation. In the year and a half of preparation leading to the exercise, the USG experienced a number of challenges that complicated the process of preparing for BA08.³⁵

USSOUTHCOM Blue Advance 2008 R&S Training Objectives, 19 – 29 Feb 2008

- Conduct a robust exercise of the IMS – its operations and processes
- Exercise the operational and planning relationships between the ACT and JTF
 - o How organizations exchange information / communicate, integrate whole of government planning, establish integrated teams, and develop a common operating picture
 - o How this relationship changes over the cycle of the R&S operation
- Exercise one potential option for the operational relationship between the ACT and USAID’s DART over the cycle of the R&S operations (DART team alone, both teams in country, ACT alone)
- Exercise the feedback / coordination loop between CRSG, IPC, and ACT particularly in regards to
 - o Resource needs
 - o Common operating picture / status of operations
 - o Planning and policy guidance
- Exercise the implementation planning portion of the USG Interagency Planning Framework for R&S, including the establishment of essential task area teams, development of an Interagency Implementation Plan (IIP), assessment of the changing environment, established metrics and planning assumptions, and revisions to the IIP and agency plans

Figure 2 – BA08 R&S Training Objectives³⁶

The after action report published by the US Army’s Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute (PKSOI) included several observations related to exercise planning or preparation.³⁷ The first of these noted that the exercise lacked firm commitment and senior leader support from personnel outside S/CRS and that interagency personnel were unwilling to contribute the necessary time before the exercise.³⁸ The report went on to recommend that exercise planners secure senior leadership buy-in for the exercise in order to secure support throughout the exercise. Lack of this commitment hindered preparations as exercise planners had difficulty obtaining resources and support from senior interagency leaders. The report also identified several instances of inadequate pre-exercise training, which led to exercise players

expending valuable time during the exercise to complete training vice participating in scripted exercise events.

Blue Advance 08 was far-and-away the most demanding and resource-consuming event conducted by the civilian R&S community since the establishment of S/CRS. Yet BA08 was planned as an additional duty by a relatively small number of personnel in S/CRS. This created significant difficulties and challenges during the planning of BA08 by overwhelming the planners, who were not fluent in standard exercise planning skills. That problem was made worse by the fact that the interagency did not reach its decision to participate in BA08 until relatively late in the exercise's planning phase. As a result, the inexperienced exercise planners were faced with significantly shortened timelines to complete planning products and actions.

In some measure, many of these difficulties are to be expected given that this was the first large-scale exercise for the USG civilian R&S interagency. In fact, one could argue that identifying these types of shortcomings contribute to corporate learning and is precisely why organizations exercise. However, this is only true if the shortcomings are not repeated in subsequent exercise. Unfortunately, the interagency experienced many of the same difficulties while planning the next major exercise.

Austere Challenge 2009

Like BA08, AC09 was a significant R&S exercise for the USG.³⁹ In fact, in many respects, AC09 is an impressive evolution of the concepts and processes employed in BA08; especially considering the relatively short time between the two events. Over fifty civilian R&S personnel from nine USG Departments supported the preparation and conduct of the Crisis Action Planning and Execution phases of the exercise. It is particularly significant that the first Active members of the Civil Reserve Corps were among the fifty civilian participants.

Austere Challenge 2009 served as a Joint Task Force Headquarters certification exercise for USEUCOM's 7th Army Headquarters and included a complex scenario with extensive R&S components. Although the civilian interagency was identified as a secondary training audience, the scenario allowed R&S planners to script five major R&S themes covering a number of core R&S sectors and enabling the most complete exercising of R&S doctrinal concepts to date. Exercise planners took full advantage of that opportunity by defining 38 targeted yet far-reaching training objectives and sub-objectives for the exercise. The four broad R&S training objectives developed by USEUCOM – further testing and refining the IMS, integrating CRC members into R&S planning, and “elevating the importance of interagency coordination to civilian and military senior leadership,”⁴⁰ – were complimented by 34 more focused training objectives from S/CRS to constitute the most comprehensive set of training objectives for the USG to date. Appendix B contains a list of S/CRS's training objectives for AC09.

Perhaps the most telling sign of how fully the R&S aspects were integrated into AC09 was the fact that a team of military planners from 7th Army traveled to Washington DC to conduct joint tactical planning and final exercise preparations in the month before the exercise. This was a significant step in interagency R&S coordination as it was the first time that USG civilian and military planners conducted any level of joint R&S planning.

While there were an impressive number of positive accomplishments in AC09, there were also a number of challenges identified during the planning and preparation for the exercise.⁴¹ None of these resulted in insurmountable difficulties for the exercise, however they did induce friction into the planning process and hampered the civilian R&S community's ability realize the full benefits of an exercise on the scale of Austere Challenge.

Arguably, the most significant challenge during AC09 was the fact that the exercise was that preparations and planning were conducted with “economy of force” effort. In other words, the exercise preparation was conducted by a relatively small number of personnel who were assigned the responsibility as an additional duty. As they were not exercise planning specialists, those planning the exercise were not familiar with typical exercise planning processes. Although they were ultimately successful in planning a valuable exercise, they endured considerable transaction costs, lost valuable time to re-work, and generally took longer to complete planning tasks than might have occurred if the exercise had been planned by a dedicated staff of specially-trained exercise planners.

Furthermore, given that planning for AC09 occurred at the same time as the civilian interagency was ramping up for a possible surge mission to Afghanistan, the additional-duty planners faced a constant tension between real world duties and exercise preparation. This tension created delays in, and disrupted continuity in, AC09 exercise planning. In particular, several planning documents were not completed until well beyond desired deadlines, which hindered joint exercise planning.

Similarly, the decision to participate in AC09 did not come until well after USEUCOM’s initial Concept Development Conference. As a result, civilian USG planners were “behind the curve” in planning the exercise and lost valuable time required to create exercise support materials, script themes, and scenario injects.

The late start in planning and competition with primary duties was further compounded by difficulties in obtaining regular and prolonged commitments from S/CRS and interagency subject matter experts to support exercise planning. As chartered by *NSPD-44* and the 2009 NDAA, the State Department’s S/CRS led AC09 planning efforts. Within S/CRS, the office of

Contingency Response Operations was give primary responsibility for planning and preparing for the exercise. However, the scope and complexity of the exercise required significant support by subject matter experts from other offices in S/CRS and from across the civilian interagency. Those experts, however, were also faced with competing real-world mission requirements and found it difficult to commit the time necessary to adequately support planning for the exercise. This resulted, again, in inefficiencies in completing mandatory pre-exercises planning tasks.

The challenges described above highlight perhaps the most significant deficiency identified during AC09 – that is the failure to implement lessons learned and recommendations from Blue Advance 08. The formal after actions report for BA08 recommended four changes to improve the planning and preparations for future R&S exercises. Key among these was a suggestion to “devote additional civilian resources to support and logistics for the exercise.” Unfortunately, as described above, S/CRS made a deliberate decision to use “economy of force” team to plan the AC09, which led to inefficiencies. In addition, the BA08 after actions report recommended that future R&S exercises include objectives to assess the ability of the IMS to interface with International Organizations, the communication capabilities of the IMS, and the role of the CRSG Secretariat and the Policy Coordinating Committee in the IMS.⁴² None of these were included in the extensive set of training objectives for AC09.

In-and-of-themselves, the challenges encountered during the planning and preparation for exercises are not necessarily problematic. What makes them significant is that fact each of the challenges observed in the preparation for AC09 was also experienced in BA08. In other words, represented a trend that was indicative of systemic deficiencies.

Trends in USG Civilian Interagency R&S Exercise Planning

When evaluating the challenges experienced in the planning of BA08 and aC09, it is important to note that they were not the result of personnel errors; rather, they were a product of the organizational structures, systems, and processes used during the planning for both events. In one regard, this is a fortunate reality, as non-systemic (e.g., personnel errors) tend to be more random and more difficult to predict and correct. Challenges stemming from organizational deficiencies, on the other hand, can typically be permanently resolved merely by identifying and correcting the organizational deficiencies that produced the shortcoming. A basic root cause analysis for each of the challenges identified in BA08 and AC09 should, therefore, yield the core issues which, once corrected, will enhance USG civilian interagency R&S exercise planning, and by extension, USG R&S exercises and capabilities *writ large*.

Challenge #1: Lack of Personnel Support and Leadership Commitment. Both BA 09 and AC09 suffered from lack of personnel support. R&S personnel were tasked to support the exercise but were not given relief from other non-exercise duties and responsibilities. In other words, their supervisors, and the R&S leadership in general, did not support the exercise sufficiently to ensure exercise planners could support exercise planning activities at the expense of other activities as necessary.⁴³ This suggests that a likely root cause for the problem was insufficient “buy in” for participation in the exercises among key “stakeholders”. Supervisors and leadership who had “bought into” the exercises could reasonably be expected to support planners’ needs to sacrifice other work in order to complete exercise planning actions.

Challenge #2: Inefficiencies During Planning. In both BA08 and AC09, inefficiencies during exercise planning, including re-work and delays in completing required products and preparation activities, were typically the result of unfamiliarity with standard exercise planning

processes. In other words, the personnel responsible for leading exercise preparation efforts were not fluent in the corporate skill set of exercise planning. Therefore, they experienced a transaction cost of time and effort as they progressed the exercise planning learning curve. Further, the fact the personnel were leading planning efforts as an additional duty created time management conflicts that hindered planning. Both of these symptoms resulted from the interagency's decision to conduct exercise planning as an additional duty. Or said another way, using a set of dedicated, specially trained personnel to lead exercise planning could reasonably be expected to overcome the type of inefficiencies experienced during the planning for BA08 and AC09.

Challenge #3: Late Decisions to Participation in Exercises. Several factors contributed to the late decision of the USG to participate in BA08 and AC09: uncertainty about available resources in light of anticipated real-world taskings, ignorance about pre-exercise planning timelines, and the newness and inherent complexities associated with coordinating interagency consensus about exercise participation in general. However, perhaps the most significant factor, and the root cause of the late decision to participate in BA 09 and AC09, was the lack of clearly stated and accepted objectives for R&S exercise efforts as a whole. Once the decision was made to participate in a given exercise, the interagency developed appropriate and meaningful objectives for that exercise. But these were not tied to any larger set of strategic objectives for USG civilian interagency participation in DoD exercises *writ large*. In other words, USG civilian interagency R&S exercise play unfolded in a largely *ad hoc* manner. Had there been a coordinated set of objectives for the R&S program and a deliberate plan to achieve these objectives, one could reasonably assume that the interagency would have been poised to commit to participate in BA08 and AC09 much earlier than they did.

Challenge #4: Inadequate Pre-exercise Training. Inadequate pre-exercise training is closely related to the inefficient exercise planning identified in Challenge #2. As planners worked through exercise planning, they did not have a mechanism to maintain “big picture” oversight of the overall effort. As a result, they did not anticipate the need for specialized pre-exercise training that was documented as a deficiency in the BA08 after actions report. However, had their planning efforts been conducted as part of a structured exercise planning program, they may have been aware of the need for pre-exercise training. In other words, the existence and use of guidelines, standard operating procedures, checklists, and schedules for exercise planning may have allowed planners to be aware of the pre-exercise training needs. The root cause of this problem, therefore, was the lack of a structure exercise management function or program with S/CRS to guide exercise event planning.

Challenge #5: Failure to Implement Lessons Learned. Exercise planners for AC09 experienced many of the same challenges as did the planners for BA08. This is a direct result of the lack of a structured process to formally track lessons learned during USG civilian interagency play in exercises. Exercise planners for BA08 produced a thorough and insightful after action report to document observations and recommendations stemming from the exercise. However, they lacked an effective method of tracking the implementation of recommended actions. As a result, the after action report did not achieve its primary purpose of enhancing future exercise planning and conduct.

The five root causes identified above represent the fundamental systemic flaws that led to the challenges experienced while planning for BA08 and AC09. If properly identified, they represent the things that must be addressed in order to avoid experiencing similar problems in future exercises. The root causes, along with their associated challenges and the exercise in

which they were experienced are summarized in Table 1. Fortunately, as outlined in the next chapter, the USG can, with relatively little effort, implement a series of changes to address each of the challenges and root causes that have hampered exercise planning to date.

<u>Challenge</u>	<u>Exercise</u>	<u>Root Cause</u>
1. Lack of Personnel Support and Leadership Commitment	BA08 and AC09	Lack of Buy-in From Stakeholders
2. Inefficiencies During Planning	BA08 and AC09	Use of “Additional Duty” Planners
3. Late Decisions to Participation in Exercises	BA08 and AC09	Lack of Overarching Goals for USG Participation in R&S Exercises
4. Inadequate Pre-exercise Training	BA08	Lack of a Structure Process for Preparing for USG Participation in R&S Exercises
5. Failure to Implement Lessons Learned	AC09	Lack of a Formal Lesson Learned Process

Table 1 – Summary of Exercises Planning Challenges and Root Causes

Chapter 4

Recommendations for USG R&S Leaders

The more you sweat in practice, the less you bleed in battle

~Author Unknown

Fight like you train and train like you fight.

—Military proverb

As described in the previous chapter, the challenges experienced in the planning for BA08 and AC09 were primarily the result of flaws in organizational structures and processes. Addressing them therefore requires an institutional response. This chapter offers recommendations on how an R&S program can be institutionalized within the civilian R&S interagency to overcome the challenges experienced in BA08 and AC09 so future exercises can be leveraged efficiently and effectively to enhance the USG R&S capabilities.

Toward that end, this chapter draws upon the USG's two most mature and comprehensive exercise programs to identify elements that can be used to address the root causes identified in the previous chapter. In addition to having the USG's most robust exercise program, the Department of Defense and the Department of Homeland Security are involved in US R&S operations. This makes their approach to exercising particularly relevant for the broader R&S interagency. The following paragraphs provide a brief overview of DoD and DHS exercise

philosophies and programs to provide a broader understanding of their general approaches to exercises.

Department of Defense

The DoD views exercising as a subset of training and considers training absolutely fundamental to its ability to execute its mission. This is shown by the size and scope of the DoD training and exercise programs, which include exercises at virtually all organizational levels across nearly all mission areas and is arguably the most comprehensive exercise program in the world. Of the many sub-categories of DoD exercises, the Joint Exercise is the most analogous to USG R&S as it involves multiple agencies that normally perform distinct mission and who are brought together to perform a common mission (including R&S activities, in some instances). The planning, management, and conduct of Joint exercises are governed by DoD's Joint Training System (JTS).⁴⁴

The JTS provides directs that preparation for, and execution of, Joint exercises be guided by six fundamental tenants. For the DoD, these can be thought of as the foundational elements of effective exercises⁴⁵. In other words, exercises conducted without adherence to these concepts may not achieve the exercise's ultimate purpose of enhancing operational capabilities.

Tenant #1: Use Joint Doctrine. The first tenant, "Use Joint Doctrine" reflects the importance the military places on using formally-sanctioned *Joint* techniques, tactics, and procedures as well as terminology to conduct Joint operations. "Joint doctrine captures the fundamental principles that guide the employment of US military forces in coordinated action toward a common objective."⁴⁶ Since joint operations are conducted by forces from a wide range of military, and increasingly, civilian organizations, it is essential that, when operating in a Joint construct, all forces operate in accordance with Joint doctrine (as opposed to agency-unique

procedures and vocabulary). As applied to exercises, the tenant directs that Joint exercises be designed around Joint doctrine.

Tenant #2: Commanders and Agency Directors are the Primary Trainers. This tenant charges leaders of military organizations to take personal responsibility for the training necessary to ensure readiness to fulfill assigned missions. This implies that leaders must be engaged in, and provide guidance for, Joint exercises.

Tenant #3: Mission focus. In identifying “mission focus,” as a tenant of Joint exercises, the JTS directs that Joint exercises must be designed to link mission requirement, prioritized training requirements, and mission essential tasks.

Tenant #4: Train the Way You Intend to Fight. This tenant reiterates a long-held central concept in military training. Specifically, the JTS states that exercises be “based on realistic conditions and standards to the maximum extent possible.”⁴⁷

Tenant #5: Centralize Planning and Decentralize Execution. To provide maximum flexibility in operations (and by extension in exercises) this tenant advises the planning should be conducted in a centralized manner while activities are conducted in a decentralized fashion. While the JTS describes the tenant in terms of military “operations”, it applies equally to training and exercises.

Tenant #6: Link Training Assessment to Readiness Assessment. This tenant directs that commanders will use assessments of their unit’s exercise activities to inform their assessment of real-world readiness. In other words, it is used to determine the “so what” of a unit’s exercise activities. If tenants one through five are adhered to, then the assessment produced in tenant six will provide the commander with a meaningful measurement of the unit’s ability to execute its mission. As such, it will also identify the areas in which the unit needs additional training.

The DoD's JTS is an intricate system of detailed processes used to ensure exercises are effective and meet their ultimate objective of enhancing operational capabilities. Despite the complexities of the JTS, however, the broad philosophies conveyed by the six tenants described above provide an excellent short-hand for conceptualizing the DoD approach to exercising.

Department of Homeland Security (DHS)

In many respects, the DHS Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) parallels the DoD's JTS. The purpose of the HSEEP is to: "provide common exercise policy and program guidance that constitutes a national standard for exercises. HSEEP includes consistent terminology that can be used by all exercise planners, regardless of the nature and composition of their sponsoring agency or organization."⁴⁸ Also, like the JTS, the HSEEP includes a number of supporting processes that ensure exercises achieve their primary objective of assessing and enhancing operational capabilities.

One significant distinction between HSEEP and JTS is that HSEEP explicitly differentiates between managing exercise *programs* and managing exercise *projects*. The former involves administrative and bureaucratic tasks associated with maintain an institutional ability to conduct exercises while the latter involved the focused activities associated with the planning, conduct, and follow-up tasks for specific exercise events. In HSEEP, both are essential to producing effective exercises.

The HSEEP describes three essential functions of Exercise Program Management: multi-year planning, stakeholder engagement, and resource management,⁴⁹ with multi-year planning serving as the basis of all exercise program management.⁵⁰ The multi-year plan establishes exercise priorities based on an agency's strategic plan and identifies the resources necessary to execute the multi-year plan.⁵¹ The multi-year plan is developed during annual Training and

Exercise Program Workshops which involve all stake-holders in the agency's mission area. Exercise Program Managers are responsible for identifying the resources necessary to execute the multi-year plan and for identifying and training Exercise Project Managers for each exercise on the multi-year plan.

Once identified, Exercise Project Managers oversee the five HSEEP phases, known as the exercise cycle, for each exercise event: Foundation, Design and Development, Conduct, Evaluation, Improvement Planning. In the Foundation phase, project managers establish an exercise planning timeline (including milestones and planning conferences), form an exercise planning team, and secure buy-in among stake holders for the event.

In the Design and Development phase, project managers identify the operational capabilities, mission essential tasks, and objectives to be exercise. They design the scenario and supporting documentation, coordinate logistics, and selecting an evaluation and improvement methodology.⁵²

Following the Design and Development phase, project managers oversee the Conduct phase, which includes executing the exercise and all associated follow up activities. In the HSEEP, the Evaluation phase is "the cornerstone" of an exercise.⁵³ It includes the post-exercise analysis to identify and document strengths and areas for improvement for input into future agency planning. The final phase of the exercise cycle is Improvement Planning. In this phase, specific corrective actions identified in the Evaluation phase are assigned to organizations for implementation and tracked until completion.

The DoD and DHS exercise programs are generally seen as having effective mechanisms and approaches for planning, preparing, executing, and incorporating lessons learned from effective exercises. In that regard, they provide a valuable reference from which to draw

potential solutions to the challenges experienced by the civilian interagency R&S community during exercise planning. Therefore, the following paragraphs borrow concepts from the DoD and DHS programs to make recommendation on how to address the root causes of the problems identified during planning for BA08 and AC09. Each of the recommendations below correlates to its similarly-numbered challenge identified in the previous chapter.

Recommendation #1. Secure Stakeholder Buy In. The very first action described in the first step of the HSEEP exercise cycle is to build a base of support and secure buy in from leadership.⁵⁴ The HSEEP Volume II, Exercise Planning and Conduct states:

*Before government agencies sponsor an exercise, the appropriate senior officials should be briefed to gain their support. Likewise, executive-level buy-in is essential for private sector entities to conduct successful exercises. Establishing this base of support indicates that the exercise purpose and objectives are concurrent with strategic and organizational goals and objectives. Additionally, senior officials often have the ability to garner participation from potential exercise players and planning team members.*⁵⁵

HSEEP Volume I, Overview and Exercise Program management, goes on to say:

Broad participation from all stakeholders is important for ensuring that training and exercises meet a wide range of preparedness needs. Broad stakeholder participation also helps ensure that exercises will be more realistic, encompassing the full spectrum of response disciplines.

Taken collectively, the HSEEP guidance describes an action, that, if adopted by the USG interagency R&S community would address precisely the root cause for “Lack of Personnel Support and Leadership Commitment.” The R&S interagency should embrace the concept by establishing a process to fully coordinate exercise participation among interagency stakeholders before committing to participate in any exercise.⁵⁶ The coordinating process should provide a reasonable estimate of the costs associated with participating in the exercise in terms of manpower, time, and finances. The process should seek explicit approval from stakeholders at

highest possible levels and should stipulate that once approved a similar level of approval would be necessary to withdraw from the exercise. Finally, to ensure sustained support for the exercise, the process should provide for recurring updates to senior stakeholders on exercise preparations to sustain support for the exercise.

Adopting a process like the one described above will ensure that senior leaders have a common understanding of the resources required to participate in the exercise and that leaders have committed to support the exercise based on that understanding. This, in turn, will provide exercise planners the support of senior leadership and, based on the adage that “what’s important to the boss is important to me”, the support of supervisors. That support would then allow exercise planners to give adequate effort to exercise preparations to ensure success. Such a process, therefore, would address the root cause of Challenge #1.

Recommendation #2: Establish a Staff of Dedicated, Trained Exercise Planners. Challenge #2 described inefficiencies during exercise planning. These inefficiencies were in areas that DHS’s HSEEP program refers to as Exercise Program Management. Exercise Program Management actions are the administrative tasks necessary to maintain an effective institutional ability to conduct and participate in exercises. Examples of these tasks include developing long range exercise schedules, coordinating organizational exercise requirements, coordinating institutional exercise program objectives, and serving as the organization’s subject matter experts to support planning for individual experts. Although it does not specifically categorize these tasks as “management” tasks, the DoD accomplishes similar tasks as part of sustaining its organization exercise programs.

Both DHS and DoD employ dedicated staffs of personnel to perform these exercise management tasks. Although these dedicated staffs are relatively small, they have

specialized training to perform tasks that are essential to maintaining an effective exercise capability. Following that model, S/CRS, in fulfillment of its charter to ensure that training of civilian personnel to perform reconstruction and stabilization activities is conducted⁵⁷ should establish a dedicated staff of specialists to manage the R&S exercise program. The existence of such a staff would have eliminated many of the inefficiencies experienced during the planning of BA08 and AC09.

Recommendation #3: Develop an Approved Interagency Exercise Strategy. In both of the USG's major interagency R&S exercises, planning was hampered by compressed timelines that resulted from late commitments to participate in the exercises. Ultimately, the late commitments stemmed from the lack of an overarching goal for the USG R&S exercise program. Once again, the HSEEP provides a potential model for how to address this shortcoming. In the HSEEP:

*“. . . the foundational document guiding a successful exercise program is a Multi-Year Training and Exercise Plan. The Multi-Year Training and Exercise Plan identifies an entity's priorities as articulated in the entity's strategy, and identifies the capabilities that are most relevant to achieving those priorities. It then outlines a multi-year schedule of training and exercises that an entity will undertake to enhance and validate its capabilities. It also graphically illustrates a multi-year schedule for training and exercise activities that support those priorities.”*⁵⁸

The USG civilian R&S interagency should develop and publish a document similar to the HSEEP Multi-Year Training and Exercise Plan. The document should be updated annually with a minimum two-year projection of strategic exercise objectives and schedules. The document should be published on a timeline that allows integration with the DoD multi-year exercise requirements projection process⁵⁹.

In the spring of 2009, S/CRS developed a new interagency process to solicit and consolidate interagency R&S exercise requirements so they can be matched to the J7 requests to identify the most mutually-beneficial exercise opportunities. As written, this process defines

long-range exercise objectives based on S/CRS strategic objectives. This process, called the Exercise and Experimentation Strategy, can serve as a good baseline for a more complete Exercise Strategy modeled on the HSEEP Multi-Year Training and Exercise Plan.⁶⁰

Had such a document existed prior to BA08 and AC09s, there would have been clear pre-coordinated approval to participate in each exercise and the civilian R&S interagency would have been fully engaged in planning for the initial stages of both exercises.

Recommendation #4: Establish Structured Exercise Planning Processes. Challenge #4 identified the problems associated with “*ad hoc*” exercise planning. The planning actions and timelines used for BA08 were almost exclusively determined by responding to DoD planning exercise processes. In other words, there was no indigenous R&S exercise planning process and the failure to schedule pre-exercise training for civilian R&S personnel resulted from the fact that the DoD exercise planners did not schedule pre-exercise training for their personnel.

Yet again, the HSEEP provides a possible model to overcome the challenge. The civilian R&S interagency should develop and implement structured exercise planning processes along the lines of those used by the HSEEP Exercise Planning Team as part of Exercise Project Management. In this construct, subject matter experts conduct detailed planning for specific exercises using a comprehensive set of standard planning processes. This, along with oversight from dedicated exercise program management staff, allows exercise planning to be conducted effectively by staff even if they are not full-time exercise planning professionals. Had planners been guided by these types of procedures while planning for BA08, it is conceivable that they would have scheduled all required pre-exercise training.

Recommendation #5: Establish a Formal Lessons Learned Accounting System. As described in the previous chapter, a number of valuable recommendations from BA08 were not

implemented in AC09 due to the lack of an effective tracking process. Implementing lessons learned following an exercise is a challenge for all organizations as post-exercise “let down” and the realities of catching up with “the real world” post exercise combine to push exercise follow up actions down on the priority list. The DoD and DHS have very similar processes to counteract this reality. As part of their core duties, exercise planners are required to conduct hot washes, de-briefs, and after action assessments to identify areas for improvement and lessons learned from the exercise. For each observation or recommendation, an implementation action is assigned to a specific agency along with a specific due date for completion. The full set of tasks, tasked agencies, and due dates are compiled in an improvement plan, which is used by exercise planners to track each item to completion. In the DoD, the status of items on improvement plan is often briefed to senior leadership as a way to ensure follow through on each item and to illustrate the value of the exercise.

The civilian R&S interagency should adopt a similar formal mechanism for tracking lessons learned tracking. The process should include the requirement to create a formal improvement plan following exercise⁶¹ as well as a requirement that the plan be briefed at recurring meetings of stakeholder senior leaders. As senior leadership direction is often required to see improvement plan items through to full implementation, the implementation plan should be briefed at the highest level possible. Finally, the process should include a requirement for the improvement plan to be reviewed during the preparation for all future exercise and real-world activities as a way to ensure that relevant lessons are not neglected in future activities. The use of such a process following BA08 would almost certainly have prevented a number of repeat observations during the planning of AC09.

Individually, these five recommendations address the root causes of the challenges identified during BA08 and AC09. However, implementing all five as part of an integrated structure would produce synergies that would result in a truly institutional exercise program for the USG civilian interagency.

Putting it all together

When considered in the aggregate, the challenges identified in BA08 and AC09 are symptoms of the fact that the civilian R&S interagency lacks an institutional approach to exercising. Fortunately, the paragraphs above also illustrate that the DoD and DHS offer the R&S interagency valuable examples of how to institutionalize an exercise program.

Borrowing largely from DHS, the civilian R&S interagency should adopt a construct based loosely on HSEEP's "exercise program management / exercise project management" structures. Specifically, S/CRS as the interagency lead for R&S, should establish an exercise program management function to perform the following duties for the R&S interagency:

1. Author, maintain, and secure stake holder senior leadership buy in on a civilian interagency R&S exercise strategy that includes strategic objectives for the R&S exercise program and a long-range schedule of exercise events.
2. Develop, maintain, and become subject matter experts in exercise planning processes.
3. Organize, schedule, and provide oversight to, exercise project management functions and specific exercise planning efforts.
4. Develop and manage a civilian interagency R&S lessons learned process including requirements to produce and track an improvement plan for each exercise event, the status of which will be briefed regularly to senior leader stakeholders within the civilian R&S interagency.

S/CRS should assign a number of dedicated personnel to the exercise program management function that are trained in exercise and exercise planning skill sets.

Applying the DoD's central tenants of exercising allows one to determine a logical location for the exercise program management function within S/CRS. DoD tenants #1 and #5

(leaders must take responsibility for ensuring effective exercising and exercises should be centrally planned) suggest the Coordinator should personally direct the location of the exercise program management function and take an active role in supporting it. Tenants #2-4 (exercising should be based on approved doctrinal concepts and mission essential tasks and be should be as realistic as possible) suggest the exercise program management function should be established within S/CRS office responsible for doctrine development, training, and providing personnel to support real world operations, in other words, the office of Contingency Response Operations (CRO).

Few would argue that effective exercises are necessary to develop operational capability. However, conducting effective exercises is a complex endeavor that requires institutionalized programs. The challenges encountered during the planning of BA08 and AC09 clearly demonstrate that the civilian R&S interagency has room to improve its R&S exercise capabilities. If adopted, the recommendations outlined would create an institutional exercise program for the civilian R&S interagency.

Chapter 5

Conclusions

The way is in the training.

—Miyamoto Musashi

The United States has declared its intent to significantly enhance its ability to conduct reconstruction and stabilization operations. In the near term, the Obama administration intends to apply these newly enhanced abilities to bring operations in Iraq and Afghanistan to a successful conclusion. In the longer term, robust R&S abilities would seem to be a key component of the Administration’s “Smart Power” concept. If true, it is likely that there will be demand for even more robust R&S capabilities. The USG’s ability to develop and employ such robust R&S capabilities is directly tied to its willingness and ability to develop them through exercises.

Title XVI of the National Defense Authorization Act charges the State Department with “[t]aking steps to ensure that training and education of civilian personnel to perform such reconstruction and stabilization activities is adequate and is carried out, as appropriate, with other agencies involved with stabilization operations.”⁶² The purpose of this paper was to assess whether USG R&S exercise activities are adequate to meet that charge. The paper concluded that, while the civilian R&S interagency genuinely benefitted from the exercises it has support,

the USG approach to planning and preparing for exercising R&S capabilities is inherently produces considerable challenges. The paper reached that conclusion by examining the major R&S exercises the civilian interagency has supported since the USG established a lead office to coordinate R&S training and operations. That review highlighted five major shortcomings encountered during USG R&S exercising: the lack of personnel support and leadership commitment, inefficiencies during exercise planning, late decisions to participate in exercises, inadequate pre-exercise training, and failure to implement lessons learned.

In light of these challenges, the paper examined the USG's two most robust exercise programs (the Departments of Defense and Homeland Security), to identify possible solutions. The results of that examination were compiled into a single recommendation to enhance USG R&S exercise capability, and by extension USG R&S capabilities *writ large*. The paper recommends that the State Department's Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization, as the interagency lead for R&S, should establish a formal exercise program management function to perform key duties for the R&S interagency; including: authoring and securing stakeholder buy-in for a comprehensive civilian interagency R&S exercise strategy (including strategic objectives and a long range schedule of exercise events); developing, becoming subject matter experts in, and overseeing a structure exercise planning process; and developing and managing an exercise lessons learned process.

Implementing the recommendations in this paper will go far to institutionalizing an exercise program for USG R&S capabilities. Such a program is absolutely essential if the USG is going to achieve the R&S goals it originally set for itself in *NSPD-44*.

Appendix A

Reconstruction and Stabilization Sectors, Goals, and Tasks

<u>Sector</u>	<u>Goals</u>	<u>Tasks</u>
Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish a safe and secure environment - Develop Legitimate and stable security institutions - Consolidate indigenous capacity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Disposition of Armed and Other Security Forces, Intelligence Service and Belligerents - Territorial Security - Public Order and Safety - Protection of Indigenous Individuals, Infrastructure and Institutions - Protection of Reconstruction and Stabilization Personnel and Institutions Security Coordination - Public Information and Communications
Governance and Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Determine governance structure and establish foundation for citizen participation - Promote legitimate political institutions and participatory processes - Consolidate political institutions and participatory processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National Constituting Processes - Transitional Governance - Executive Authority - Legislative Strengthening - Local Governance - Transparency and Anti-Corruption - Elections - Political Parties - Civil Society and Media - Public Information and Communications

<u>Sector</u>	<u>Goals</u>	<u>Tasks</u>
Humanitarian Assistance and Social Well-Being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide for emergency humanitarian needs - Establish foundation for development - Institutionalize long-term development program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) - Trafficking in Persons - Food Security - Shelter and Non-Food Relief - Humanitarian Demining - Public Health - Education - Social Protection - Assessment, Analysis, and Reporting - Public Information and Communications
Economic Stabilization and Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Respond to immediate needs - Establish foundation for development - Institutionalize long-term development program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Employment Generation - Monetary Policy - Fiscal Policy and Governance - General Economic Policy - Financial Sector - Debt - Trade - Market Economy - Legal and Regulatory Reform - Agricultural Development - Social Safety net - Transportation - Telecommunications - Energy - General Infrastructure - Public Information and Communication

<u>Sector</u>	<u>Goals</u>	<u>Tasks</u>
Justice and Reconciliation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop mechanisms for addressing past and ongoing grievances - Initiate the building of a legal system and process for reconciliation - Functioning legal system accepted as legitimate and based on international norms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interim criminal Justice System - Indigenous Police - Judicial Personnel and Infrastructure - Property - Legal System and Reform - Human Rights - Corrections - War Crime Courts and Tribunals - Truth Commissions and Remembrance - Community Rebuilding - Public Information and Communication

Table 2 - Reconstruction and Stabilization Sectors, Goals, and Tasks

Appendix B

S/CRS Training Objectives for Austere Challenge 09

TO 1: Conduct Major Mission Element (MME) Planning (Crisis Action Planning Phase)

TO 1.1: Review assumptions, impediments to success, and resources spreadsheet.

TO 1.2: Refine Essential Task Areas (ETA)

TO 1.3: Develop tasks and activities for each ETA.

TO 1.4: Sequence MME and provide cross-MME linkages

TO 1.5: Develop measures of success

TO 1.6: Review Comprehensive Resource and Management Strategy

TO 2: Refine Coordination processes involving country team, FTF, GCC/IPC, CRSG

TO 2.1: Obtain contact information for all relevant people in Washington, GCC and embassy

TO 2.2: Determine existing battle rhythms of Embassy, CRSG, GCC, JTF, and de-conflict critical meeting times

TO 2.3: Develop councils, boards, cells, or centers as needed

TO 2.4: Identify and develop reports that should be regularly circulated

TO 2.5: Develop and manage portal

TO 3: Integrate JTF R&S support plans into USG Strategic Plan

TO 3.1: ID and integrate appropriate ACT planners(s) into JTF planning process

TO 3.2: Provide JTF with appropriate input into the military operations planning process to reconcile long-term stability objectives with military necessity

TO 4: Integrate agency or sub-objective team plans into Interagency Implementation Plan

TO 4.1: ID and integrate appropriate JTF planners into ACT planning processes

TO 4.2: Reassess and revise USG Strategic Plan

TO 4.3: Identify other nation' activities and intentions in country

TO 4.4: Provide feedback to the strategic planning team and the DC-based implementation planning team

TO 4.5: Assist in developing Essential Task Area Strategies

TO 4.5.1: ID potential key benchmarks to achieve "next state:

TO 4.5.2: Align resources from the Comprehensive Resource and Management Strategy with specific tasks and activities

TO 4.6: ID key decision points and benchmarks

TO 4.7: Prioritize, sequence, and timeline ETAs

TO 4.8: Develop metrics for monitoring and evaluation

TO 4.9: Develop implementation-level resource plan

TO 4.10: Develop concept for release of plan

TO 5: Assist in coordinating USG response to humanitarian requirements

TO 5.1: Work with USAID country team coordinator to establish battle rhythm meetings, boards, cells

Glossary

AC	Austere Challenge
ACT	Advance Civilian Team
BA	Blue Advance
COCOM	Combatant Commander
COM	Chief of Mission
CRSG	Country Reconstruction and Stabilization Group
CSI	Civilian stabilization Initiative
CRC-A	Civilian Response Corps – Active
CRC-S	Civilian Response Corps – Standby
CRC-R	Civilian Response Corps – Reserve
DHS	United States Department of Homeland Security
DoC	United States Department of Commerce
DoD	United States Department of Defense
DoJ	United States Department of Justice
DoS	United States Department of State
DoT	United States Department of Transportation
GCC	Geographic Combatant Command
HHS	US Department of Health and Human Services
HSEEP	Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program
ICAF	Interagency Conflict Assessment Framework
IMS	Interagency Management System
IO	International Organization
IPC	Integration Planning Cell
JTF	Joint Task Force
JTS	Joint Training System
NDAA	National Defense Authorization Act
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NSPD	National Security Presidential Directive
PKSOI	Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute

R&S	Reconstruction and Stabilization
S/CRS	Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization
US	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USEUCOM	United States European Command
USG	United States Government
USIP	United States Institute of Peace
USSOUTHCOM	United States Southern Command

Reconstruction. The process of rebuilding degraded, damaged, or destroyed political socio-economic, and physical infrastructure of a country or territory to create the foundation for longer-term development

Stabilization. The process by which underlying tensions that might lead to resurgence in violence and a break-down in law an order are managed and reduced, while efforts are made to support preconditions for successful longer-term development.

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³ 2002 *National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, September 2002, p 4 and 2006 *National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, March 2006, 15.

⁴ 2002 *National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, September 2002, 4.

⁵ President, National Security Presidential Directive, “National Security Presidential Directive 44, *Management of Interagency Efforts Concerning Reconstruction and Stabilization*, 7 December 2005, 2.

⁶ “A consensus has developed within the Executive Branch, in Congress and among independent experts that the U.S. Government needs a more robust capability to prevent conflict when possible, and if necessary manage stabilization and reconstruction operations in countries emerging from conflict or civil strife.” Taken from, US Department of State, Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization, <http://www.crs.state.gov/index.cfm?fuseaction=public.display&shortcut=4QXJ>. The general categories of activities to be conducted were drawn from: Department of State, *Post Conflict Reconstruction Essential Tasks*, DoS Publication 11463 (Washington DC: Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization, October 2007).

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²² US National Security Council. *Interagency Management System for Reconstruction and Stabilization*. (Washington DC: National Security Council Deputies, 29 Mar 07), 5. Doctrinally, the IPC will deploy to the Joint Task Force Headquarters. However, the team may deploy to any location that most effectively facilitates coordination of the civilian R&S and military plans.

²³ Doctrinally, this is referred to as the “Interagency Implementation Plan”.

²⁴ SCRS has supported R&S operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, Sudan, Kosovo, Georgia, Haiti, Liberia, Cuba, Nepal, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Colombia, Burma, Chad, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Yemen, Tajikistan, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Niger, Mali, Mauritania, Lebanon, and Zimbabwe since 2004. Department of State, Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization. *Mission Briefing*. February 2009, slide 18.

²⁵ US National Security Council. *Principles of the USG Planning Framework for Reconstruction, Stabilization and Conflict Transformation*, (Washington DC: National Security Council Deputies, 22 Jul 08), 1.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Department of State, Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization. *Mission Briefing*. February 2009.

²⁸ Department of Defense. *Joint Publication 1-02, Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*. (Washington DC: Joint Staff, 12 April 2001 as amended through 17 October 2008), 194.

²⁹ Department of Homeland Security. *Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program Volume I, HSEEP Overview and Exercise Program Management*. (Washington DC: Feb 07), B-9.

³⁰ The Department of Homeland Security’s HSEEP does not address experimentation. Joint doctrine from the DoD does not include an explicit definition of experimentation; however, the official web site of the DoD Joint Forces Command/J9, DoD lead for experimentation, makes repeated reference to developing new concepts. See <http://www.jfcom.mil/about/experiment.html>.

³¹ This is not to say that the activities that were more closely aligned to “experiments” were ineffective or un-useful. In fact, these activities were vital to the development of USG R&S capabilities.

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³² Even these were not exercises in the truest sense of the DoD or DHS definitions. While USG R&S doctrine was approved for use in 2007, many of the implementation details are still in development. For both BA08 and AC09, there were still some objectives focused on refining the concepts and procedures involved in R&S. However, unlike previous exercises, the training objectives in BA08 and AC09 were predominately geared toward training existing doctrine.

³³ Department of the Army. *Summary Report for Exercise Blue Advance 2008*. Carlisle, PA: (US Army War College and Carlisle Barracks, U.S. Army Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, 8 May 2008), attachment slides 1-5.

³⁴ Department of the Army. *Summary Report for Exercise Blue Advance 2008*. Carlisle, PA: (US Army War College and Carlisle Barracks, U.S. Army Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, 8 May 2008), S/CRS Feedback to AAR for Exercise Blue Advance 2008, iii.

³⁵ Although the after action report from BA08 does include items related to the preparation for the exercise, these were captured only inasmuch as they influenced the conduct of the exercise directly. In other words, challenges that were limited to the effectiveness or efficiency of the exercise preparation process itself were not included. The planning observations referenced here that are not drawn from the after actions report are based on discussions with S/CRS personnel who participated in the planning for BA08.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Department of the Army. *Summary Report for Exercise Blue Advance 2008*. Carlisle, PA: (US Army War College and Carlisle Barracks, U.S. Army Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, 8 May 2008), 1.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ There were two major phases to AC09: the Crisis Action Planning phase, which occurred in January 2009, and the Execution phase, which is scheduled to occur 22 April – 8 May 2009. The Execution phase has not occurred as of writing of this paper. Therefore the observations are limited to the planning and preparation for the exercise.

⁴⁰ Department of Defense. Headquarters United States European Command Austere Challenge Lessons Learned Brief to the Joint Staff J7 Worldwide Training and Scheduling Conference, Colorado Springs, CO. 23 March 09.

⁴¹ As the exercise is not complete as of the writing of this paper, the challenges listed here are based on observations by the author and discussions from interagency personnel who participated in the planning and preparation for the exercise.

⁴² Department of the Army. *Summary Report for Exercise Blue Advance 2008*. Carlisle, PA: (US Army War College and Carlisle Barracks, U.S. Army Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute: 8 May 2008), S/CRS Feedback to AAR for Exercise Blue Advance 2008, 24.

⁴³ In discussions with personnel involved in both exercises, planners stated that their inability to support exercise preparations completely stemmed from competing requirements levied by their supervisors and agency leadership.

⁴⁴ Department of Defense. *Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Manual 3500.03B, Joint Training Manual for the Armed Forces of the United States*. Joint Chiefs of Staff, (Washington DC: 31 August 2007). A summary of the JTS can also be found in CJCS Guide 3501. See

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⁴⁵ Department of Defense. *Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Guide 3501, The Joint Training System, A Primer for Senior Leaders*. Joint Chiefs of Staff, (Washington DC: 31 July 2008), 3-4.

⁴⁶ Department of Defense. *Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Guide 3501, The Joint Training System, A Primer for Senior Leaders*. Joint Chiefs of Staff, (Washington DC: 31 July 2008), 4.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Department of Homeland Security. *Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program Volume I, HSEEP Overview and Exercise Program Management*. (Washington DC: Feb 07), v.

⁴⁹ Department of Homeland Security. *Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program Volume I, HSEEP Overview and Exercise Program Management*. (Washington DC: Feb 07), 8.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid., 10.

⁵² Department of Homeland Security. *Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program Volume II, Exercise Planning and Conduct*. (Washington DC: Feb 07), 12.

⁵³ Department of Homeland Security. *Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program Volume I, HSEEP Overview and Exercise Program Management*. (Washington DC: Feb 07), 18.

⁵⁴ Department of Homeland Security. *Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program Volume I, HSEEP Overview and Exercise Program Management*. (Washington DC: Feb 07), 8. Also, Department of Homeland Security. *Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program Volume II, Exercise Planning and Conduct*. (Washington DC: Feb 07), 1.

⁵⁵ Department of Homeland Security. *Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program Volume II, Exercise Planning and Conduct*. (Washington DC: Feb 07), 1.

⁵⁶ The HSEEP planning guidance offers suggestions on how to identify stakeholders and secure buy in for exercises that could be the foundation of an interagency R&S process.

⁵⁷ *Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009*. 110th Cong., 2nd sess., 3 January 2008.

⁵⁸ Department of Homeland Security. *Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program Volume I, HSEEP Overview and Exercise Program Management*. (Washington DC: Feb 07), 5.

⁵⁹ In 2008, the DoD's Joint Staff J7 implemented new process for consolidating all DoD requests for interagency exercise play.

⁶⁰ The process was drafted by the author of this paper and is still in draft as of the writing of this paper.

⁶¹ HSEEP provides excellent sample products. See HSEEP Vol I, p 19 and HSEEP Vol IV.

⁶² *Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009*. 110th Cong., 2nd sess., 3 January 2008.