

Bridging the Interagency Gap for Stability Operations

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Irregular warfare and stability operations require whole-of-government approaches and specific military and civilian expertise, yet civilian supply has not met the demand. Furthermore, collaboration channels across the interagency community remain immature. The Department of Defense (DoD) has sought ways to bridge the gap and bolster civilian capacity.

Interagency Inputs to Military Planning

DoD Directive 3000.05 addresses military support to Reconstruction and Stabilization Operations and was developed to support the

implementation of National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD) 44 and to elevate the status of stability operations to that of major combat operations. A May 2009 DoD Report to Congress on Integration of Interagency Capabilities into Department of Defense Planning for Stability Operations provides a good overview of progress and work that remains.

An IDA team has been engaged in the analysis and review of many of the efforts named in the DoD report and this article summarizes the team's work in two areas: 1) interagency inputs to military planning, and 2) whole-of-government stability operations planning and activities.

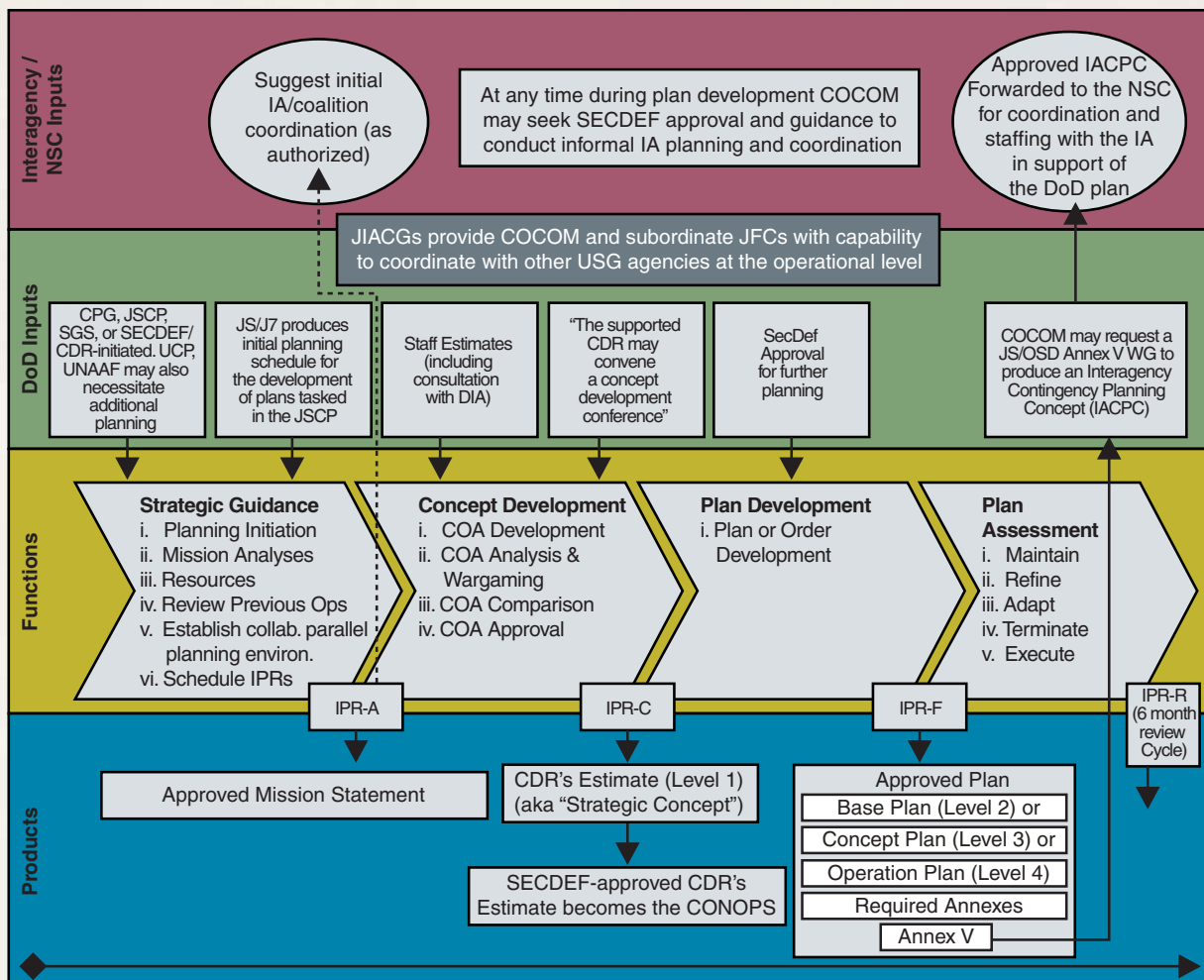
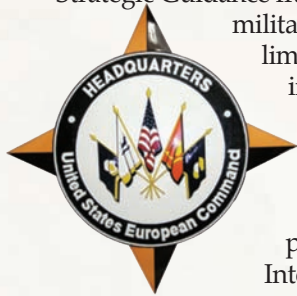


Figure 1. DoD's Process for Developing Interagency Contingency Plans.

Interagency Inputs to Military Planning

The European Command is taking an “experimental” approach to incorporating interagency perspectives in military planning, using the development of a contingency plan as the venue. In a departure from normal practice, OSD officially authorized State Department and USAID representatives to participate in the development of Strategic Guidance framing the plan. Traditionally, military planning has had only limited opportunities for formal interagency contributions (see Figure 1). The typical point of interagency review has been at the coordination stage after a plan is already developed, perhaps only to vet its Interagency Annex. Though there are good reasons for a close-held military plans development process, the absence of earlier interagency input or review sometimes leads to plans that are unsupportable, leaving other agencies to scramble at the last moment to accomplish things for which they had little warning or preparation time.



The criteria for success of this experiment as laid out by the Secretary of Defense memorandum to the Secretary of State and the National Security Advisor of January 2008, were:

- a. That the planning process addresses both prevention and response, with increased emphasis on stability and prevention in the designated area of operation.
- b. That the plan incorporates a greater degree of interagency collaboration and that a greater degree of interagency input is reflected in the strategic guidance, concept development, plan development, and final product.

We found that EUCOM’s experimental planning process met these criteria, reflecting a greater degree of interagency participation in the development of strategic guidance and the concept of operations. Participants acknowledged the added value of interagency contributions.

A prominent deficiency identified by EUCOM’s experiment was the lack of formal interagency collaboration and coordination mechanisms, as well as the need to codify such processes in DoD doctrine, training, and policy guidance.

Another insight was the need for expanded use of knowledge management tools, such as

the Theater Security Cooperation Management Information System, to provide a whole-of-government Common Operating Picture for each of the combatant command’s areas of responsibility. The analysis also highlighted the importance of collaborating with the State Department and USAID to develop common metrics that provide the proper context for Plan Assessments.

Additionally, the research found that the compressed planning timelines introduced by DoD’s Advanced Planning and Execution System complicate the accommodation of inputs from USG and international partners. One of the biggest barriers to this is the lack of civilian capacity to participate in and contribute to such planning. There are initiatives underway, supported by the State Department’s Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS), to train a Civilian Response Corps, but the numbers are small compared to the demand.

Finally, the research revealed deficiencies in USG steady state planning, including the lack of a home for national-level whole-of-government prevention planning. DoD may not be the preferred coordinator or leader for developing some whole-of-government USG contingency prevention plans, but other agencies lack the appropriate mandate, authority, and resources to conduct national-level planning. Though many participants identified the National Security Council (NSC) as the appropriate nexus, the NSC is not staffed to lead such a process. Thus, whole-of-government steady state planning remains an interagency gap.

Whole-of-Government Stability Operations Planning and Activities

During U.S. Joint Forces Command (JFCOM) Unified Action experimentation series, IDA analysts observed and evaluated a series of experiments co-sponsored by JFCOM and S/CRS in which two new whole-of-government concepts were vetted, an Interagency Management System (IMS) and draft planning framework for Reconstruction and Stabilization and Conflict Transformation.

Also, the IDA team has supported planning and execution concept development for the domestic departments that are members of the new Civilian Response Corps (CRC). The team began working on a pilot program with the Department of Commerce, designed to build departmental capacity to contribute to overseas contingencies.

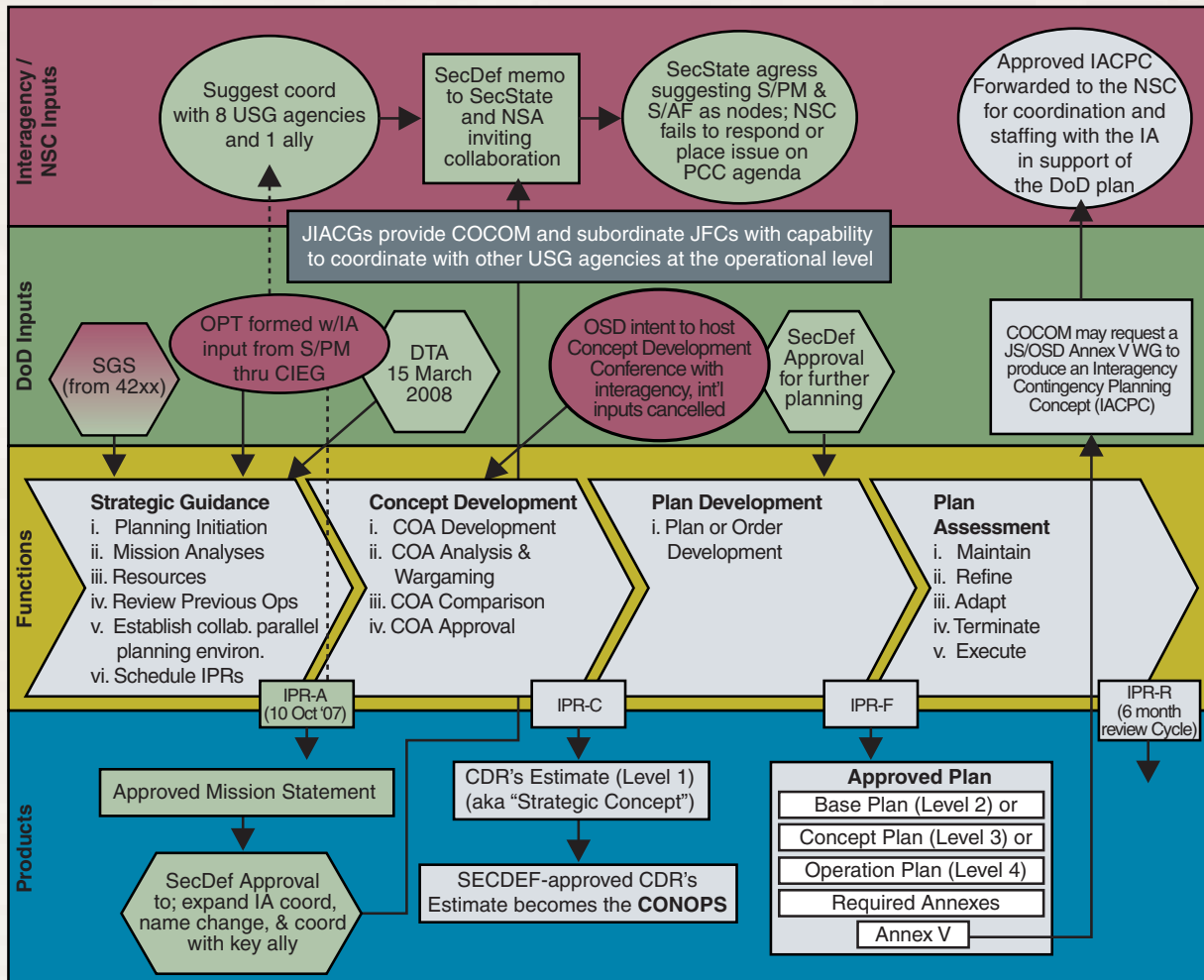


Figure 2. Expanding the Interagency Planning Role.

This work resulted in departmental standard operating procedures for stability operations and spurred the expansion of the pilot to two additional domestic departments (Health and Human Services and Agriculture, both members of the CRC). Non-CRC members, the Departments of Energy and Transportation have expressed interest in participating in the pilot as well.

Finally, in the context of the Unified Action program, IDA supported an Interagency Mission Analysis (IMA) for U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM). This work, co-sponsored by JFCOM and OSD Policy, synthesized the results of a series

of seven interagency workshops to inform the development of structures, processes, and tools for AFRICOM. Though conducting stability operations is not AFRICOM's primary mission, the Command is focused on fostering stability and security on the continent, to include building indigenous partner capacity for crisis management in concert with USG strategic goals. The IDA report includes recommendations for ways to foster such capacity building (see Figure 2) and will help to bridge the interagency gap to establish more effective USG approaches to crisis management and conflict prevention in Africa.