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Peacekeeping and Post-Conflict Capabilities: The State Department's Office for Reconstruction and Stabilization

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Summary

The State Department's new Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS) is intended to address longstanding concerns, both within Congress and the broader policy community, over what is seen as inadequate planning mechanisms for stabilization and reconstruction operations, lack of inter-agency coordination in carrying out such tasks, and inappropriate capabilities for many of the non-military tasks required. Effectively distributing resources among the various executive branch actors, maintaining clear lines of authority and jurisdiction, and balancing short- and long-term objectives are major challenges for designing, planning, and conducting post-conflict operations. This report will not be updated.

The State Department's creation in July 2004 of the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS) responded to increasing calls for the improvement of U.S. civilian capabilities to plan and carry out post-conflict operations. These calls were reflected in several bills introduced in the 108th Congress.[1]

S/CRS is currently comprised of 37 officials from the State Department and other U.S. government agencies. The Coordinator, Ambassador Carlos Pascual, has been given

[1] These bills were: The Winning the Peace Act of 2003 (H.R. 2616 introduced by Rep. Sam Farr on Jun. 26, 2003); The Stabilization and Reconstruction Civilian Management Act of 2004 (known as the "Lugar-Biden bill," S. 2127 introduced by Senators Lugar and Biden on Feb. 25, 2004, and its companion measure, H.R. 3996 introduced by Rep. Schiff on Mar. 18, 2004); the International Security Enhancement Act of 2004 (H.R. 4185, introduced by Rep. Dreier on Apr. 21, 2004); and the United States Assistance for Civilians Affected by Conflict Act of 2004 (H.R. 4058 introduced by Rep. Hyde on Mar. 30, 2004).

a broad mandate to develop proposals for improving U.S. government practices and structures for handling future post-conflict operations, including new civilian capabilities.[2]

The term "post-conflict reconstruction and stabilization" is broad but is usually understood to encompass tasks and missions to promote security and encourage stable, democratic governance and economic growth following major hostilities. In the past, many of the "stabilization" activities were loosely labeled "peacekeeping." These include activities ranging from organizing humanitarian relief efforts, monitoring and enforcing cease-fires and other arrangements designed to separate contending parties, providing observers to monitor elections, and establishing or re-creating police or civil defense forces. Reconstruction involves repairing (in some cases creating) the infrastructure necessary to support long-term economic growth and development. This infrastructure can be physical (i.e., roads and schools), or institutional (i.e., legal and tax systems).[3]

Background

Post-conflict operations are complex undertakings, usually involving the participation of several United Nations (U.N.) departments and U.N. system agencies, the international financial institutions and a plethora of non-governmental humanitarian and development organizations, as well as the military and other departments or ministries of the United States and other nations. The United States developed its contributions to the earliest international "peacekeeping" operations of the 1990s on an *ad hoc* basis, with little inter-agency planning and coordination, and often with the U.S. military in the lead. The military was called upon to perform such missions not only for its extensive resources but also because no other U.S. government agency could match the military's superior planning and organizational capabilities. In addition, because of its manpower, the military carried out most of the U.S. humanitarian and nation-building contribution, even though some believed that civilians might be better suited to carry out such tasks, especially those involving cooperation with humanitarian NGOs.

During the 1990s, many analysts began to perceive the need to improve and increase civilian contributions to peacekeeping operations, especially for those activities related to planning and conducting operations and to establishing a secure environment. An important Clinton Administration initiative was the May 1997 Presidential Decision Directive (PDD) 56, entitled *The Clinton Administration's Policy on Managing Complex Contingency Operations*. It sought to address inter-agency planning and coordination problems through new planning and implementing mechanisms. Due to what some analysts describe as internal bureaucratic resistance, PDD 56's provisions were never formally implemented, although some of its practices were informally adopted. The Administration also attempted to remedy the shortage of one critical nation-building tool, international civilian police forces, through PDD 71, *Strengthening Criminal Justice*

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[2] S/CRS' activities are to be prospective, dealing with new situations and crises; they will not include Iraq and Afghanistan.

[3] For additional background on various aspects of post-conflict reconstruction and assistance, see CRS Issue Brief IB94040, *Peacekeeping and Related Stability Operations: Issues of U.S. Military Involvement*; CRS Issue Brief IB90103, *United Nations Peacekeeping: Issues for Congress*; and CRS Report RS21819, *World Bank Post-Conflict Aid: Oversight Issues for Congress*, by Martin Weiss (archived, available from author, 7-....).

Systems in Support of Peace Operations, which, while never implemented by the Clinton Administration, has been partially put into force by the Bush Administration.[4]

Improvements in the provision of social and economic assistance are also viewed as crucial to successful outcomes. Post-conflict populations need "safety net" and poverty alleviation programs, as well as technical assistance and advice on monetary and fiscal policy and debt management in order to create an environment conducive to democratization and economic growth.[5] While the popular image of U.S. post-conflict assistance is the post-World War II Marshall Plan, through which the United States provided the foreign assistance needed for Europe's post-conflict reconstruction, multilateral institutions became increasingly important during the 1990s, when small, regional conflicts proliferated following the collapse of the Soviet Union. International organizations such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund now play crucial roles, working with the U.S. government to provide economic assistance and technical advice on rebuilding post-conflict economies. (Nevertheless, although the United States has provided some funding for economic reconstruction multilaterally for the recent Afghanistan and Iraq operations, most U.S. funding for post-conflict operations is provided bilaterally.) Many analysts now judge that multilateral assistance is more effective for the recipient country than bilateral aid for two reasons.[6] First, disbursing funds multilaterally through U.N. agencies or international organizations gives greater assurance that it will reach recipients than providing aid bilaterally with direct payments to individual governments or non-governmental organizations (NGOs). In addition, analysts find that bilateral aid is more likely to be apportioned according to the donor's foreign policy priorities rather than the economic needs of the recipient country.[7]

For many analysts and policymakers, the ongoing Iraq operation illustrates a U.S. government need for new planning and coordination arrangements that would provide a leadership role for civilians in post-conflict phases of military operations and new civilian capabilities to augment and relieve the military as soon as possible, and greater international coordination. The perception of a continuing need for such operations, and the perceived inefficiencies of the still largely *ad hoc* U.S. responses have reinvigorated calls for planning and coordination reform. The Bush Administration's reluctance to use military forces for nation-building tasks and the extreme stresses placed on the military by combat roles in Iraq and Afghanistan have pushed those calls in a new direction, to the development of adequate civilian capabilities to perform those tasks.

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[4] See CRS Report RL32321, *Policing in Peacekeeping and Related Stability Operations: Problems and Proposed Solutions*.

[5] Collier, Paul and Hoeffler, Anke "Aid, Policy and Growth in Post-Conflict Societies," *World Bank Working Paper*, Oct. 2002.

[6] Milner, Helen, "Why Multilateralism? Foreign Aid and Domestic Principal Agent Problems," available at [http://www.wcfia.harvard.edu/seminars/pegroup/milner.pdf], and Schiavo-Campo, S., "Financing and Aid Arrangements In Post-Conflict Situations," *World Bank Working Paper*, May 2003.

[7] Alesina, Alberto and Dollar, David, "Who Gives Foreign Aid to Whom and Why?" *NBER Working Paper No. w6612*, June 1998.

Calls for Change

The perception that international terrorism can exploit weak, unstable states has convinced many policymakers of the need to strengthen U.S. and international capabilities to foster security, good governance and economic development, especially in post-conflict situations. Most recently, the 9/11 Commission and the Commission on Weak States and U.S. National Security[8] have judged weak states, as well as unsuccessful post-conflict transitions, to pose a threat to U.S. security. Such states often experience economic strife and political instability that make them vulnerable to drug trafficking, human trafficking and other criminal enterprises, and to linkage with non-state terrorist groups (such as the links between the previous Taliban government in Afghanistan and the Al Qaeda terrorist network). Weak states also are unprepared to handle major public health issues, such as HIV/AIDS, that can generate political and economic instability.[9] These commissions argued for assistance to the governments of weak states and of post-conflict transitions regimes to help them control their territories, meet their citizens' basic needs, and create legitimate governments based on effective, transparent institutions.

These and other studies recognize a need to enhance U.S. government structures and capabilities for conducting post-conflict operations.[10] Although differing in several respects, the studies largely agree on five points: (1) the current *ad hoc* system needs to be replaced with a permanent mechanism for developing contingency plans and procedures for joint civil-military operations led by civilians; (2) mechanisms to rapidly deploy U.S. civilian government and government-contracted personnel need to be put in place; (3) preventive action needs to be considered; (4) the U.S. government needs to enhance multinational capabilities to carry out post-conflict security tasks and to better coordinate international aid; and (5) flexible funding arrangements are needed to deal with such situations. Major differences concern the placement of a permanent planning and coordinating structure, the emphasis given to rule of law (i.e., police, judicial and penal personnel) vs. economic/reconstruction aid, and the attention paid to preventive measures.

S/CRS' Current Mission and Activities

Congress endorsed the creation of S/CRS in the Consolidated Appropriations Act for FY2005 (H.R. 4818, P.L. 108-447). Section 408, Division D defined six

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[8] *The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States*, New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2004; and *On the Brink: A Report of the Commission on Weak States and US National Security*, sponsored by the Center for Global Development, May 2004.

[9] Prins, Gwyn, "AIDS and Global Security" *International Affairs*, vol. 80, Issue 5, 2004.

[10] The reports are: (1) *Play to Win: The Final Report of the bi-partisan Commission on Post-Conflict Reconstruction*, Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) and the Association of the U.S. Army (AUSA), 2003 (a book-length version was published in mid-2004, *Winning the Peace: An American Strategy for Post-Conflict Reconstruction*, Robert C. Orr, ed.); (2) *Beyond Goldwater-Nichols: Defense Reform for a New Strategic Era*, CSIS, Mar. 2004; (3) *Transforming for Stabilization and Reconstruction Operations*, National Defense University Center for Technology and National Security Policy, Apr. 2004, (4) *On the Brink: Weak States and US National Security*, Center for Global Development, May 2004; and *Transition to and From Hostilities*, Defense Science Board, Dec. 2004.

responsibilities for the office, the first five of which respond to the first need — for readily-deployable crisis response mechanism — stated above. These are (1) to catalogue and monitor the non-military resources and capabilities of executive branch agencies, state and local governments, and private and non-profit organizations "that are available to address crises in countries or regions that are in, or are in transition from, conflict or civil strife;" (2) to determine the appropriate non-military U.S. response to those crises, "including but not limited to demobilization, policy, human rights, monitoring, and public information efforts; (3) to plan that response; (4) to coordinate the development of interagency contingency plans for that response; and (5) to coordinate the training of civilian personnel to perform stabilization and reconstruction activities in response to crises in such countries or regions." The sixth is to monitor political and economic instability worldwide to anticipate the need for U.S. and international assistance.

The office is developing proposals on how to enable the U.S. government to more effectively respond to crises and carry out all these activities. Two of the proposals concern the development of more integrated and coherent groups of personnel to respond to crises. The first would create a "Response Readiness Corps" of existing and additional U.S. government personnel which would facilitate the transition from military to civilian leadership on the ground and to manage more effectively civilian resources in the post-conflict environment. It would be comprised of three units: (1) a diplomatic response group to establish diplomatic operations in crisis response efforts, to participate in peace negotiations, and to develop relationships with transitional governments and liaise with international organizations, (2) a technical group to design and manage transitional security and governance programs, and (3) an advance civilian team of staff from S/CRS and from diplomatic and technical groups to deploy with military forces at the beginning of an intervention in order to assume stabilization responsibilities, freeing up military personnel for other tasks. S/CRS has also begun to work with the Joint Forces Command on a feasibility study for a "Civilian Response Corps" to assess possible options for the development of a reserve of retired government personnel, and personnel from state and local governments, private for-profit companies and non-profit NGOSs to carry out rule of law and reconstruction activities.

S/CRS has already begun instituting mechanisms to carry out some of its responsibilities. To monitor potential crises, S/CRS has asked the National Intelligence Council (NIC) to provide it twice a year with a list of weak states most susceptible to crisis, and is to choose one or more of them as test cases to prepare contingency plans for possible interventions. It is also working with the USAID Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation, which is developing techniques for assessing conflicts that will provide a high level of detail about a conflict or impending conflict. To better plan and carry out response efforts, S/CRS is developing a system to collect, analyze, and transmit "lessons learned." To address the need for greater interagency, particularly civil-military, planning and coordination, S/CRS is working with the military to develop, among other things, civilian-military training exercises for stabilization and reconstruction operations and a common template for civil-military stabilization and reconstruction planning.

In two related areas necessary to carrying out Congress' mandates, S/CRS has also taken a role. First, it has begun to develop ties with other international participants to coordinate and enhance civilian capabilities for stabilization and reconstruction activities. S/CRS also is seeking to help State Department regional bureaus, which have the lead on preventive activities, to develop concepts and proposals for preventive action.

Major Issues for Congress

Funding for Stabilization and Reconstruction Operations. Would U.S. foreign policy interests benefit from a flexible funding mechanism for crisis responses and what are the oversight consequences? The Bush Administration is likely to again ask Congress to provide a new, flexible funding mechanism to respond rapidly to developing crises. The 108th Congress turned down repeated requests for $100 million for an "Emergency Fund for Complex Foreign Crises"in foreign operations appropriations. In conference on the FY2005 omnibus appropriations bill, H.R. 4818, Congress deleted a Senate foreign operations appropriations provision that would have created a State Department Crisis Response Fund with $20 million of no-year money.[11]

Inter-Agency Planning and Coordinating Structures. Would the creation of new government arrangements or entities enhance the United States' ability to plan and coordinate such activities? Congress would have to approve any major restructuring of U.S. government agencies, as well as any possible authorities necessary to carry out new or reorganized functions. Proposals differ as to which functions belong in the National Security Council and which would be better served by placement in the Department of State. In the 108th Congress, Representative Dreier' bill (H.R. 4185) would have created an Undersecretary of State for Overseas Contingencies and Stabilization position.

Competing Priorities and Resource Allocations. Since post-conflict assistance encompasses both short-term stabilization and long-term reconstruction there is great potential for disputes over resource allocation priorities. Among the questions are:

- Would investment in preventative activities be successful in averting civil conflicts that might later require costly interventions?
- What is the optimal distribution of responsibility between civilian and military actors for establishing immediate security and conditions for growth in a post-conflict environment, and what resources are required?
- How can policymakers be assured that resources are distributed effectively?
- What are the appropriate U.S. civilian capabilities needed to undertake the security and economic challenges and how can funding be best allocated to optimize training and responsiveness?
- To what extent can international capabilities replace or augment U.S. resources?

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[11] The "Lugar-Biden" legislation (S. 2127 and H.R. 3996) proposed a rotating account for stabilization and reconstruction activities, funded at $100 million with an authorization for replenishment as needed. (This mechanism appears similar in concept to the Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance or ERMA emergency relief account.) This proposal also would have provided the president with authority to transfer money among foreign operations accounts without regard to funding limits. The Dreier legislation (H.R. 4185) proposed the creation of such an account with no-year money, but with no automatic replenishment or transfer authority.