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<b>14. ABSTRACT</b> Reconstruction, stabilization, humanitarian and disaster relief require a collective effort from all instruments of power. Success will be determined based on how current structures are physically and authoritatively re-organized to support complex operations. Leadership, organization, systems and processes, combined with cultural tension, have shown that the interagency process is in need of significant improvement. The dilemma in which the USG finds itself is not a recent development. For decades there has been a constant struggle for power in the federal system. Presidents have issued directives and mandates in an attempt to consolidate the executive agencies; however, existing policy is ambiguous and unclear. In addition to this lack of clarity, management, oversight and enforcement are non-existent. In order to create a true Whole of Government response, leaders, peers and subordinates of all executive agencies must be aware that a system that is flexible, adaptable and efficient, led by one decision-making authority at the NSC level is the only course of action to attain an acceptable system as it relates to reconstruction and stabilization. This paper highlights these areas as key issues that must be strengthened in order to achieve an acceptable interagency system. This paper also uses a case study to illustrate that these areas significantly affect operations at the strategic, operational and tactical levels thus providing clear evidence of the failed state of the interagency. Solving the interagency problem will require detailed analysis that leads to clear and concise legislative mandates that direct agencies to consolidate into a joint concept working, training, and deploying under a consolidated integrated operational structure. In order to achieve success, internal governmental changes must be made to the interagency in the areas of leadership, structure, systems and relationships. More importantly, the approach must be properly managed by an NSC level decision making authority, which provides clear and direct leadership on all issues concerning the interagency.		

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
DISCLAIMER.....	ii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	iii
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	v
PREFACE.....	vi
INTRODUCTION.....	1
NATIONAL SECURITY PRESIDENTIAL DIRECTIVE 44.....	4
PRESIDENTIAL POLICY DIRECTIVE 1.....	4
INTERAGENCY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM.....	4
DOD DIRECTIVE 3000.5.....	7
THE PROBLEM.....	10
POLICY.....	10
LEADERSHIP, MANAGEMENT & FOCUS.....	11
ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE.....	12
SYSTEM & PROCESSES.....	13
RELATIONSHIPS.....	14
CASE STUDY (AUSTERE CHALLENGE 2009).....	15
FUTURE OF THE INTER-AGENCY.....	19
LEADERSHIP VS POLICY.....	19
ORGANIZATION & STRUCTURES.....	21
SYSTEMS & PROCESSES.....	22
RELATIONSHIPS.....	22

CONCLUSION.....	23
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	24

## *Executive Summary*

**Title:** The Inter-Agency: Is there a Solution to the Madness?

**Author:** Major Randall E. Davis Jr.

**Thesis:** In order to maintain international credibility, the United States must establish a consolidated, centralized interagency system that provides an effective and efficient response to complex operations by leveraging the appropriate instruments of power that is organized and led to meet national objectives.

**Discussion:** As the United States continues to lead the global community in efforts to address international instability, it is evident that inter-agency cooperation will be necessary to achieve success. Internal and external threats present significant challenges in how the United States Government responds to crisis situations. Reconstruction, stabilization, humanitarian and disaster relief require a collective effort from all instruments of power. Success will be determined based on how current structures are physically and authoritatively re-organized to support complex operations. Leadership, organization, systems and processes, combined with cultural tension, have shown that the interagency process is in need of significant improvement.

The dilemma in which the USG finds itself is not a recent development. For decades there has been a constant struggle for power in the federal system. Presidents have issued directives and mandates to include PDD-56, NSPD-44 and PPD-1; however, these documents are ambiguous as best. In addition to this lack of clarity, management, oversight and enforcement are non-existent. In order to create a true Whole of Government response, leaders, peers and subordinates of all executive agencies must be aware that a system that is flexible, adaptable and efficient, led by one authority is the only course of action to attain an acceptable system as it relates to reconstruction and stabilization.

**Conclusion:** Solving the interagency problem will require detailed analysis that leads to clear and concise legislative mandates that direct agencies to consolidate into a joint concept working, training, and deploying under a consolidated integrated operational structure. In order to achieve success, internal governmental changes must be made to the interagency in the areas of leadership, structure, systems and relationships. More importantly, the approach must be properly managed by an NSC level decision making authority, which provides clear and direct leadership on all issues concerning the interagency.

## *Preface*

Serving as an interagency fellow, I quickly realized the importance of the Whole of Government concept as it relates to crisis situations. Throughout my fellowship, it was abundantly clear that policy did adequately address the complex issues that plague the executive agencies' ability to operate jointly. Numerous hours were spent delving into the complexities of the interagency specifically in the areas of leadership, organization/structure, systems/processes and relationships in order to gain insight, perspective and subsequently, a solution to this issue. This paper sought to accomplish this task.

This project required substantial time and effort and without the support of my family, mentors and faculty, it would not have been possible. First and foremost, I would like to thank my wife and children for their unconditional support. It was through their love and encouragement that this paper was a success. I would like to thank the military and civilian faculty members at Marine Corps University for their continuous leadership throughout this process. Also, I would like to acknowledge the professional and hardworking members at the United States Agency for International Development. I was inspired daily by the dedication and selflessness demonstrated by all. Lastly, I would like to give a special thank you to Dr. Rebecca Johnson for the mentorship and guidance that allowed me the opportunity to grow throughout this process. I am forever indebted to all these individuals for their patience and assistance in making this goal a reality.



## **Introduction**

As the United States continues its fight against terror on a global scale, it is clear that persistent engagement in such conflicts has put a tremendous strain on the entire spectrum of the United States government. The complexity of current operations has wreaked havoc in terms of employing U.S. capabilities effectively in crises situations. Solving the interagency dilemma will be a long, complex endeavor that will require a high level of effort from all agencies within the government. Implementation of a National Security Strategy (NSS) that states that the United States will maximize each component of its executive agencies to achieve national security is paramount, not only to the United States, but its allies as well.<sup>1</sup> With this being stated, the United States has responded to these operations with mediocre success. In essence, the federal government has been unable to leverage the instruments of national power effectively. The outcome within the federal government has been organizations that compete rather than collaborate on a number of fronts to include who will lead, resource, fund and train personnel for civil-military operations.

Additionally, legal, organizational and human dynamics have presented tremendous challenges across the interagency spectrum.<sup>2</sup> These are just a few of the collective friction points that decrease U.S. effectiveness in world crisis situations. These obstacles have significantly degraded the President's ability to manage the various national security agencies and offices within the United States.<sup>3</sup> In fact, the greatest degradation to effectiveness comes from a weak and undeveloped inter-agency capability to staff complex issues for the President.<sup>4</sup> It also promotes unhealthy relationships when strategic decisions made at the highest level of government do not exploit the capabilities of responsible agencies.

Federal organizations have jockeyed for power throughout the country's history. With the passage of the National Security Act in 1947 and the subsequent establishment of the National Security Council, The United States Government (USG) has painfully modified its interagency approach in order to meet the requirements of the President's foreign policy initiatives. The Korean and Vietnam Wars, Operation Desert Storm and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have highlighted America's shortcomings in the interagency arena. As a result of these shortfalls, the President issued a series of directives in an attempt to fix the recurring problem. These directives sought to improve response in relation to coordination, planning, and implementation for reconstruction and stabilization assistance in support of post conflict and/or failed states.<sup>5</sup> On the contrary, policy specifically formulated to address interagency operations has been counter-productive.

The evolution of the inter-agency process has produced an internal environment in which civilian governmental employees and their respective agencies are hard-pressed to work under a joint construct; meanwhile, The Department of Defense (DOD) has maneuvered itself into a position to assume the responsibility for answering the nation's call on all national security issues. This includes not only operations in non-permissive environments in which military forces are required, but also missions in permissive and semi-permissive areas that encompass humanitarian and foreign disaster relief operations that are normally supported by other civilian agencies. This is a direct result of ambiguous presidential directives that fail to provide specific guidance on how to establish and maintain a capability that is joint in nature, deploys and operates under a single system and, subsequently, assists other countries in building secure, democratic and economically stable nations.

This research paper will take a look at the current interagency structure and how it functions in the area of crisis response. It will also explore the various directives, existing agency relationships and the role of senior leadership and how these variables create problems for the interagency initiative. The question this paper will attempt to answer is: Can federal agencies operate under an integrated structure to meet U.S. strategic objectives and what changes must be made to meet the challenges of 21<sup>st</sup> century crisis situations? Looking at the current interagency structure and its efforts closely, one can identify numerous impediments that significantly influence agencies' ability to respond in an efficient and effective manner. This paper focuses on the four most important areas that are critical to interagency success:

1) Leadership - The given authority through which an individual or committee makes decisions in order to achieve a specified end-state; 2) Organization and Structure - Agencies that are organized into cohesive subcomponents working collectively towards a given objective; 3) Systems and Processes - Standard practices in relation to administrative, intelligence, planning, training, logistics and other relevant staff elements that foster inter-operability and; 4) Relationships – Personal and professional interaction between participating organizations of the interagency.

✓ In order to maintain international credibility, the United States must establish a consolidated, centralized interagency system that provides an effective and efficient response to complex operations by leveraging the appropriate instruments of power that is organized and led to meet national objectives.

To demonstrate how current practice fails to produce effective collaboration, the following sections will sketch the organizational framework of the interagency crises response network/system to demonstrate that a lack of clear guidance, insufficient authority, poor linkages

among relevant offices, incompatible procedures and a general lack of trust undermine effectiveness and operational capacity. The next section demonstrates the effects of these dysfunctions in a case study of Austere Challenge. The conclusion provides recommendations for how to improve the four components of effective interagency coordination to better position the U.S. to respond quickly and capably as crisis emerge.

### **Presidential Directives**

Beginning in 2004, Presidents Bush and Obama issued a series of mandates that officially recognized the need for interagency coordination. NSPD-44 and PPD-1 broadly state that members of the executive branch will work under a systematic construct on behalf of the USG. Each directive provides broad guidelines for interagency coordination and integration. These documents provide a formal context through which federal agencies and members of the President's staff operate under the interagency process.

Released in December of 2005 NSPD-44 superseded PDD-56 as the primary interagency management source document with respect to crises/complex operations. This directive outlines the responsibilities of the Department of State (DOS) as the lead proponent of stabilization and reconstruction efforts involving all U.S. departments and agencies with relevant capabilities to support USG objectives.<sup>6</sup> "Specifically, DOS will serve as the center of gravity as it pertains to 1). coordination of efforts of the USG to prepare, plan for and conduct reconstruction and stabilization assistance and other related activities that require response capabilities of multiple USG agencies and 2). harmonize and integrate these efforts with the U.S. Military."<sup>7</sup> In addition to DOS responsibilities, NSPD-44 also addresses criteria in which other executive agencies are to support complex operations and the interagency effort. Specifically, these agencies identify capabilities and develop strategies that compliment DOS policies and concepts of operation that

enable the Secretary of State to carry out the responsibilities in the directive.<sup>8</sup> Lastly, NSPD-44 stipulates that the Secretaries of State and Defense work together to integrate contingency plans when appropriate to accomplish U.S. objectives.<sup>9</sup> PPD-1 superseded NSPD-1 and elaborates in more detail on the decision making process through which policy is generated and analyzed before arriving at the National Security Council (NSC).

PPD-1 defines the vertical structure through which the National Security Council (NSC) makes decisions regarding national security objectives. This directive identifies the councils, committees and sub-committees charged with the responsibility to develop, review and implement policy in support of the President's objectives. PPD-1 designates subordinates committees to include the Principals Committees (PC), Deputies Committees (DC) and Policy Coordination Committees (PCC).<sup>10</sup> Lastly, PPD-1 calls for the creation of an Interagency Policy Committee (IPC) which was excluded from NSPD-1. The IPC serves as the NSC level committee charged with the responsibility to develop and implement security policies by multiple agencies.<sup>11</sup>

Following NSPD-44, the Department of State, in concert with other agencies, worked to implement new mandates through the creation of the Interagency Management System (IMS) and the Civilian Response Corps (CRC).

The Secretariat/Coordinator for reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS), lead agency of the IMS and CRC, were officially established in August of 2004 as a result of lackluster performances during OIF and OEF. Policy-makers sought a capability that would establish a joint command and control structure, coordinate/integrate and synchronize planning processes for a government response to crisis and/or complex situations and establish communications and information sharing networks.<sup>12</sup> "Managed by the Department of State, S/CRS is charged with

the responsibility for developing and subsequently institutionalizing this capability that addresses foreign states and regions at risk of or in transition from conflict or civil strife.”<sup>13</sup> The S/CRS mission statement is stated as such: “To lead, coordinate and institutionalize U.S. Government civilian capacity to prevent or prepare for post-conflict situations, and to help stabilize & reconstruct societies in transition from conflict or civil strife in order to reach a sustainable path towards peace, democracy and market economy.”<sup>14</sup>

The objective of S/CRS is to centralize efforts on behalf of the USG so that resources are focused and maximized, thus allowing for a USG response that is rapid and flexible.<sup>15</sup> To meet this objective, S/CRS developed the IMS as its command and control structure. Conceptually, this structure serves two purposes: 1). it task organizes multiple agencies under a centralized system, and 2). it integrates civilian personnel into the military machine at the strategic, operational and tactical levels.<sup>16</sup> The Country Reconstruction and Stabilization Group (CRSG), The Integrated Planning Cell (IPC) and the Advance Civilian Teams/Forward Advance Civilian Teams (ACT/FACT) form the nucleus of the interagency process.<sup>17</sup> Each one of these offices is made up of participating agencies to include DOD. Collectively, these elements facilitate requirements needed to support complex operations providing centralization and focus at the strategic, operational and tactical levels.

The CRSG is the Washington-based decision-making body at the Assistant Secretary level. All agencies involved in a particular Reconstruction and Stabilization (R&S) mission will have members assigned to the CRSG. The CRSG is managed by the NSC’s Deputies Committee, providing decision making and overall coordination in the IMS process as it relates to a specific country.<sup>18</sup> A Secretariat ensures that there is a single channel for developing policy, helping to formulate strategies, and monitoring the implementation of policy decisions.<sup>19</sup> The

Secretariat oversees the writing of a unified plan taking account of all U.S. Government capabilities that will be used in the crisis.<sup>20</sup>

The IPC functions as the civilian planning cell deployed to the relevant Geographic Combatant Command (GCC) or multinational headquarters to harmonize civilian and military planning, processes, and operations.<sup>21</sup> It will generally consist of civilian planners and regional and sectoral experts from across the U.S. Government whose objective is to facilitate civil military activities.<sup>22</sup>

Lastly the ACT/FACT work in concert with the Chief of Mission's assigned staff to assess, plan, execute and monitor program development in order to mitigate or marginalize conflict.<sup>23</sup> Its mission is to deploy to the field to support the Chief of Mission in implementing the U.S. R&S strategic plan. If a U.S. Embassy exists, the ACT will operate under Chief of Mission authority and be integrated with existing Embassy and USAID mission structure. In the absence of an existing U.S. diplomatic presence, the ACT will assist in establishing a diplomatic link to the host nation. If necessary, the ACT can deploy FACTS, to provide maximum capacity to plan and implement R&S programs at the provincial or local level supporting military commanders on the ground.<sup>24</sup>

While NSPD-44 structured crisis response for civilian agencies, DOD Directive 3000.5 (*Military Support for Stability, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction (SSTR) Operations*) serves as the U.S. military regulatory mandate for stability and reconstruction operations. This directive states that stability operations are a core U.S. military mission equal to combat operations and that the Department of Defense shall be prepared to execute such requirements,<sup>25</sup> and shall integrate stability operations across all DOD activities.<sup>26</sup> DOD's mandate, according to this directive, is to advance to U.S. interests and values through long term capacity building via

essential services, economic, rule of law, diplomatic, and civil operations.<sup>27</sup> The document continues by stating that DOD must be prepared to accomplish tasks necessary to maintain order in a given area of operation when the population cannot provide organic security, rebuild security forces, judicial services and correctional facilities, and establish capacity within governmental and economic institutions.<sup>28</sup>

To better coordinate their actions, S/CRS, in concert with Joint Forces Command (JFCOM), created a planning manual that focused on principals similar to that of the U.S. Armed forces. Released in 2005, the U.S. Government Draft Planning Framework for Reconstruction, Stabilization and Conflict Transformation sought to establish a process that promoted unity of effort, standardization and flexibility.<sup>29</sup> This process, at the request of a given State Department Regional Bureau, is initiated by the Secretary of State, Principle or Deputies Committee who, in turn, establish an interagency planning team to review the request. Once approved, Deputies and/or Principals Committees begin to formulate individual and collective tasks that are termed Major Mission Elements (MME).<sup>30</sup> These tasks are filtered down to the Lead Agency & MME Planning team that will, in turn, provide a detailed analysis on sub-tasks, personnel, budget requirements and an overall strategy to accomplish the collective MMEs.<sup>31</sup> The MMEs are reviewed by the Deputies and/or Principals Committees prior to mission execution and compared to lessons learned and after action reviews from previous missions.<sup>32</sup>

To support this concept, S/CRS developed a staffing plan that revolved around three definitive manning elements. The Active, Standby and Reserve components of the Civilian Response Corps (CRC) seem to give S/CRS the means to achieve collective goals and objectives set forth by presidential mandates. The members who would essentially constitute these



components would come from a group of eight agencies to include DOS, USAID and the Department of Agriculture.<sup>33</sup>

The Active Response Corps (ARC) is designated as full time, newly appointed GS/FS employees hired on limited term basis.<sup>34</sup> These subject matter experts are hired specifically for crisis response and most of their time is to be spent abroad participating in CRC activities providing support in the area of assessment, management, planning and administration.<sup>35</sup> ARC members will support overseas operations 60% of their time while 40% is dedicated to training. Personnel are required to be available for deployment with notification being made within 48-hours and actual movement to country within 7-days.<sup>36</sup>

The Standby Response Corps (SRC) is the second level of responders in crisis situations. Subject matter experts comprised of the aforementioned agencies volunteer to serve as members of the CRC; however, their primary duties remain with their parent organization.<sup>37</sup> The purpose of the SRC is to provide augmentation and expertise to active component members while deployed. When called upon, these responders are deployed within 30 days and can coordinate support for Reconstruction and Stabilization efforts.<sup>38</sup>

Lastly, the Civilian Reserve Component (CRC) operates under conditions similar to that of the U.S. military reserve forces. This being said, the government will draw upon civilian personnel outside the USG, who, have volunteered services in a particular field of expertise.<sup>39</sup> When called upon, these members can deploy within 45-60 days to an area of operation in support of contingency operations.<sup>40</sup> Their mission is to support the ARC and SRC in coordinating and synchronizing program and/or program implementation throughout all levels of the inter-agency process.

The goals and objectives under this concept are quite clear that the IMS attempts to unify the federal agencies of the USG when addressing crisis situations that affect national security. However, NSPD-44 and PPD-1 lay an ambiguous foundation of what is expected of the interagency and how it is supposed to successfully integrate. If this interagency concept is supposed to serve as the basis for creating a synergistic method to solving complex operations then this approach is significantly off the mark. Getting these policies correct is essential in that it effects all subsequent actions taken by subordinate executive branches.

The following section will examine the current systems and weaknesses in more depth by demonstrating how the process lacks the leadership, structure, interoperability and trust necessary for effective interagency coordination.

## **The Problem**

The creation and subsequent release of NSPD-44 and PPD-1 have done little to either unify the inter-agency or establish a process that operates effectively. These frameworks provide unclear and inconsistent guidance on agencies' participation.<sup>41</sup> Additionally, differences in technical/doctrinal terminology have posed significant challenges to inter-agency collaboration.<sup>42</sup> This ambiguity has allowed DOD and DOS to act in a manner that seeks to protect their own interests. At the same time, it has given these agencies the green light to "Mission Creep" into other organization's respective areas of expertise, as evidenced by military personnel performing stability operations where employment of civilian personnel would be appropriate and preferable.<sup>43</sup> On the contrary, DOD is developing enduring capabilities to perform PRT like missions.<sup>44</sup> The content of NSPD 44 is clear in what authorities DOS is given with respect to leading, coordinating and developing inter-agency efforts; yet, combining this authority with little or no expeditionary ability to deploy experts is a recipe for disorganization, frustration and,

ultimately, failure.<sup>45</sup> “In short, DOS is not viewed as an effective organization on par with the military combatant commands in influence or leadership, by the Congress, the Defense Department, many interagency partners, or even within the State Department.”<sup>46</sup>

At the same time, the Department of Defense has taken it upon itself to enhance its capability to plan, prepare and execute reconstruction and stabilization operations. The ambiguous guidance outlined in NSPD-44 directs the Secretary of Defense to simply coordinate inter-agency efforts with DOS.<sup>47</sup> In reality, DOD has established that U.S. military forces will be prepared to perform all tasks necessary to establish or maintain order when civilians are not available.<sup>48</sup> DOD Directive 3000.5 and Field Manual (FM) 3.07 specifically address this as a priority.<sup>49</sup>

### **Leadership, Management and Focus**

In theory, the President is responsible for managing all elements of the Executive Branch. This not only includes DOS and DOD but also the less visible agencies as well. Realistically, the President has little time to provide the direct management and oversight that is needed to be effective; however, direct management and oversight are needed to create and maintain an inter-agency capability that can respond to crises efficiently and effectively. As “Lead” of the interagency for crisis response, DOS is also a participant in the process. “This leadership gap has provoked infighting among agencies that has been characterized by media outlets as Bureaucratic infighting and that bickering has hamstrung initiatives to promote stability.”<sup>50</sup> What does this mean? It means that DOS, as the lead, makes decisions that affect not only other agencies but itself as well. This has sparked tensions within the other agencies. For example USAID’s office of Conflict, Management and Mitigation has served as the facilitator of crises response expertise for many years providing conflict assessments that generate comprehensive

analysis that identify destabilizing patterns and trends in specific countries and recommendations on program implementation.<sup>51</sup> This expertise being available, DOS demonstrated little interest in this critical capability and, in 2002, established its own Office for Conflict Management. This resulted in a long standing feud between the two agencies that still exists today.

## **Organizational Structure**

The current organizational structure of the interagency is another impediment to the process. First and foremost, the CRSG, IPC and ACTs are only used to respond to large-scale crises. This concept has not been tested in a real world situation and failed to meet expectations in its debut during Exercise Austere Challenge 2009 (AC09). The first large scale test of the IMS, AC09 sought to integrate executive agencies into a centralized entity focused on civil military operations.<sup>52</sup> From the outset of the exercise, DOD took control of the entire exercise with the rest of the inter-agency standing on the side-lines pointing fingers at each other. This was due to a lack of proper leadership, defined organizational structures/boundaries and relationships.

In a steady state environment, all agencies operate within their own organizations. Aside from Sub-Policy Coordinating Committees, there are no formal structures that link respective inter-agency offices and the efforts of each. Integration below the sub-PCC level is usually at the initiative of representatives involved in said activities. In most cases, this coordination fails to generate consistent dialogue between the organizations, resulting in a break-down in synchronization in relation to administration, operations, training, education and logistics.

Creating a level of continuity within the interagency also seems to be an issue. There are two reasons that can be attributed to this. First, personnel selected to spearhead the management of the interagency concept are not experienced in interagency concepts and lack the experience

needed to move the process forward. Second, the individuals who have institutional knowledge are not retained in critical positions that foster continuity. In essence, establishing a level of continuity is considered a low priority within the interagency; however, without integration, there will be significant vertical and horizontal gaps that create miscommunication, dysfunction and poor performance at the operational and tactical levels and agencies operating independent of each other.<sup>53</sup>

### **Systems & Processes**

Systems and processes are, in essence, the single most important component to integrating the interagency. Unifying information technology and doctrinal concepts as they relate to administration, intelligence sharing, operations (planning, training and education) and logistics into compatible structures is imperative. By doing so, agencies will increase productivity resulting in an organization that is prepared to deploy in support of a crisis situation. Currently, there is little standardization across the interagency. Compatibility that does exist is challenged by most as failing to meet criteria for interagency coordination. Agencies work tirelessly to justify, create and fund systems and processes that are organization specific. This diminishes the capability to coordinate efforts to respond when directed. This is counter-productive to the interagency effort and will only deepen the divide among organizations if it is not managed properly. For example, all executive agencies use their own information technology operating systems. These differences create huge dilemmas in relation to the aforementioned that significantly reduce interagency effectiveness.

### **Relationships**

Although most may think that relationships among agencies are insignificant, they are an issue that is worth highlighting with respect to the interagency process. The complexities of

relationships among agencies are critical because, in most cases, they do more to slow the process than any other subject discussed in this paper. Personal, professional and organizational attitudes have sparked of many debates and, therefore, have delayed the process to such a scale that it has taken several months to accomplish the most basic tasks.

For example, DOS initiated a Memorandum of Agreement in relation to a training course for incoming active component members.<sup>54</sup> This document contained a wide variety of topics to include who was selected to develop the course, how it would be developed, what was required of subordinate agencies and funding responsibilities.<sup>55</sup> Subsequently, haggling began regarding, not general statements but, individual words within the statements themselves.<sup>56</sup> As a result, this memorandum stalled at the Sub-PCC level of the government system for over four months before directives were given to sign the document as it was written. The impact of this document and the second and third order effects were monumental in that it effectively delayed or cancelled the attendance of incoming employees. This has had significant internal/external effects as it is a mandatory requirement for individuals to complete prior to beginning their tenure.<sup>57</sup> This, in turn created a domino effect as to starting dates, training timelines and deployment cycles.<sup>58</sup>

Personal and professional attitudes stem from experience from previous assignments or interactions in which an individual or team has operated with a partner organization. These views permeate the entire organization, influencing group perceptions. This is prevalent among the senior Foreign Service Officers down to junior level employees.<sup>59</sup> This leads to a general avoidance and reluctance to support and/or participate in inter-agency operations. More importantly, it moves against the USG's overall objective of responding to the worlds needs in a time of crisis.

These points raise concerns in relation to the ability of the U.S. government to operate under an interagency construct. Taking a look at the most recent civil-military training event, Exercise Austere Challenge 2009 (AC09) highlights many of the aforementioned items that interagency organizations will face in the foreseeable future.

### **Case Study (Austere Challenge 2009):**

This exercise was deemed the largest of its kind in terms of planning, staffing and resourcing efforts among the interagency. Spearheaded by S/CRS, civilian agencies showcased the Interagency Management System (IMS) as the newest innovation in the Whole of Government approach to R & S crisis situations.<sup>60</sup> Although the overall endstate/objectives were achieved, this exercise exposed some critical gaps in the inter-agency process and may have even slowed the momentum in making this concept a reality. With this being stated, it is imperative that the following friction points are addressed in order to operationalize this initiative. It is important to understand what was supposed to take place, what actually happened during the exercise and why this outcome was achieved.

As stated before, AC09 was the first exercise that included a truly Whole of Government response to a crisis situation. Preparations for this event were extensive and tedious; however, civil and military participants would find that, for all the planning and coordination that was involved, everyone was ill-prepared for this endeavor.

Hosted by European Command (EUCOM), AC09 served as a venue for civil-military cooperation, focused on a crisis response situation under a centralized construct with an emphasis on the inter-operability between the different agencies.<sup>61</sup> Each agency sought to identify key takeaways and attempt to validate the IMS concept while EUCOM placed its priorities on transitioning into phase IV operations. Comparatively, S/CRS provided a total of 47

personnel to the event while EUCOM's entire staff element totaled approximately 500 personnel. Key elements included EUCOM's standard command and control structure and staff planning teams whereas S/CRS provided individuals to support its CRSG, IPC and ACT. Finally, management and oversight was provided by a group of 14 individuals who comprised the Exercise Control Group (ECG). All of these elements participated throughout all phases of the training exercise to include 12 months of extensive planning prior to the execution of AC09 itself.

The overall objective established at the beginning of the exercise in terms of socializing and testing IMS doctrine and the USG planning concepts was a success; however, there were fundamental deficiencies needing considerable improvement.<sup>62</sup> These areas include organization and systems, training and education and command and control.

As stated before, all agencies participated throughout each phase; however, significant problems arose as to who would participate in each phase, how they would contribute and how the integration of each element would be achieved. More importantly, employing civil military capabilities throughout each phase of the exercise and employing that capability at the right time is critical in establishing phases.<sup>63</sup> Agencies must be configured to meet requirements with the appropriate personnel and, more importantly, personnel who are subject matter experts. It is essential that these decisions must be made during the planning phase in order gain clarity prior to the execution of training. However, during the planning phase, organizational configurations created problems from the beginning of the exercise. Objectives Teams created to address sector specific requirements highlighted these issues.<sup>64</sup> The purpose of the teams was to provide cross-sector expertise, meaning that each sector is linked in order to provide a level on continuity



between each. The failure in doing this resulted in stove-pipes between sectors creating closed vertical structures.<sup>65</sup>

In addition to stove pipes during the planning stage, planning horizons posed a significant obstacle for participating agencies.<sup>66</sup> Civilian and military concepts of short and long term planning are vastly different. This has tremendous effects on the Whole of Government process as many developmental programs address complex situations that may stretch over a period of years while others may require a short duration of time. The fundamental issue here is civil-military program planning must be flexible and able to employ raw capacity and resources that can respond to fluid situations.

The IMS structure failed to provide the appropriate situational awareness to produce an understanding necessary to develop complete, modify or execute plans.<sup>67</sup> In essence, there was a lack of communication, synchronization and common picture from which to formulate a integrated, clear and concise concept of operation. Participants acknowledged that a structure that fosters this capability would enhance communication and synchronization efforts between military and civilian activities. Additionally, there were no tools under the IMS construct that enabled interagency personnel to assess and establish metrics.<sup>68</sup> Participants noted that, in order to accomplish this task, it would require a high level of resources especially in relation to personnel and technology.<sup>69</sup> Not doing so would result in the components of the IMS to become overwhelmed, affecting its overall ability to execute its mission.

Resource allocation proved to be another key note addressed during this exercise in which disproportionate levels or zero support was provided.<sup>70</sup> The after action review suggests that resources were distributed on an individual basis and not as an integrated interagency team, thus further promoting the stove pipe effects.<sup>71</sup> As a result, it was determined that establishing

priorities based on holistic assessments and supported/supporting criteria was the best solution to this problem.

Training and education posed additional constraints for inter-agency personnel. As previously mentioned, establishing the common operating picture would also enable optimal training standards that are relevant across the entire inter-agency spectrum.<sup>72</sup> Training created for inter-agency personnel was attended by only a small percentage of those individuals prior to deployment into the COCOM AOR.<sup>73</sup> This, in turn, limited their ability to provide subject matter expertise to their military counterparts. Other issues relating to internal roles responsibilities, characteristics and capabilities were another shortfall identified during the exercise.

Command and control exacerbated all the underlying friction points. Inexperience on behalf of all agencies in relation to familiarization of each other led to assumption as to who was ultimately in charge of the operation.<sup>74</sup> This, too, was a result of having ill-defined roles and responsibilities thus creating confusion at every level. Expectations were that military personnel would be in charge of military operations and stability efforts would be led by the rest of the whole of government.<sup>75</sup> This inexperience led to a greater understanding of the supporting/supporting roles that each agency would assume during each phase of operation.<sup>76</sup> In essence, the execution of this exercise highlighted that both internal and external relationships must be clearly defined.

Although Austere Challenge 2009 proved to be an overall success, it clearly demonstrated that there are numerous shortfalls that must be resolved at all levels. The exercise challenged every aspect relating to leadership, training & education, resource management and plans and operations. AC09 highlighted that, at the operational level, there must be one overall

authority supported by the rest of the interagency and selection is based on the operation being addressed.

The next section will explore remedies to the aforementioned areas and provide a way forward to addressing the interagency quagmire in which the USG continuously finds itself.

### **Future of the Inter-Agency**

#### **Leadership vs. Policy**

Interagency cooperation is a critical capability in meeting the objectives outlined in the National Security Strategy (NSS) and there are many subject matter experts who recommend multiple solutions to fix the problem. The key to addressing this begins at the highest level of government.

First, The President must take an active role and serve as the leader in this initiative. This responsibility cannot be neglected. He must be an integral part of the creation and management of a comprehensive system that is focused on unity of effort and the spirit of unity.<sup>77</sup> Simply put, he must be part of the process as it all begins and ends in the office of the President. If the President is unable to provide active, visible leadership, the vice president or an outside political appointee must be given the responsibility.<sup>78</sup>

Second, creating an interagency team that responds quickly when called upon is a highly complex subject that requires clear and concise goals/objectives, roles and responsibilities and delegation of authority with intent. Directives that address the Whole of Government initiative do not provide proper guidance. Six pages in length, NSPD-44 fails in terms of identifying what is required to formulate a cohesive interagency element. The President must be very clear in disseminating guidance to subordinate agencies and expectations of each individual organization.<sup>79</sup> Current directives are task oriented documents that set objectives without

providing guidance on how to reach a realistic end-state. Policy, to include NSPD-44, must outline how the agencies will integrate and operate under given situations. Indeed NSPD-44 states that we will build “capacity”; however, this term is fluid and can mean many things. The failure to identify the mission leads to enormous headaches at all levels in relation not only what the interagency is doing, but how it is going to accomplish it and under what circumstances.

Third, the Department of State must be relieved of its duties as lead agency for interagency operations. The decision to place DOS in charge of the collective interagency process has been somewhat counterproductive. The participating agencies have taken the general attitude that DOS is not trustworthy based on its past and current behavior. Lacking the credibility to lead others creates tense situations in which others will do not want to be a part.<sup>80</sup> As stated previously, this concept must be led by an individual or team that serves as a single point in which all decisions are made thus creating centralization and structure.

At the same time, DOD’s stability operations capability as it relates to funding and other resources must be shifted to those organizations whose responsibilities are those specific tasks. Currently, DOD receives that largest portion of these resources to man, train and equip its forces for tasks it deems are the priority, which, in this case, are reconstruction and stabilization operations. The President, through NSPD-44, must redistribute authority and resource equally between all executive partners. Additionally, the President must provide detailed direction in what role DOD will play in terms of supporting and supported efforts. This will provide formalized criteria that will marginalize DODs ability to step out of its lane and into other organizations.

Ultimately, the President must understand the skill sets that are organic to each of his agencies, subsequently, assigning roles and responsibilities appropriately based on situations as

they occur. Also, he must appropriate funding and resources in accordance with these roles and responsibilities ensuring that there is equitability throughout the interagency.

## **Organization and Structure**

Looking at the structure of the interagency, adjustments are required in order to establish a distinct division between levels vertically while, at the same time centralizing and/or consolidating horizontally. Operationally, the interagency is meshed together to point where there is really no distinction among strategic, operational and tactical levels. All three levels operate within Washington D.C. and assigned personnel execute daily activities that bleed into all areas of operation. For example, policy level entities work to develop tactical level doctrine. This way of doing business has created an ambiguous, chaotic environment causing frustration in and among the agencies at all levels. Separating the interagency vertically means that clearly defined lines both physically and authoritatively along the strategic, operational and tactical spectrum. These levels must separate and personnel at each level must be responsible for identified missions, individual and collective tasks that support each other.

Similar to the roles and responsibilities that NSPD-44 assigns to respective agencies, task and purpose must be assigned to each operational level followed by direct management. Using a common sense approach, it seems that the Goldwaters-Nichols concept is a feasible guide to facilitate this goal as it will eliminate independence, strengthen the role of the lead entity and emphasize jointness.<sup>81</sup> Led by the previously mentioned overall lead element, the strategic level must be authoritative and direct in synchronizing the operations of the military, state department and other agencies that are part of the national security apparatus.<sup>82</sup> This element directs in a manner that supports the operational and tactical structures facilitating national objectives.<sup>83</sup>

This means that its functions are to man, train, and equip the inter-agency force. Another key note is the separation of policy formulation and the execution of said strategic guidelines.

Horizontally, each agency, to include DOD, must be required to provide the appropriate resources in order to consolidate prospective interagency assets. This means that agencies will consolidate resources, create regional structures that are integrated and operates along the same authority and uses the same resources and doctrinal guidelines. This is most critical as it centralizes the critical components of government and enables it to mobilize and deploy in a timely manner.<sup>84</sup> This will lead to an integration of the various agencies in terms of manning, information sharing, logistics and training & education.

### **Systems and Processes**

Systems and processes are a topic of frequent discussions. It is evident that these things are deeply imbedded in each agency's infrastructure and choosing one system over another would be a significant project; however, changes need to occur with regard to this area in order to be successful. First, changes in administration, operations, intelligence and logistics infrastructure must be a priority. Creating information technology (IT) that promotes interoperability across the interagency will eliminate stovepipes. Second, management of these systems by a centralized interagency IT office will ensure fair and equitable distribution of resources is maintained. This will force executive agencies to collaborate, breaking cultural barriers that have existed for many years.

### **Relationships**

As stated earlier, agency relationships are the single most complicated elements of the interagency process. To solve this dilemma, interagency leaders must look at training & education in order to establish a "One Team, One Fight" mentality. Professional development of

personnel is key in facilitating interagency operations.<sup>85</sup> This includes areas such as joint education, assignments and accreditation. Incentivizing these areas in terms of upward mobility and monetary increases will further enhance this approach.<sup>86</sup> Developing programs that address these areas will produce well-rounded, effective, critical thinking leaders that can operate in a complex environment under a Whole of Government construct.<sup>87</sup> Additionally, integrating respective fellows and interns into partner organizations will allow the individuals to familiarize themselves with the internal processes of the institution in which they work. In turn, the host organization can exploit the talents and experience of the intern to improve upon its way of doing business.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, it can be argued that attempts to rectify the interagency process have resulted in little success thus creating a chaotic, tenuous interagency environment. This has led to serious complications in building a Whole of Government capability that can respond to complex issues. This situation; however, can be resolved. To reverse this trend, the highest levels of government must assess the current state of the interagency and take serious measures to address these issues to include legislative mandates, resources, and funding. Additionally, training, education and organizational structures must be changed to reflect a concerted effort to integrate agencies. Unless this is done, the execution of operational and tactical requirements will continue to suffer and the United States will continue to muddle through complex operations expending numerous resources in the process.

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