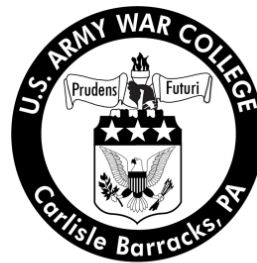


# Strategy Research Project

## Whole of Government Approach to Personnel Recovery

by

Lieutenant Colonel William J. Rowell  
United States Air Force



United States Army War College  
Class of 2012

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# REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved  
OMB No. 0704-0188

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing this collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports (0704-0188), 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number. **PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS.**

<b>1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY)</b> 22-03-2012		<b>2. REPORT TYPE</b> Strategy Research Project		<b>3. DATES COVERED (From - To)</b>	
<b>4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE</b> Whole of Government Approach to Personnel Recovery				<b>5a. CONTRACT NUMBER</b>	
				<b>5b. GRANT NUMBER</b>	
				<b>5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER</b>	
<b>6. AUTHOR(S)</b> Lieutenant Colonel William J. Rowell				<b>5d. PROJECT NUMBER</b>	
				<b>5e. TASK NUMBER</b>	
				<b>5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER</b>	
<b>7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b> Colonel Michael L. Slojkowski Department of Military Strategy, Planning, and Operations				<b>8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER</b>	
<b>9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b> U.S. Army War College 122 Forbes Avenue Carlisle, PA 17013				<b>10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)</b>	
				<b>11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)</b>	
<b>12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT</b> Distribution A: Approved for public release distribution is unlimited					
<b>13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES</b>					
<b>14. ABSTRACT</b> Our adversaries can exploit and paralyze our decision making by taking captive or kidnapping United States Government personnel or American civilians. To address the escalating prevalence of hostage-taking, coupled with the increased presence of Americans abroad, President George W. Bush established Annex 1 to National Security Presidential Directive - 12, <i>United States Policy on Personnel Recovery and the Prevention of U.S. Hostage Taking and Other Isolating Events</i> . This paper aims to create a shared understanding of the specific and even unique aspects of personnel recovery at the strategic level. An examination of Annex 1 to National Security Presidential Directive - 12 will provide a policy understanding that incorporates personnel recovery into a holistic government approach. This paper will describe personnel recovery architecture and the two fundamental models used overseas. Finally, this paper will conclude with a recommendation to develop a national strategy for personnel recovery.					
<b>15. SUBJECT TERMS</b> Personnel Recovery Architecture, NSPD-12					
<b>16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:</b>			<b>17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT</b>  UNLIMITED	<b>18. NUMBER OF PAGES</b>  32	<b>19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON</b>
<b>a. REPORT</b> UNCLASSIFIED	<b>b. ABSTRACT</b> UNCLASSIFIED	<b>c. THIS PAGE</b> UNCLASSIFIED			<b>19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (include area code)</b>



USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**WHOLE OF GOVERNMENT APPROACH TO PERSONNEL RECOVERY**

by

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## ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: Lieutenant Colonel William J. Rowell  
TITLE: Whole of Government Approach to Personnel Recovery  
FORMAT: Strategy Research Project  
DATE: 22 March 2012 WORD COUNT: 6,914 PAGES: 32  
KEY TERMS: Personnel Recovery Architecture, NSPD-12  
CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

Our adversaries can exploit and paralyze our decision making by taking captive or kidnapping United States Government personnel or American civilians. To address the escalating prevalence of hostage-taking, coupled with the increased presence of Americans abroad, President George W. Bush established Annex 1 to National Security Presidential Directive - 12, *United States Policy on Personnel Recovery and the Prevention of U.S. Hostage Taking and Other Isolating Events*. This paper aims to create a shared understanding of the specific and even unique aspects of personnel recovery at the strategic level. An examination of Annex 1 to National Security Presidential Directive - 12 will provide a policy understanding that incorporates personnel recovery into a holistic government approach. This paper will describe personnel recovery architecture and the two fundamental models used overseas. Finally, this paper will conclude with a recommendation to develop a national strategy for personnel recovery.





## WHOLE OF GOVERNMENT APPROACH TO PERSONNEL RECOVERY

On Tuesday, March 22 of 2011, minutes before a state dinner with the Chilean President in Santiago, Chile, President Barack Obama received a brief on the F-15E fighter crash in Libya during Operation Odyssey Dawn.<sup>1</sup> National Security Adviser Thomas Donilon stayed back at the hotel in Santiago and relayed the rescue's progress to President Obama throughout his dinner.<sup>2</sup> The next day President Obama praised the U.S. Marines for their rescue of one crewmember and the Libyan rebels for the recovery and return to U.S. forces of the other crewmember.<sup>3</sup> President Obama lauded the overall recovery as "a testament to our military that we had fully prepared for any contingency, including something like this, and they were able to recover these individuals rapidly."<sup>4</sup> With the advent of global communications and shorter decision-making cycles, situations involving isolated personnel and hostages have a profound impact on the American people, U.S. civil and military leaders, and consequently U.S. strategic decision-making. For our leaders faced with a hostage taking or an isolating event, how we execute personnel recovery is of strategic importance.

Our adversaries use hostage taking to meet their strategic effect, opting to capture vulnerable American civilian or military personnel to further their political, military or financial goals. An effective whole of government approach to personnel recovery minimizes or counters an adversary's ability to exploit or paralyze U.S. decision making. The following vignette illustrates the beginning of a whole of government approach to a personnel recovery scenario. Somewhere in a developing nation, locals armed with machine guns force a Foreign Service National (FSN) driving a U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) representative off the road

between two development project worksites. As the situation developed, the USAID representative made a quick call on her cell phone to the emergency number at the U.S. Embassy operations center to report the incident. Two armed men forced themselves into the car and drove the USAID representative and FSN to an unknown location. From the front seat, the men made threatening statements about their future, and repeatedly asked her how much the U.S. government would pay to have her released. Meanwhile, the embassy operations center informed the Ambassador and began to assemble the Emergency Action Committee (EAC). The embassy's Regional Security Officer (RSO) sought out assistance from a host nation law enforcement agency and then notified the Combatant Commander's Joint Personnel Recovery Center (JPRC) in accordance to established procedure. Interagency coordination and use of host nation resources, as described in the vignette, frequently will be the most effective, if not the only option for recovering isolated personnel. How should the United States best use a whole of government approach to ensure a positive outcome for the rest of this scenario?

This paper aims to create a shared understanding of the specific and even unique aspects of personnel recovery at the strategic level. An examination of Annex 1 to National Security Presidential Directive - 12 (NSPD-12), *United States Policy on Personnel Recovery and the Prevention of U.S. Hostage Taking and Other Isolating Events*, will provide a policy understanding that incorporates personnel recovery into a holistic government approach. In a whole of government approach, Annex 1 to NSPD-12 directs the synchronization and response of United States Government capabilities to an event in which U.S. personnel become isolated from friendly control.<sup>5</sup> For the purpose of this paper, a whole of government approach is defined as “an approach that

integrates the collaborative efforts of the departments and agencies of the United States Government (USG) to achieve unity of effort toward a shared goal.”<sup>6</sup> This paper will describe personnel recovery architecture and the two fundamental models used overseas. Finally, this paper will conclude with a recommendation to develop a national strategy for personnel recovery. This paper is meant to inform its readers and spark thought on the U.S. whole of government approach to personnel recovery.

### The Strategic Environment

The national interests of the United States revolve around the security of the United States, its citizens and its allies; economic security; a stable international order; and the promotion of our national values.<sup>7</sup> President Obama’s national security strategy also recognizes that the security environment continues to evolve with a “complex array of challenges.”<sup>8</sup> One need only to refer to America’s *National Security Strategy*, the State Department’s *Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review*, and to U.S. Joint Forces Command’s *Joint Operating Environment* published in 2010 to reaffirm the complexity facing the United States. The United States and the world face urgent foreign policy challenges to include the ongoing war in Afghanistan and continued regional conflicts, a growing global economic crisis, terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, worldwide poverty, and food insecurity, to name a few.<sup>9</sup> Uncertainty and unpredictability will characterize the future, as well as “threats and opportunities ranging from regular and irregular wars in remote lands, to relief and reconstruction in crisis zones, to cooperative engagement in the global commons.”<sup>10</sup>

The threat of isolation or capture to USG and civilian personnel will remain a challenge and concern in this complex strategic environment. In their Fiscal Year 2011 President’s Budget Submission, the Defense Prisoner of War Missing Personnel Office

(DPMO) described the security environment for USG personnel and American citizens working and traveling abroad as:

more disperse, pervasive, less predictable, and transnational...Hostage-taking, kidnapping, and indiscriminant governmental detention are the growing trends that threaten to destabilize developing societies. These activities allow the adversary to gain strategic advantage from a tactical event, influence the international peace and security system, degrade the collective international image, and certainly have an impact on the nation's operational resources.<sup>11</sup>

Failure to address the concept of personnel recovery could have serious ramifications for the isolated person but also U.S. policy and decision-making. Our adversaries seek to capture our personnel to exploit and paralyze U.S. decision-making, for example in Iraq, the 2004 capture and execution U.S. Army Private First Class (PFC) Matt Maupin, the 2007 abduction and execution of U.S. Army PFC Ramon Jimenez and Private Byron Fouty, and the 2006 kidnapping and release of Jill Carroll, a civilian reporter.<sup>12</sup> They attempt to do this by forcing changes in U.S. policy, provoking concessions, and limiting U.S. courses of action. They attempt to “damage the American narrative, and to directly influence popular perception of U.S. operations in order to influence our political will.”<sup>13</sup>

For the foreseeable future, “uncertainty and unpredictability” by state and non-state actors will define the strategic environment in a variety of conventional and irregular challenges. As the United States implements our national goals of promoting stability in key regions and providing assistance to nations in need, USG and civilian personnel will be placed in harms way. Our U.S. response to isolating events must be to act swiftly to a wide variety of complex challenges to protect American citizens, enable our national strategy, and defeat the adversary's ability to capture USG and civilian personnel. The United States must maintain a comprehensive whole of government

approach to personnel recovery in order to “prevent, proactively prepare, and effectively respond” to those isolating or hostage taking events.<sup>14</sup>

### Personnel Recovery Understanding

Personnel Recovery is the sum of diplomatic, military, and civil efforts to prepare for and recover persons who become isolated from friendly support or are held against their will.<sup>15</sup> Force protection, anti-terrorism and personnel accounting help frame personnel recovery across the continuum of personnel accountability in today’s contemporary operating environment with civil and military operations. Personnel recovery is related to and sometimes overlaps with the tenets, requirements, and capabilities of both anti-terrorism/force protection and personnel accounting.<sup>16</sup> Figure 1 depicts that functional overlap between Antiterrorism/Force Protection and Personnel Accounting across the continuum of personnel accountability.<sup>17</sup>



Figure 1. Personnel Recovery Functional Location<sup>18</sup>

The United States’ main objective with personnel recovery is to return isolated personnel to friendly control as soon as possible while leaving no one behind. Traditionally, personnel at highest risk of isolation were downed aircrew members, Special Operations Forces (SOF) operating within enemy territory, or diplomats operating in high-risk areas. In the current operational environment, the risk of isolation extends to other broad categories of personnel to include General Purpose Forces, USG civilians and contractors, and American citizens working or vacationing abroad.

With Annex 1 to NSPD-12, the USG has made a commitment to the safe and rapid recovery of all “U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents.”<sup>19</sup>

Annex 1 to National Security Presidential Directive - 12, *United States Policy on Personnel Recovery and the Prevention of U.S. Hostage-Taking and Other Isolating Events*, defines personnel recovery as “Diplomatic, military, and private efforts to prepare for and recover persons who become isolated from friendly support or are held against their will.”<sup>20</sup> Joint Publication 3-50, *Personnel Recovery*, defines personnel recovery as the “sum of military, diplomatic, and civil efforts to prepare for and execute the recovery and reintegration of isolated personnel.”<sup>21</sup> These two definitions highlight that personnel recovery is a combined effort of military, diplomatic and civil efforts to return an isolated person to friendly control.

The presidential directive does not define an isolated person, but does define an isolating event as an “incident wherein persons become separated or isolated from friendly support and are forced to evade capture or endure being held against their will.”<sup>22</sup> Joint Publication 3-50 defines isolated personnel as those U.S. military, Department of Defense (DoD) civilians, and DoD contracted employees and “others designated by the President or SecDef who are separated from their unit, as an individual or group, while participating in a US sponsored military activity or mission and who are, or may be, in a situation where they must survive, evade, resist, or escape.”<sup>23</sup> Annex 1 to NSPD-12 describes the situation while joint military doctrine describes the person. However, the presidential directive further states that the U.S. Government “remains committed to the safe and rapid recovery of private Americans and United States Government personnel taken hostage or isolated overseas.”<sup>24</sup> With Annex 1’s

direction, the isolated person is no longer a military person or DoD contractor as stated in joint military doctrine, the isolated person concept is applicable to all American citizens.

Force protection, antiterrorism and personnel accounting are three additional terms related to personnel recovery and the isolated person. From a military perspective, commanders must link force protection programs and personnel recovery as a means of preserving the force through all phases of military operations.<sup>25</sup> Force protection is a shared concept across the interagency. Joint Publications 1-02 and 3-0 both define force protection as “Preventive measures taken to mitigate hostile actions against DOD personnel (to include family members), resources, facilities, and critical information. Force protection does not include actions taken to defeat the enemy or protect against accidents, weather or disease.”<sup>26</sup> Additionally, Joint Publication 3-0 adds that antiterrorism programs support force protection “by establishing defensive measures that reduce the vulnerability of individuals and property to terrorist acts, to include limited response and containment by local military and civilian forces.”<sup>27</sup> At the other end of the continuum is personnel accounting. Department of Defense Directive 2310.07E, *Personnel Accounting--Losses Due to Hostile Acts*, describes personnel accounting as the “sum of military, civil, and diplomatic efforts to locate, recover, and identify personnel unaccounted for as a result of hostile acts.”<sup>28</sup>

With slight variations in definition, other USG agencies and our partner nations recognize the terms "personnel recovery" and "isolated personnel." The Department of State (DoS) Foreign Affairs Manual (FAM) includes sections on hostage-taking and missing persons with inclusion of personnel recovery tenets. The Joint Air Power

Competence Centre, a focal point for the transformation of Joint Air and Space Power in North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), has proposed these two terms become a formal part of the NATO and European Union lexicon.<sup>29</sup> Again, these terms tend to be militarily oriented, however they are universally understood throughout the interagency and in the multi-national environment.

#### United States Government Personnel Recovery Policy

On 4 December 2008, by Mr. Hadley, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs and Mr. Wainstien, Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism, signed the first-ever national personnel recovery policy, Annex 1 to National Security Presidential Directive - 12.<sup>30</sup> The presidential directive states that:

The escalating prevalence of hostage-taking, coupled with the increased presence of Americans abroad, requires the USG place a greater emphasis on the prevention of U.S. hostage-taking, the safe conduct of federal business and duties abroad, and both an effective personnel recovery infrastructure and a coordinated response capability to resolve hostage-taking or isolating events.<sup>31</sup>

Annex 1 to NSPD-12 emphasizes the synchronization of USG capabilities in response to an event in which U.S. citizens become isolated from friendly control, but also emphasizes the education and training needed for prevention and preparation. The presidential directive directs a comprehensive policy concerning personnel recovery from increased education and training to reintegration of recovered isolated personnel.

Annex 1 augments the guidance found in NSPD-12, *United States Citizens Taken Hostage Abroad*, and articulates U.S. personnel recovery policy as:

The United States Government remains committed to the safe and rapid recovery of private Americans and United States Government personnel taken hostage or isolated overseas and to bringing to justice and punishing individuals or groups responsible for illegally capturing or holding such persons against his or her will.<sup>32</sup>



Annex 1 establishes a comprehensive policy concerning personnel recovery with enabling objectives and specific tasks, guiding every department and agency toward three strategic personnel recovery objectives: prevention of, preparation for, and response to isolating events.<sup>33</sup> Annex 1 was a watershed effort forcing all federal departments and agencies to examine and address their personnel recovery efforts while providing enabling objectives to meet the three strategic objectives of prevention, preparation, and response.

The strategic objective of prevention is to decrease the vulnerability of U.S. personnel working or traveling abroad. All U.S. departments and agencies will “evaluate current personal security, force protection, and personnel recovery education training at overseas venues where U.S. personnel are at risk of being taken hostage or isolated.”<sup>34</sup> The key is education and training to reduce an individual’s susceptibility to an isolating event. Departments and agencies will “train members as necessary, implement individual and organizational protective security measures, and indoctrinate U.S. personnel with a thorough understanding of the security and threat environments abroad to help reduce the risk of hostage taking and other isolating events.”<sup>35</sup> Across the continuum (Figure 1), anti-terrorism/force protection, personnel accounting and personnel recovery concepts and training overlap to effectively decrease an individual’s susceptibility to an isolating or hostage taking event.

Preparation is different from prevention in that it anticipates a future isolating event will happen. The strategic objective of preparation is to prepare at-risk USG personnel with a shared understanding of personnel recovery processes and procedures.<sup>36</sup> In Annex 1 to NSPD-12, all departments and agencies will “train and

prepare its personnel with an appropriate level of knowledge and skill to help them understand the risk environment, survive captivity, minimize their exploitation, and enable recovery from a threat environment.”<sup>37</sup> Along with education and training, preparation helps build the USG and host nation capability and infrastructure needed during a personnel recovery response.

The last strategic objective is response to an isolating event. The strategic objective of response is to energize the personnel recovery network and quickly recover isolated personnel and manage their reintegration into normal operations. The USG will “enhance and maximize organizational responsiveness by strengthening and further integrating existing personnel recovery mechanisms.”<sup>38</sup> Additionally, the USG will improve post-incident response in support on American citizens taken hostage or isolated. The USG should provide “an appropriate reintegration process that deliberately reintroduces individuals back into society.”<sup>39</sup> Reintegration is a systematic and controlled process for recovered personnel and helps them to fully reintegrate back into their military or civil organization, their family, and society. The goal of the reintegration is to “gather critical information from recovered personnel through a series of debriefings,” and protect “the health and well-being of returned isolated personnel.”<sup>40</sup> The reintegration process is offered and open to all American citizens that are rescued from captivity and aids in returning rescued personnel back to duty or work as expeditiously as possible, both physically and emotionally fit.<sup>41</sup>

A review of the presidential directive promotes an integrated whole of government approach to personnel recovery and the implementation of the policy. The solutions and approaches to implement Annex 1 to NSPD-12 are the responsibility of

the National Security Council, and mainly the Departments of State, Defense, Justice and National Intelligence, but in some cases all of the U.S. departments and agencies are required to take action. Of the 68 implementing tasks found in Annex 1 to NSPD-12, 29 tasks directly involve the Department of Defense, making the Defense Department integral to the solution.<sup>42</sup>

### A Whole of Government Approach to Personnel Recovery

While the term “whole of government” is not new, the concept as it relates to personnel recovery is a relatively new approach or way of thinking about personnel recovery. A whole of government approach utilizes a more holistic strategy and draws upon tenets, knowledge, skills and capabilities from across the departments and agencies of the USG. Annex 1 to NSPD-12 established national policy and directs the Departments of State, Defense, Justice, Treasury, and the Intelligence communities to contribute to this whole of government approach. In the *Concept of Operations for Personnel Recovery*, a concept to shape global DoD personnel recovery strategy, Joint Personnel Recovery Agency describes a whole of government approach to personnel recovery as the United States Government’s “coordinated contribution to a larger ‘comprehensive’ approach that may involve host and partner nations, transnational organizations such as the UN [United Nations], NGOs [nongovernmental organizations], and even private sector enterprises and individuals.”<sup>43</sup> Figure 2 depicts this comprehensive whole of government approach or networked approach that integrates the collaborative efforts of all the departments and agencies of the USG with our international partners to achieve unity of effort.

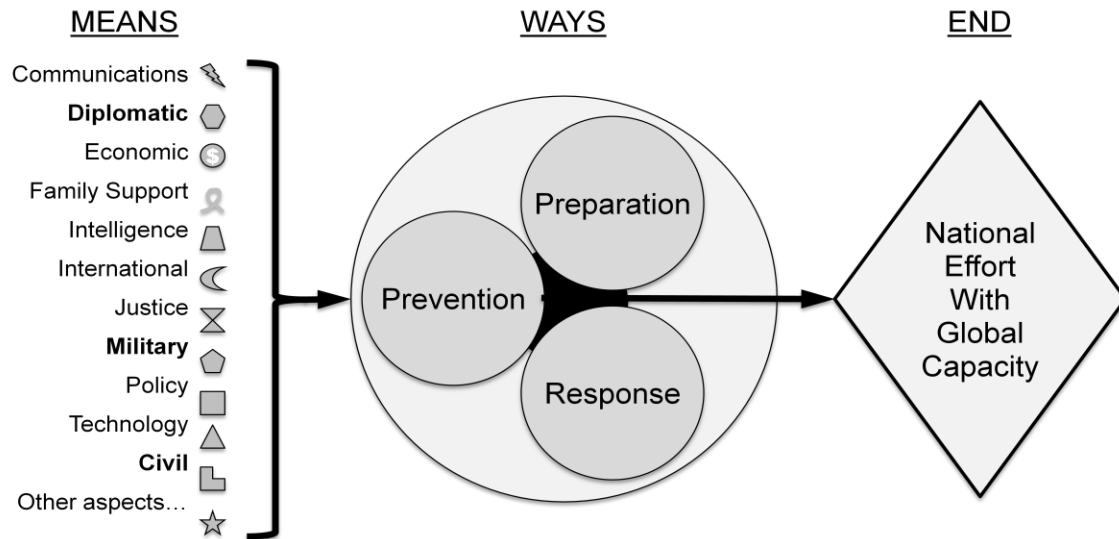


Figure 2 – U.S. Whole of Government Comprehensive Personnel Recovery Network<sup>44</sup>

This approach or strategy to personnel recovery illustrates a comprehensive approach across governmental departments and agencies with nongovernmental organization help, directed toward a national effort with global capacity. Like war and its relationship to politics, the principles of ends, ways and means are still relevant to today’s operational environment. As illustrated in Figure 2, the whole of government approach to personnel recovery is the interaction of means or the resources from across the whole of government, and ways or in this illustration – preparation, prevention, and response, to achieve the end state. The end state is a national effort with global capacity to safely and rapidly recover private Americans and USG personnel taken hostage or isolated overseas.

The definition of personnel recovery itself incorporates a whole of government approach with its inclusion of diplomatic, military, and private or civil efforts as part of the strategy response in an isolated event. Personnel recovery operations are diverse in nature and require a full range of capabilities coordinated across all departments and

agencies. This approach to personnel recovery expresses the need for a smart combination of tools, such as policy, processes, capability and engagement, for each situation. A whole of government approach requires extensive coordination and information sharing between civilian and military organizations with an integrated, interagency team approach.

Additionally, in most parts of the world, the United States will require host nation or partner nation support to conduct response options to an isolating event. A host nation allows or permits the United States, “either by written agreement or official invitation, government representatives and/or agencies of another nation to operate, under specified conditions, within its borders” while a partner nation partners with the United States to accomplish a mission or support activity.<sup>45</sup> Accordingly, Annex 1 to NSPD-12 stresses the importance of building host nation support and partner nation cooperation in personnel recovery education, training, and capability.<sup>46</sup> A coherent whole of government approach requires early engagement with high-level civil and military leaders, and participation of both host nation and partner nation to prevent or respond to an isolating event. As with any international engagement, the emphasis “should be on developing trust, providing incentives, emphasizing mutual benefits, and ensuring proper alignment of motives for all players.”<sup>47</sup> Effective personnel recovery requires host nation and partner nation trust, support, and capability.

To further understanding, this paper provides three real world examples of what is meant by military, diplomatic, and civil efforts to recover persons who become isolated from friendly support or are held against their will. The military option includes any combination of United States, partner nation, host nation military capabilities to

recover isolated personnel. The March 2011 rescue of the F-15E fighter crew in Libya during Operation Odyssey Dawn is an excellent example of a military option to rescue isolated personnel.

A diplomatic option involves USG “contact with the various parties involved in the isolating incident and through negotiation and communications recover isolated personnel” or set conditions for military or civil option of personnel recovery.<sup>48</sup>

Diplomatic options are not a sole action of the diplomatic corps but may include military and civilian or non-governmental personnel. A successful diplomatic recovery is the 2001 U.S. Navy EP-3 crew recovery from the People’s Republic of China. The Chinese government detained the crew, after an emergency landing in the People’s Republic of China, and the Department of State assigned the Defense Attaché to assist the USG effort to successfully recover the isolated crew.<sup>49</sup>

A civil option may include “sanctioned or unsanctioned intervention by intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), influential persons, and/or private citizens” negotiating for the release of isolated personnel.<sup>50</sup> The civil option is similar to the diplomatic option “with the exception the primary negotiator has no official ties and may want to distance themselves” from the U.S. or host nation government.<sup>51</sup> An example of a civil option is the 2009 release of two American journalists from North Korea. Former President Bill Clinton went to North Korea as a private citizen during a time when the United States’ relationship with North Korea had become strained.<sup>52</sup> Mr. Clinton skillfully negotiated the release of Laura Ling and Euna Lee, two American journalists sentenced to 12 years of hard labor for illegally entering North Korean territory.<sup>53</sup>

## Personnel Recovery Architecture

The United States has 270-plus embassies, consulates, and other posts in more than 180 countries around the world and for the military there are six Geographic Combatant Commands and four Functional Combatant Commands.<sup>54</sup> Each Combatant Command and the 270-plus embassies, consulates, and posts representing the United States must synchronize efforts across their organization and between partner nations and the interagency to provide a comprehensive and responsive architecture to recover isolated USG personnel and American citizens. The relationships are tailored to each situation, country, command, and host or partner nation.

Personnel recovery architecture is just as complex as is the global USG presence described above. Personnel recovery architecture combines partner nation, Department of Defense, Department of State and the U.S. interagency capabilities and assets, the physical command, control and coordinating structure, and the staffs to conduct the recovery of isolated personnel. There are two distinctly different situations that impact United States personnel recovery architecture; one where the Combatant Commander is in charge of personnel recovery efforts and the other when the Chief of Mission is in charge of those efforts. In the first situation, which the Combatant Commander is in charge, similar to the operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Libya, the Combatant Commander is responsible for personnel recovery. In the other situation, for all other countries in the world, the Chief of Mission, in concert with the partner nation leads personnel recovery efforts.

Regardless of who leads the USG effort, personnel recovery efforts must be effectively coordinated with the Chief of Mission, the Combatant Commander, and host nation personnel using an integrated, interagency team approach. Complicating the

situation even more is the organizationally complex environment surrounding any personnel recovery effort. Barrowed from a 2004 Institute for Defense Analysis (IDA) study on U.S. integrated national personnel recovery architecture, the organization chart shown in Figure 3 portrays the complexities of the diplomatic, military, and civil coordination needed in personnel recovery.

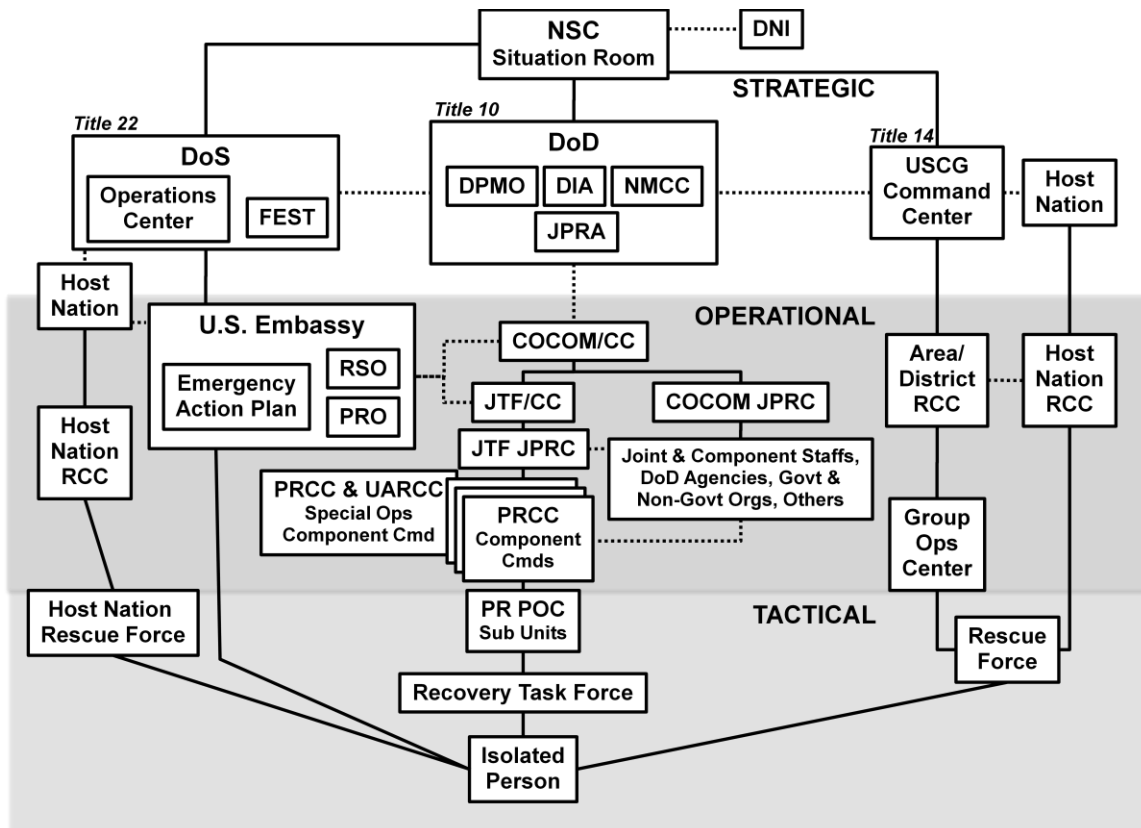


Figure 3. Complexities of Diplomatic, Military and Civil Coordination in Personnel Recovery<sup>55</sup>

Specifically, Figure 3 illustrates the relationship among the State and Defense Department entities at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels, and illustrates the role of the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) as lead agency for civil search and rescue events. The figure shows the broad personnel recovery organization and the command, control,



and coordination relationships among State, Defense, USCG and the host or partner nation.

Adding additional complexity, U.S. constitutional authorities, budgetary limitations, and responsibilities, particularly Title 10, Title 22, and Title 14 of U.S. Code. Specified by Congress in U.S. Code, Title 10 guides the DoD and Military Services, Title 22 guides the DoS, and Title 14 guides the USCG within the Department of Homeland Security (except when operating as a service in the U.S. Navy).<sup>56</sup> Any combination of political pressure, interagency friction with roles and responsibilities, departmental culture or parochialism can inhibit an effective and timely response to an isolating event.

*Combatant Commander in Charge of Personnel Recovery.* When the Combatant Commander is in charge, the Military Services provide the Combatant Command with specifically organized, trained and equipped personnel for personnel recovery missions, and typically with a vast background of experience. Combatant Commanders are responsible for planning and executing personnel recovery throughout their area of responsibility and in most cases they can execute personnel recovery missions immediately. Results have been very good in recent cases from Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and Somalia, however, these cases were in combat zones under Combatant Command authority.

The Combatant Commander, or their designated subordinate Joint Force Commander (JFC), should establish a Joint Personnel Recovery Center (JPRC) to:

plan, coordinate, and monitor PR [personnel recovery] missions, and to integrate PR activities with other operations and activities in the assigned operational area. The JPRC is also the JFC's primary coordination center for PR assistance to another nation or other appropriate civil entity, when such assistance is authorized by the President, SecDef, or by US-approved prior agreements.<sup>57</sup>

Additionally, each Combatant Command component establishes a Personnel Recovery Coordination Cell (PRCC), and SOF establishes an Unconventional Assisted Recovery Coordination Center (UARCC).<sup>58</sup> As illustrated in Figure 3, the Combatant Command delineates a robust command relationship for personnel recovery and “facilitates the synchronization and integration of recovery operations...tailored to the situation and evaluated against the mission, the environment, and the specific force structure.”<sup>59</sup> The complexities of the Combatant Command structure are mitigated in many ways, however, educated and trained professionals working in a tailored and structured command environment help facilitate successful action.

*Chief of Mission in Charge of Personnel Recovery.* Before a situation in a host nation develops requiring the intervention of U.S. combat or rescue forces, the Combatant Commander may not be in the lead for personnel recovery. As long as a nation’s sovereignty remains intact, the host nation has the responsibility for personnel recovery operations within their own sovereign boundaries.<sup>60</sup> In fact, this is the default case for most personnel recovery efforts in a host country and the Chief of Mission will be the lead. The Chief of Mission with the title of Ambassador, Minister, or Charge d’Affaires, and the Deputy Chief of Mission head the mission’s “Country Team” of USG personnel, responsible for many functions to include responding to hostage taking and isolating events.<sup>61</sup>

The U.S. Department of State Foreign Affairs Handbook (FAH), 12 FAH-1 H-230 *Emergency Action Committee*, and 12 FAH-1 ANNEX G to the Emergency Action Plan provide emergency planning guidance for EACs regarding the kidnapping or hostage taking of any U.S. citizen, including USG officials.<sup>62</sup> Should an isolating event occur, the

Chief of Mission would assemble the EAC, a group of subject-matter experts from the mission, to immediately respond to the event and begin to leverage partner nation and interagency cooperation and support. Generally, the EAC represents all USG agencies at the post and provides the Ambassador with guidance in preparing for and responding to threats, emergencies, and other crises at the post or against U.S. interests elsewhere.<sup>63</sup> Those subject-matter experts will include the Regional Security Officer, the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, the Office of Counter Terrorism, the Department of Justice (DoJ), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and other Department of State offices and federal agencies as appropriate.<sup>64</sup>

In a few high-risk countries like Afghanistan, Iraq and Mexico, DoS has added a Security and Personnel Recovery Advisor or Personnel Recovery Officer (PRO) to address security concerns and develop Interagency Personnel Recovery Program.<sup>65</sup> The PRO serves as the advisor to the RSO, country team, and appropriate host nation parties on all aspects of personnel recovery to include the application of current U.S. policy, U.S. doctrine, and helps to coordinate and integrate host nation and U.S. civil search and rescue capabilities into a multinational, multiagency recovery architecture.<sup>66</sup> This model has been extremely successful and provides a full-time, personnel recovery trained expert, who is responsive to U.S. and host nation development and response requirements.

#### Recommendation – A National Strategy for Personnel Recovery

Personnel recovery requires a collective and comprehensive national strategy. A national strategy for personnel recovery would articulate a clear vision statement that defines what the nation hopes to achieve through prevention of, preparation for, and response to isolating events. A national strategy for personnel recovery requires

successful change across all the departments and agencies in the federal government, change “sticks only when it becomes the way we do things around here.”<sup>67</sup> In John Kotter’s book *Leading Change*, a good vision serves three important purposes: clarify the “general direction for change,” motivate “people to take action in the right direction,” and “coordinate the actions of different people...in a remarkably fast and efficient way.”<sup>68</sup> A national strategy for personnel recovery would provide a collective and comprehensive direction for a whole of government approach.

A national strategy would collectively align all departments and agencies, fostering cooperation while adapting concepts to equip our national security professionals for the complex challenges ahead.<sup>69</sup> The process of developing a national strategy would harmonize a whole of government approach and provide clarity in the direction to a whole of government approach. Clarity to think of personnel recovery in whole of government terms, and the direction needed in developing a collective strategy that incorporates personnel recovery into a holistic government approach.

Effective leadership will motivate people to take action in the right direction. It takes leadership to define “what the future should look like,” align the people with the vision, and “inspires them to make it happen despite the obstacles.”<sup>70</sup> A national strategy implies building consensus and capability among all departments and agencies, which can cause friction between the organizational culture, roles and responsibilities. Only leadership can “blast through” the friction, “motivate the actions needed to alter behavior”, and “get change to stick.”<sup>71</sup> To provide the institutional impetus for strategy and leadership of the process, DoS and DoD should co-lead the strategy development within an interagency working group. An integrated co-led

approach should not simply be perceived as an outcome, but rather as a process; how to get there is just as important as getting there. Abroad the DoS has a greater proponent of the interagency under Chief of Mission authority, while the DoD has greater depth of personnel recovery capabilities and professionally educated and trained personnel. In an integrated approach, a co-led team would build a more binding relationship with a deeper understand across government. From the perspective of coordination, it is better to have an established working group to facilitate the buy in and coordination necessary across all departments and agencies, which may be the Overseas Security Policy Board (OSPB) chaired by the Director, Diplomatic Security Service, or the OSPB Personnel Recovery sub-working group.<sup>72</sup> The OSPB membership includes the DoS, DoJ, FBI, USAID, Peace Corps, Central Intelligence Agency, Defense Intelligence Agency, Department of Commerce, and others in the interagency.<sup>73</sup>

A national strategy for personnel recovery would comprehensively align all departments and agencies, addressing the continuum of personnel accountability: force protection, anti-terrorism, personnel recovery, and personnel accounting. This would build greater breadth and depth in the whole of government approach. Annex 1 to NSPD-12 is comprehensive in its approach with clear policy guidance and task responsibility, 68 implementing tasks across the interagency. Additionally, a collective and comprehensive national strategy would address national and international support to civil search and rescue.

To succeed, a national strategy for personnel recovery must harness and integrate all aspects of national power and work closely with a wide range of allies, friends, and

partners. In a resource-constrained environment, a national strategy promotes unity in development and helps align policy, capabilities, architecture, support, education, training and leader development within federal, state, local entities and host nations. Key aspects of the national strategy should include: create a vision for personnel recovery; the roles and missions of federal, state, and local entities; national effort toward building effective partnerships with host nations; applicability of education and training; and establish objectives, priorities, outcome-related goals with milestones, and performance measures to achieve strategic objectives of prevention, preparation, and response. Ultimately, a national effort will clearly integrate, synchronize and properly focus the interagency to eliminate personnel recovery gaps and duplication of programs. Accordingly, a national strategy's success depends more upon a new way of thinking about personnel recovery than the establishment of new programs.

### Conclusion

The emphasis on personnel recovery will continue to grow in our complex operational environment. One of the challenges of integrating civilian and military efforts into a whole of government approach is the differing cultures found in civilian interagency compared to those found in military forces.<sup>74</sup> One way to mitigate cultural differences is to combine education and training venues, but more important, to integrate and exercise together as an integrated, interagency team. In essence, the interagency personnel recovery team with host nation support should train and exercise as it operates in the real world. In other words, the team should train as it fights, as integrated, interagency team.

In 2010, State Department's Diplomatic Security Bureau hosted an interagency personnel recovery conference in Mexico City with 45 recovery experts from 16 U.S. agencies in attendance.<sup>75</sup> This type of engagement is an excellent example of how engagement and exchange of information can help educate and train U.S. agencies and the host nation while shaping and building interagency teamwork. The Department of Defense holds a periodic exercise, called Angel Thunder, in Arizona and New Mexico to improve its capabilities of conducting personnel recovery operations in noncombat environments.<sup>76</sup> Angel Thunder 2011 incorporated civilian and military role-play with lessons learned from relief work done after the Haiti earthquake and Hurricane Katrina.<sup>77</sup> The exercise brought together military participants from the U.S., Canadian, Singapore, Sweden, Colombia, France and several other nations, and civilian participants from the State Department, USAID, U.S. Forest Service, Drug Enforcement Agency, and several local police, fire and rescue organizations, all integrated into a massive personnel recovery exercise.<sup>78</sup> Ambassador Charles Ray participated in the first week of the two-week exercise, playing the role of the ambassador to a factious country, and "I helped the military participants learn to better function in a highly charged foreign environment under chief of mission control...this exercise is not about war; it's about saving lives."<sup>79</sup> These types of events help forge civilian and military teams and achieve the unity of effort needed in a whole of government approach.

Concluding the scenario that was started in the introduction, the following lines show how a whole of government approach to the personnel recovery process works. The Ambassador, working in coordination with his staff and the Combatant Commander's staff, requests and receives assistance from the military and civilian

intelligence community, the JPRC forwards general location data to the RSO. The RSO and legal attaché coordinate with the host nation law enforcement agency for their assistance in recovering the captives. Because of their local area knowledge, the host nation safely recovers the USAID representative and FSN driver. In this scenario, personnel recovery worked because of an integrated civilian and military whole of government approach with clear interagency coordination, effective host nation development and relations, and a responsive process that minimized friction between military, civilian and host nation participants.

## Endnotes

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<sup>6</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, *Stability Operations*, Field Manual 3-07 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Army, October 6, 2008), 1-4.

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<sup>11</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, "Fiscal Year 2011 Budget Estimates Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO)," (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, August 20, 2003), 404, [http://comptroller.defense.gov/defbudget/fy2011/budget\\_justification/pdfs/01\\_Operation and Maintenance/O M VOL 1 PARTS/DPMO FY11.pdf](http://comptroller.defense.gov/defbudget/fy2011/budget_justification/pdfs/01_Operation_and_Maintenance/O_M_VOL_1_PARTS/DPMO_FY11.pdf) (accessed September 17, 2011).

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<sup>13</sup> U.S. Joint Forces Command, *Initial Capabilities Document for Personnel Recovery* (Norfolk, VA: U.S. Joint Forces Command, January 26, 2010), 2.

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<sup>15</sup> Bush, *Annex 1*, 1.

<sup>16</sup> Lee Pera, *Concept of Operations for Personnel Recovery* (Fort Belvoir, VA: Joint Personnel Recovery Agency), 2; U.S. Joint Forces Command, *Initial Capabilities Document for Personnel Recovery*, E-2.

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 1.

<sup>21</sup> U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Personnel Recovery*, Joint Publication 3-50 (Washington, DC: U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, 20 December 2011), I-1.

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<sup>28</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, *Personnel Accounting -- Losses Due to Hostile Acts*, DoD Directive 2310.07E (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, August 21, 2007), 14.

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<sup>34</sup> George W. Bush, *Appendix A: Implementation Plan for Annex 1 to NSPD-12* (Washington, DC, The White House, 1 November 2008), 4.

<sup>35</sup> Bush, *Annex 1*, 3.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> Bush, *Annex 1*, 4.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Personnel Recovery*, I-10 and VI-29.

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<sup>42</sup> Bush, *Appendix A*.

<sup>43</sup> Pera, *Concept of Operations for Personnel Recovery*, 20.

<sup>44</sup> Pera, *Concept of Operations for Personnel Recovery*, 20; U.S. Joint Forces Command, *Initial Capabilities Document for Personnel Recovery*, E-11.

<sup>45</sup> U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Department of Defense Dictionary*, 151 and 253.

<sup>46</sup> Bush, *Appendix A*.

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