



THE STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICE OF RECONSTRUCTION AND STABILIZATION AND ITS INTERACTION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

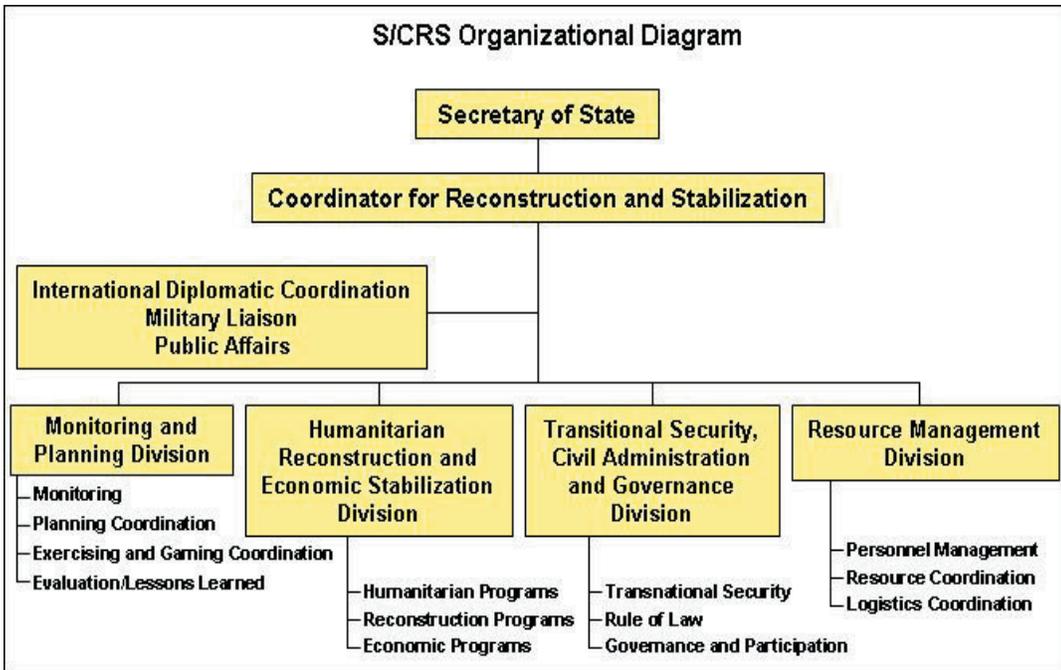
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A U.S. ARMY WAR COLLEGE COURSE PAPER ON U.S. DEFENSE POLICY STRATEGY AND ISSUES
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ELECTIVE INSTRUCTORS

“[W]e are working to strengthen international capacities to address conditions in failed, failing and post-conflict states. . . . President Bush already has charged us at the State Department with coordinating our nation’s post-conflict and stabilization efforts.”

— Secretary of State Rice, February 17, 2005

Over the past 15 years, the United States has been involved in seven major post-conflict reconstruction and stabilization operations.¹ The ad hoc responses that characterized U.S. stabilization efforts in these missions have



(Source: S/CRS Briefing Chart)

often proven inadequate. On each mission, our government has struggled to provide a responsive and enduring solution. The consequences have been the unnecessary loss of life, damage to infrastructure, and higher eventual costs for reconstruction and stabilization. Our unpreparedness to respond to the instability in post-war Iraq has met with sharp criticism. In response to these failings, the Bush administration established the U.S. Department of State (DOS) Office of the Coordinator for Recon-

struction and Stabilization (S/CRS). This paper will analyze the functions of S/CRS, examine the organization’s relationship with the military, and offer Department of Defense (DOD) policy recommendations to improve the interagency cooperation with this new organization.

¹ Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, Kosovo, Liberia, Afghanistan, and Iraq. (RAND Center on International Cooperation).

ABOUT S/CRS

In July 2004, President Bush created S/CRS and appointed Ambassador Carlos Pascual as its Coordinator. The agency was given a broad mandate to develop policy options to respond to failing and post-conflict states. The organization is staffed with representatives from the Department of State, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), DOD, Central Intelligence Agency, Army Corps of Engineers, Joint Forces Command, and Department of Treasury. The S/CRS mission is to “lead, coordinate, and institutionalize U.S. Government civilian capacity to prevent or prepare for post-conflict situations, and to help stabilize and reconstruct societies in transition from conflict or civil strife so they can reach a sustainable path toward peace, democracy and a market economy.”²

Based on trends over the past decade, the U.S., along with international partners, must have the capacity to manage two to three concurrent stabilization and reconstruction missions at any given time.³ To manage these efforts S/CRS will synchronize U.S. Government and international organization actions to anticipate and avert state failure, and to assist post-conflict states in their efforts toward peace and development. To that end, S/CRS has five core functions: Monitoring, Mobilizing, Building Surge Capacity, Learning, and Coordinating with International Partners. Below is a brief description of each of the core functions:⁴

Monitoring, Early Warning and Planning. S/CRS plans to identify vulnerable states through a deliberate planning system. The process will produce detailed contingency plans to avert and, if necessary, respond to crises. Every six months the department will select at risk countries for intensive planning. The process seeks to incorporate all key interagency partners from both inside and outside the government.

Mobilize and Deploy. The organization proposes standing up interagency Country Reconstruction and Stabilization Groups (CRSGs) in Washington DC. The groups would have regional bureaus to plan and coordinate individual operations. The CRSGs would overlay this regional expertise with specialized stabilization and reconstruction skill sets: governance, economic development, humanitarian assistance, and infrastructure development. The groups would then coordinate the deployment of personnel and resources in support of reconstruction missions.

Build Surge Capacity. The Office of the Coordinator will develop and train an Active Response Corps, a Standing Corps, and a Technical Corps for immediate deployment. Like the U.S. military’s reserve system, these response corps would maintain a cadre of personnel available for recall in response to emerging crises. Interagency teams would deploy as first responders to augment embassy staffs and if necessary, deploy with the military or multilateral peacekeepers to lead the U.S. diplomatic and reconstruction efforts.

Learning from Experience. S/CRS will fully participate in military and interagency exercises. Through active involvement and study the organization would identify gaps and deficiencies in U.S. capabilities to carry out stabilization and reconstruction operations and develop strategies to overcome these shortcomings.

Coordinate with the International Community. The agency plans to collaborate with international partners to develop a shared understanding of responsibilities and burden sharing. It hopes to increase the efficiency of reconstruction and stabilization operations and to improve upon existing cooperation among key international partners (UN, EU, IMF, G-8).

One year after its creation the new office is still without dedicated funding. The President’s recent \$82 billion supplemental request for operation in Afghanistan and Iraq included \$17 million in start-up funds for S/CRS. This has allowed Ambassador Pascual to hire only a minimum staff of 37 people (out of a desired 80), borrowed from elsewhere in State and other government agencies. The current funding level allows the organization to train and plan, but not to deploy operational elements in a crisis. The President’s 2006 budget request proposes a \$100 million Conflict Response Fund.

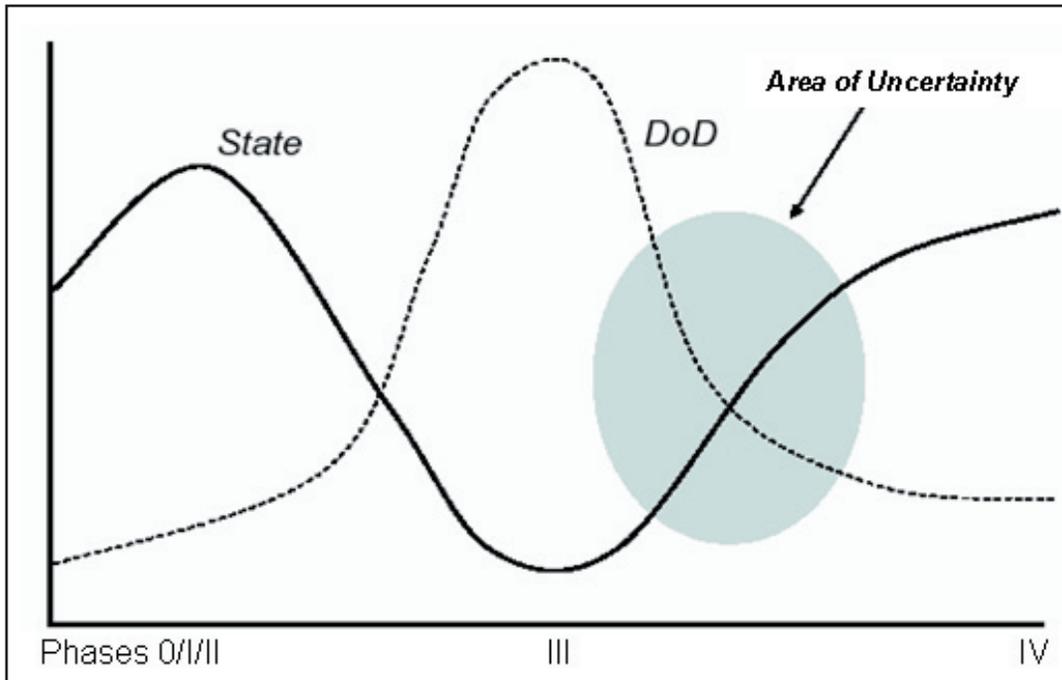
² U.S. Department of State, S/CRS Fact Sheet, www.state.gov/s/crs/rls/43327.htm

³ Ibid.

⁴ Summarized from S/CRS Fact Sheet.

INTERACTION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

S/CRS seeks to forge a strong relationship with the DOD. The organization's desired goal is to assemble the requisite civilian experts and permit them a seat at the table alongside the military during the planning phase for U.S. interventions in troubled states. The agency plans to deploy Humanitarian, Stabilization, and Reconstruction Teams (HSRT) to Regional Combatant Commands (RCC) to participate in post-conflict planning where U.S. military forces will be heavily engaged. S/CRS desires to rehearse its response capabilities through active participation in military training exercises.



(Source: Defense Science Board)

Under the proposed model, an HSRT would deploy to the RCC headquarters to facilitate the integration of civilian planning into the military's campaign. The CRSGs in Washington would manage policy decisions and guide civilian led planning efforts with the military's participation. During the intervention phase of a conflict, S/CRS would deploy Advance Civilian Teams (ACTs) with the U.S. military to initiate humanitarian, stabilization, and reconstruction tasks on the ground. ACTs at the

Unit of Action (brigade) or Unit of Employment (division) level would provide the foundation for Provisional Reconstruction Teams or similar interagency field organizations. The overarching objective is the joining of civilian and military capabilities from the initial planning stage, through combat operations, and onward into the stability and reconstruction phases.

Critical gaps in civilian planning and operational capacity jeopardize the success of reconstruction operations. In past conflicts there has been a distinct lack of joint civilian-military planning during the pre-hostilities phase and a correspondingly poor transfer from military to civilian responsibilities during Phase IV. Consequently, the U.S. military has been saddled with a disproportionate share of the reconstruction burden. With the creation of S/CRS the U.S. Government seeks to close these key gaps by strengthening civilian planning capabilities. In the event of substantial military involvement the organization seeks to transition as early as possible from military to civilian leadership on the ground. S/CRS is leading U.S. Government efforts to develop a common template for joint stabilization and reconstruction planning. It seeks to integrate civilian and military planners into each other's processes, promote common operational doctrine, and jointly execute post-conflict stability operations. Through the building of robust civilian capacity it is hoped that S/CRS will provide the military with more viable exit strategies.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

In the upcoming Quadrennial Defense Review the Pentagon has provided four focus areas to frame the armed services' future force structure: defense of the homeland, combating internal terrorist threats in failed and collapsed states, dissuading future near-peer countries from aggression, and halting WMD proliferation. This shift from a "defeating adversaries" approach to a strategy of conflict prevention has profound implications for DOD's

relationship with the State Department and the S/CRS office. The two departments can no longer operate independently – they are inextricably linked by this strategy of conflict prevention. I offer the following recommendations to strengthen the interagency relationship and improve future stabilization and reconstruction efforts.

DOD and DOS must align their regions to synchronize planning and execution efforts. State’s six bureaus and Defense’s five RCCs should be aligned in parallel. Neither arrangement is judged to be superior, but the current disparity is not conducive to effective interagency cooperation. Aligning the regions would be a logical first step toward more effective collaboration.

Further, the two departments should be fully joined during the deliberate planning process. S/CRS should not perform its monitoring and planning tasks independent of the military. Likewise, DOD should not produce its library of warplans without DOS and S/CRS input. The entire process should be aligned under the existing Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan (JSCP). The JSCP’s scope should expand to include interagency tasks. It should direct the development of contingency plans for both military and civilian agencies, and apportion major combat forces as well as S/CRS Response Corps.

The Defense Department should make a concerted effort to appropriately man the S/CRS military liaison office. We should send our best and brightest – it is in the department’s best interest to ensure this new organization succeeds. Without it the military will continue to shoulder the burden during Phase IV operations. Similarly, the RCCs must fully integrate the HSRTs into their headquarters. The teams should be full partners in the RCC’s deliberate and contingency planning process.

The two departments need to better share education and training opportunities. They should capitalize on each other’s formal education systems and seek to fully harmonize operational language, practice and doctrine. Once it is fully manned, S/CRS should take advantage of every training opportunity and deploy regional teams to participate in the planning and execution of scheduled military training events. The RCCs should incorporate Phase IV operations into their exercise training objectives.

Lastly, the two departments must share information. Both have learned tremendous lessons during recent stabilization and reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq. We should not relearn those lessons. The interagency effort should develop dynamic databases of studies, reports, and real-time feedback to support future planning efforts. Through a close examination of lessons learned, the two departments should identify gaps and deficiencies in the U.S. Government’s ability to carry out future missions and develop joint strategies to overcome the challenges.

Ultimately, the success or failure of the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization will depend on funding. Will the organization merely be an interagency coordinator, or will it be a robust agency, capable of meeting its stated core functions? If the miniscule apportionment of \$17 million of the \$82 billion supplemental is any indication, S/CRS will struggle to achieve its desired end state. And while it may never organize and train a standing reconstruction corps, S/CRS may still serve a valuable role as the lead organization for interagency planning.

Failing or failed states and those emerging from conflict pose one of today’s greatest security challenges. The U.S. National Security Strategy promotes the prevention and management of internal conflict a cornerstone of our foreign policy. All elements of national power – from the strong Department of Defense to the newly created Reconstruction and Stabilization Office – must work together to achieve our security objectives.

This paper is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Strategic Studies Degree. The U.S. Army War College is accredited by the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, 3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104, (215) 662-5606. The Commission on Higher Education is an institutional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.

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