

Improving S/CRS Planning Framework from a Geographic Combatant Command's Perspective

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INTRODUCTION

With the establishment of the Department of State's Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stability (S/CRS) in August 2004, increasing attention and resources have been devoted to the topic of stability planning. The "US Government Draft Planning Framework for Stabilization, Reconstruction and Conflict Transformation" (referred to throughout this paper as the Planning Framework) was published in December 2005 to serve as the vehicle by which S/CRS proposes to meet its Presidential mandate to bring all elements of the US government into active planning. The Planning Framework focuses on post-conflict reconstruction rather than pre-conflict prevention. It is also reactive rather than proactive in nature, meaning the planning process is not initiated until a trip-wire event occurs.

By contrast, US European Command's (USEUCOM) Stability Planning Branch in the Strategy, Policy and Assessments Directorate focuses on stability planning from the standpoint of conflict prevention. We are exploring the concept of applying a preventative "stability calculus" across our Area of Responsibility (AOR), working within the Theater Security Cooperation (TSC) strategy and Department of Defense Security Cooperation Guidance.

The purpose of this paper is to examine the areas in which these two approaches overlap, and to explore means by which the military's long-established planning expertise and USEUCOM's current focus on conflict prevention can be used to strengthen and enhance the Planning Framework. This integrated strategy would encourage a degree of interagency influence absent from current TSC strategies and avoid re-inventing the wheel by taking advantage of established planning and cooperation programs that are already funded within

each Geographic Combatant Command (GCC). Utilizing specific tools and strengths of TSC Regional Strategies, such as established evaluation methods and resource allocation, lends utility and accountability to the planning process and improves the US government's ability to achieve National Security Objectives.

BACKGROUND

NATIONAL SECURITY PRESIDENTIAL DIRECTIVE 44

On 7 December 2005, President G. W. Bush signed National Security Presidential Directive 44 (NSPD 44):

The purpose of this directive is to promote the security of the United States through improved coordination, planning and implementation for reconstruction and stabilization assistance for foreign states and regions at risk of, in, or in transition from conflict or civil strife. (National Security Presidential Directive 44, December 2005, p.1)

NSPD 44, which was in draft for nearly two years, may not seem to be "grand strategy" in the conventional view, but it does bring all elements of governmental power to bear in support of US interests. (Liddell Hart, Basil H. 1967, p. 336). The precedent of writing grand strategy at the National Security Council began with NSC 68, a paper written in 1950 at the onset of the Cold War. (NSC-68, (1950), p.1). National Security Decision Directive 75, which was signed by President Reagan in 1983, continued the grand strategy against the Soviet Union (NSPD-75, 1983), but with the end of the Cold War in 1991 that strategy dissipated.

While the threat facing it was no longer as clearly identifiable, the United States found itself increasingly committing forces to humanitarian and peacekeeping operations. Somalia, Haiti, and Bosnia became our new problems, or in political parlance, our complex contingencies. In 1997, President Clinton signed Presidential Decision Directive 56, mandating that all Departments and Agencies of the US government coordinate and harmonize their efforts in these contingencies. (PDD-56, 1997, p.1). The attacks on the US in September 2001 brought the enemy into sharper focus, but didn't revive the Cold War clarity of sovereign enemy states and conventional combat. Instead, it necessitated a focus on issues not found in traditional military mission statements (such as establishing the basis for security, justice, economic stability, social well-being, and good governance in foreign territories, (Orr, Robert C., 2004, *Winning the Peace*, p.11) and made the coordination of US government efforts even more critical for success in the post-Cold War era.

STATE/COORDINATOR FOR RECONSTRUCTION AND STABILIZATION

Noting this change in the nature of war, particularly following Operation Iraqi Freedom, the Bush Administration asked Secretary of State Colin Powell to establish S/CRS in 2004. In the short time since then the office has grown to about a hundred people, which is still small considering its charge from NSPD 44:

...[to] coordinate and lead integrated United States Government efforts involving all US Departments and Agencies with relevant capabilities, to prepare, plan for, and conduct stabilization and reconstruction activities. (NSPD-44, 2005, P.1)

In November 2005, Deputy Secretary of Defense Gordon England signed the Department of Defense Directive 3000.05, which assigns stability operations the *same level of importance* as combat operations, and instructs the military to support S/CRS in developing full spectrum reconstruction and stabilization operations. (DoD Directive 3000.05, 2005, p.1). Shortly thereafter, S/CRS, in conjunction with US Joint Forces Command (JFCOM), published the Planning Framework. This pamphlet outlines a planning structure intended to standardize the interagency approach to reconstruction and stabilization. (S/CRS Planning Framework, p.4). The Planning Framework is intended for coordination within the US Government, and later to form the basis for planning with the private sector, non-governmental organizations, international organizations and other nations in developing stability operations. (Ibid., p.12)

ANALYSIS OF PLANNING FRAMEWORK

The Planning Framework consists of four planning principles: Unity of Effort, Simplicity, Flexibility, and Consistency and Standardization of Products. (Ibid., pp. 8-9). Planning is initiated when the Secretary of State stands up a Strategic Planning Team (SPT) in response to a crisis or pending crisis. S/CRS, as the lead agency, provides the SPT with all information needed to develop an “overarching policy goal” and keeps all other parts of the US government which are involved in the planning organized and moving forward.

Policy goals could be either the unilateral position of the US or, if there is time and allied support exists, the combined strategy of the US and other international political and economic parties. The Planning Framework then breaks down policy guidance to the next step, “strategic development,” which is most closely connected with the GCC and the operational level of planning. The subsequent level of planning within the Planning Framework corresponds in military terms to the tactical level “essential tasks.” (Ibid., p.15)

S/CRS and the planners at JFCOM have done an excellent job in developing a workable concept of planning for not only the entire US government, but also those other nations developing stability operations as well. This will be an important milestone, one that will serve as an entry point for others without detailed organizational planning experience. Unfortunately, for the operational-level planner looking to use the Planning Framework as a preventative tool, it falls short of its potential.

FOCUS ON RECONSTRUCTION, NOT PREVENTION

To “prevent” means to anticipate or counter in advance. That dictionary definition precludes the Planning Framework’s trip-wire event that would lead to SPT establishment. It is axiomatic that conflict prevention is preferable to reconstruction, both in terms of human lives and dollars spent. In addition, the broad range of responsibilities assigned to the SPT, and the very short timeframe suggested, imperil the success of stability efforts. This paper

will demonstrate how the S/CRS Planning Framework can be combined with TSC strategy to re-orient its focus and avoid these potential problems.

LIBRARY OF POTENTIAL PLANNING

Rather than waiting for something to happen and then responding to it, successful planners identify and analyze potential areas of conflict before they arise. Not having a standing organization ready with collected and evaluated information for potential planning is a significant oversight of the Planning Framework. Both the Departments of Defense and State have several lists readily compiled of prioritized possible conflicts. These lists could be combined and blended with those from international organizations, NGOs and academia. Such an aggregate would produce a substantial database that could be used to focus resources and pre-empt a potential crisis, or failing that, give the SPT a solid platform from which to prioritize and begin formulating policy.

An important facet of TSC Regional Strategies is the wealth of region- and country-specific detail they include. Country Campaign Plans identify and oversee the activities of each service, such as Navy Construction Battalions building schools in Gabon, or US Air Force personnel staffing medical clinics in Angola. Information necessary for successful planning includes: How well does the current government perform basic services? What is the prevalent attitude towards the US, or towards any foreigners? How well does the infrastructure work? Does the economy function? Is there clean water and sewage? What other organizations are “in the field” and what are they doing? This sort of everyday detail is vitally important at the operational level if unpleasant surprises are to be minimized. Without this information the SPT is reduced to “discovery learning” in its policy-making role due to ignorance of local conditions. This country-specific information conveniently fits into the Planning Framework Essential Tasks Matrix at the Major Mission Elements level while helping to prioritize and organize the next lower level of detail.

BROAD RESPONSIBILITIES PLUS LITTLE TIME EQUALS PARTIAL PLANNING

The next issue is the scope of the SPT strategic policy-making responsibilities. Consider this task from the Planning Framework: “...to coordinate an initial assessment and the development of goals, priorities, and a broad resource strategy to obtain them.” (Ibid., p.17) That’s difficult enough when given the luxury of long-range planning, but when one considers the short-fused nature of contingency planning, to say nothing of the intense pressure on the SPT to decide policy, the task is close to impossible. Unless the US Government is dictating the timelines, as was the case in Operation Iraqi Freedom, we are unlikely to get such advance notice. The planning effort, already significantly burdened, may well collapse when additional demands are introduced, such as “...work[ing] with multinational, interagency partners, and local partners to form a multilateral SPT to align US national efforts....” (Ibid., p.17).

In addition, the S/CRS Planning Framework suggests planners consider as their objective “locally led nascent peace,” occurring in 2-3 years. (Ibid., p.22) This seems artificial and

without historical support, and contradicts this further guidance from the Planning Framework:

The planning template should not be based on long-term developmental goals that may require decades of sustained assistance or support, but should nonetheless be informed by and consistent with that perspective. (Ibid., p.22)

One can think of several examples in which this objective was not met. Consider Bosnia, where US forces went in with the Implementation Forces (IFOR) in December 1995, and handed over control to the military entity of the European Union, EUFOR, in December 2004. (US DoS, Fact Sheet, 2004) Another instance is Kosovo. US Task Force Falcon went into Kosovo as part of KFOR in 1999 and remains there to this day. US forces have been fighting in Afghanistan and Iraq since 2001 and 2003, respectively. A form of locally-led peace did come to bear in Somalia within the allotted timeframe, but certainly not the peace hoped for by the US. These examples of US involvement in recent conflicts illustrate that a 2-3 year timeframe for achieving peace is implausible.

THEATER SECURITY COOPERATION AND REGIONAL STRATEGIES

The concept of expecting a hurriedly assembled SPT to quickly give precise and comprehensive national-level strategic guidance, coordinated with allies and international organizations, seems hopeful at best. Add to that the planning limit of 2-3 years, and one is left with the impression that this isn't the serious attempt at solving stability problems that the US government intends it to be. These failings can be addressed at the operational level of the Geographic Combatant Command by combining the Planning Framework with the Theater Security Cooperation strategies within each GCC. The timing is right for a wider-ranging combination of civilian and military planning at the strategic and operational levels.

In March 2005, General James L. Jones, Supreme Allied Commander Europe and Commander US European Command, testified before Congress on the need to widen the scope of military planning:

A military approach alone will not deliver the desired outcome in countries or regions where there is little or no experience in responsible governance. Integrated interagency and international action is necessary to achieve long-term strategic goals. (Gen J. L. Jones, 2005, Statement before the Senate Armed Services Committee, p. 38)

TSC strategies are developed by the GCC in consultation with the Department of State by prioritizing countries within the Area of Responsibility (AOR), establishing specific goals for bi-lateral relationships, and *allocating resources* with those strategic priorities and specific goals in mind. Periodic updates are published with annual conferences to assess the strategy and its *methods of evaluation*, which test the validity of planning assumptions. The strategy is also synchronized with other strategic documents such as the National Security Strategy, National Defense Strategy, and National Military Strategy. This data from the GCC perspective needs to be opened to a wider audience within the US government to better organize and focus US activities and resources to accomplishing national strategic goals. A

future SPT could use the resultant information to act decisively during a crisis with reduced risk to delicately balanced international coordination.

ANTICIPATE TROUBLE-SPOTS AND WORK WITH OTHERS

Anticipation is the balancing-act between two of the Clausewitzian principles of war: security and surprise. (Clausewitz, 1834, *On War*, p.198) While prevention is cheaper than reconstruction, it's also not free, and the potential costs are political as well as monetary. Who is willing to publicly say to country X that if they don't do this or stop that, they could be the next target of American intervention? The only way to travel this potholed road is to do it with friends. There are some who are ready to travel with us. For instance, in 2005 the British Government published a report from the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit: "Investing in Prevention, An International Strategy to Manage Risks of Instability and Improve Crisis Response." (Prime Minister's Strategy Unit, 2005, Investing in Prevention, title page.) The British see the problems of prioritization clearly:

This report identifies concrete, practical steps that the international community can take to make prevention real. These include: measures to strengthen international systems to prioritise resources and develop more coherent strategies for countries and regions, as well as global issues. (Ibid., p.5)

S/CRS uses information from the Department of State Regional Strategies to prioritize its efforts. (S/CRS, 2005, Planning Framework, p.11) Expand that information with the preventative perspective TSC programs bring to the planning table, and we have something to contribute to the concept described by the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit. Those TSC programs offer S/CRS established links with specific nations and willing coalitions which over time have developed into symbiotic relationships determined to prevent or mitigate future conflicts.

The Department of State's regional and country strategies are put into effect through each mission (embassy). The US Mission in each country writes its own strategy annually in Mission Performance Plans (MPP), that incorporate all the elements of the US government within the embassy (for instance, the Foreign Agricultural Service, Foreign Commercial Service, USAID and Legal Attaché) and their responsibilities in accomplishing that strategy. TSC Regional Strategies are coordinated with the MPP through the Office of Defense Cooperation and the Defense Attaches, each of which contribute to the MPP. The S/CRS Planning Framework is the ideal tool to bring this existing network of interagency coordination into national alignment.

There's another crucial aspect to this. Planning information that is openly and directly contributed *from* the subject country or region early in the process would add essential detail, and assure those nations or peoples that the US is listening to them. That is vitally important to long-term success because, as Andrew Natsios, former Administrator of the US Administration for International Development, recently wrote, the most important principle of development is ownership, which he defines as "...[building] on the leadership, participation, and commitment of a country and its people." (Natsios, Andrew S., *Parameters*, Autumn 2005 pp. 4-20) Bringing these parties completely into the process at the

start increases their sense of ownership of the solution. That simple action enhances the impression that their problems are genuine and taken seriously, while on the other hand, it diminishes the impression that solutions to those problems are merely the hasty impressions of distant planners.

SUPPORT THE SPT'S BROAD RANGE OF RESPONSIBILITY

Setting national policy is the SPT's job, and it will be initially focused on US-only actions. However, almost invariably it will find that the US doesn't have all the resources to accomplish its goals. As discussed above, the US needn't do this alone. Because TSC programs focus on military-to-military relationship building, they have a key role in stabilizing a country where no diplomatic or political facet could wield such influence. Consider the successful role NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP) program played in stabilizing the former Warsaw Pact countries. General George Joulwan, Commander USEUCOM in the mid-1990s, saw how fragile nascent democracy was in Eastern Europe and understood that the military was a pivot point on which those societies could turn. He realized the potential to develop PfP as a means to professionalize those militaries under civilian rule and to reassure the people, thus removing that potential obstacle to their democratic growth.

Partnership for Peace ... is an engagement strategy to try to say how do we create trust and confidence, how can we create stability so then investment can come in, so democracy will take root?...How do we interact to create democratic societies that can live in peace and freedom with respect for the dignity and worth of the individual? ...if we can do that, that is in U.S. strategic interest. That is in the world's interest. (Public Broadcasting Corp. Newsmaker Interview with Gen Joulwan, 1997)

TAKE THE LONG VIEW

Finally, TSC strategy takes a long-term view of the AOR. Many of the limits (budgeting programs, election cycles and bureaucratic barriers) (S/CRS, pp.14-15) that S/CRS took into account when it wrote the Planning Framework don't affect GCCs to the same degree. TSC planning has greater longevity because those limits, while they are just as real for the GCC, are bureaucratically one degree distant. That one degree is the operational level. That is the point where TSC strategy has much to offer in extending planning strategies beyond 2-3 years. Such examples within the USEUCOM AOR alone are: the Gulf of Guinea Initiative, the Swahili Coast Initiative, and the Trans-Sahara Counter Terrorism Initiative. These programs all have the potential to significantly impact Africa. They involve US relations with the countries in these regions as well as other allies, such as the UK, and international organizations, such as the African Union, Economic Council of West African States, the UN, and the EU. (EUCOM Theater Security Cooperation Activities Handbook, 2006, p.104) USEUCOM's association in those organizations overlaps with other programs in other regions, giving the Command a long-term, panoramic view of the continent. This information is a substantial augmentation to S/CRS's Planning Framework Essential Task List at the crucial Major Mission Element level.

TSC Regional Strategies are specifically written to support defined TSC activities within a specified region. They are the translation of *strategy to tactics*. They supplement TSC strategy with greater detail, while integrating higher-level strategies with interagency activities at the embassy level, through the Office of the Defense Attache. Regional Strategies balance regional assessments against strategic resources as they define longer-term (4-7 year) TSC goals. They also have the means to chart TSC objectives and initiatives that are less than three years from implementation, and allot money and specific military capabilities to support them.

CONCLUSION

S/CRS's Draft Planning Framework for Stabilization, Reconstruction and Conflict Transformation is welcome news for the civilian-military planning community. It represents official leadership alignment with the concept of full-spectrum interagency planning that, until NSPD-44 was signed, simply didn't exist. While its liabilities are noteworthy, they are not irreparable.

GCC Regional Strategies can be combined with the Planning Framework in order to shift the focus of S/CRS planners to conflict prevention, and bring enhanced interagency expertise to GCC planning. The practical applications of this combined effort are substantial and immediate. Having solid information it can trust, the SPT would have a much simpler policy-making chore ahead of itself. If S/CRS were to round out the information generated by Regional Strategies with that from international organizations, specific allies and regional security organizations, the SPT would not be backed into making poorly-informed, hasty decisions under pressure that alienate our friends or compromise the image of the US abroad.

Having a well-considered and practical planning tool that combines the best of the military planning experience with interagency expertise would give the USG a valuable opportunity to incorporate the lessons learned from Afghanistan and Iraq. Dr. Andrew Rathmell, the former Director of Strategy for the Coalition Provisional Authority in Iraq pointed out recently that “[some] key areas... need to be improved in the planning and management processes....” (Rathmell, 2005, p.1038). First among those areas is unity of effort, which the reader may recognize as one of the Planning Framework's principles, and one of Andrew Natsios's nine principles of development. Preventative planning represents a superb opportunity to put such a concept to the test.

Dr. Rathmell makes two more points that underscore the value that Regional Strategies bring to the Planning Framework, particularly regarding methods of evaluation, validity of assumptions, and resource allocation:

Early planning must be adequate...and mission leadership must build planning and reporting processes into a system that they routinely use for decision-making. Mechanisms must be built into planning processes to challenge assumptions and to plan for failures, as well as to audit performance. Finally, the planning process needs to be integrated with the resource allocation and management process if the mission is to be able to sensibly align priorities with resources. (Ibid. p. 1038.)

Combining the officially sanctioned, but unproven, Planning Framework with the deep, but narrow, experience of the Geographic Combatant Command staffs significantly enhances the ability of the United States to plan, organize and successfully effect stability operations.

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