WHITE PAPER

TRANSFORMING AMERICA'S COLLABORATIVE CRISIS RESPONSE CAPABILITY:
The Executive Education Dimension

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About the Author

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Ambassador Litt served for 34 years as a career U.S. diplomat, specializing in the Middle East and Southwest Asia. In 2005-2006 he was the third-ranking officer at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad, Iraq, with the title of Political-Military Counselor, providing policy advice to the U.S. Ambassador, and serving as liaison between the Embassy and the Multi-National Forces – Iraq. His final assignment as a Foreign Service Officer, prior to retirement in 2008, was as the Associate Director for International Liaison at the George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany. Ambassador Litt entered the Foreign Service in 1974. He served as the U.S. Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates (1995-1998) and as Consul General in Dubai ten years prior. Ambassador Litt was Political Advisor to U.S. Central Command and U.S. Special Operations Command at MacDill Air Force Base, Florida (1998-2004). While at the Department of State, Ambassador Litt served as the Director of the Office of Northern Gulf Affairs (Iran and Iraq), and also as Desk Officer for Saudi Arabia. In addition to a tour as economic/commercial officer in Kabul, Afghanistan, in the late 1970s, he served twice as political officer in Damascus, Syria. Just prior to his recent service in Baghdad, he was the State Department's Diplomat-in-Residence at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina.

Other assignments included Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in Niamey, Niger, and as a consular officer in Palermo, Italy. Among several other languages, he speaks Italian, French, Arabic, and Afghan-Persian (Dari).

Ambassador Litt received the Secretary of Defense Meritorious Civilian Service Award in 2004 and USSOCOM's Civilian Award for Outstanding Service in 2002. He also received the State Department's Superior Honor Award in 2002 and 2004 for his work with the U.S. military and in 2000 for his proposals to improve strategic planning at the Department of State. In addition, he earned a Superior Honor Award for his service as Ambassador to the UAE, and the Meritorious Honor Award as DCM in Niger.

Ambassador Litt was born on Dec. 27, 1949, in Pittsburgh, PA, and grew up in Miami, FL. He received a bachelor's degree with majors in history and French from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1971, and a master's degree in International Relations from the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) in Washington, D.C. in 1973. At SAIS, he specialized in European affairs and international economics. He attended Harvard University's Program for Senior Executives in National and International Security at the John F. Kennedy School of Government in 2000.

He is married to the former Beatrice Ilardi, and has two children, Barbara and Giorgio.

Summary

The United States should rapidly develop and expand executive education and training for collaborative, non-kinetic crisis response capability. The three "cultures" that traditionally are present on the scene in post-conflict and post-disaster environments – military, civilian government agency, and private sector – do not collaborate very effectively. Training for most civilian agencies – with the possible exceptions of the State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) – is less than satisfactory or non-existent. State, USAID, the military, and the private sector receive education and training in their own areas of expertise, but not necessarily in collaboration with each other. Few, if any, opportunities exist currently to bring all three cultures together in impartial, non-threatening, executive education environments in which they can break down cultural barriers, and arrive at workable solutions. Developing and resourcing executive education for crisis response will be all the more urgent if the U.S. government successfully restructures its institutions and hires thousands more practitioners in the next year or two.

Contents

1. Introduction

Given today's globalized economy, stabilizing and revitalizing societies emerging from conflicts and disasters should be much more effective than it is. On one hand, the information technologies and logistical capabilities associated with the planet's most powerful governments, and the rehabilitative potential of today's global corporations should be able to put even the most devastated nations back on the road to healing much more quickly than is the case today. On the other hand, the complexities of insurgency and asymmetrical threats complicate international and interagency planning; organizations on the ground must be more agile and adaptable, and less risk-averse.[1] Identifying solutions, and who is responsible for implementing them, is not always obvious; conflict can decrease in intensity and scope, yet not come to a definitive end, simmer for years and flare up at any moment. To maximize global capability in a post-conflict scenario multiple agencies and organizations must act in concert as the transition occurs from major military involvement towards stabilization, rehabilitation and reconstruction, the non-kinetic aspects of crisis response.[2] These are our challenges, and we are not yet measuring up to them.

This paper is not designed to propose broader institutional reform of our crisis response capability. Rather it is to urge immediate attention to educating teams of crisis responders, public and private sector, whether or not institutional reform occurs. The requirement will be all the more pressing whenever reform does take place.

2. The Military-Civilian Imbalance in Crisis Response

Many Americans understand the urgency of transforming our international civilian-military crisis response capabilities. A severe imbalance has developed over the past decade in which, for a variety of reasons, civilian organizations have been unable to perform the missions for which they should be in the lead during stabilization and reconstruction, and the military has stepped in to do the job. Certainly the U.S. military retains specific critical roles in these crisis environments, especially to stabilize insecure locations (principally through traditional military operations), to train host-nation security forces, and to provide much of the logistical requirements for relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction. Over the last several years, however, our military forces, for lack of other actors on the scene, have assumed responsibility for other essential operations that they were not trained or designed to perform. At the same time, the civilian agencies of government that have the requisite skills and established networks lack the authorities and resources – human and financial – to accomplish these missions. An additional, critical defect of this system is an inability to coordinate effectively with both not-for-profit non-governmental organizations and for-profit corporations (herein referred to collectively as "the private sector"). The private sector generally bears the lion's share of the burden of providing essential goods and services in crisis environments[3], but collaboration between public and private sectors currently is less than optimal.[4]

Several merit-worthy efforts are already underway to redress this situation at the strategic level. A few serious proposals to restructure our national security apparatus and enhance our crisis response cadres are making their way to Congress and the contenders for the White House.[5] These contain key elements that would shift the center of gravity of our efforts in favor of appropriate civilian agencies. Some even emphasize actions to improve public-private sector

collaboration; however, the focus seems to be on hiring new personnel, reorganizing the bureaucracy, and developing new processes for devising strategies and resourcing policies.

In any event, the effectiveness of these projects will depend in large part on our ability to educate and train American personnel quickly to apply their skills in international crisis environments, and more importantly, in effective collaboration with each other on the ground. In the last few decades in which Congress and the White House shrank some civilian agencies, most of our resident expertise has been lost, especially in USAID, and must be regained.[6] Some education and training programs have been underway for a handful of years; more are planned. If we will acquire the thousands of additional personnel necessary to perform effectively, according to most of the reform plans, we will need much more training and education. Tellingly, we do not see enough success thus far in breaking down the barriers among different bureaucratic cultures – especially military and civilian, public and private. Many of these barriers have arisen from the prejudices, misperceptions, and miscommunications that have built up over the years, and we must strive to eliminate them.

In addition to improving "cross-cultural" communications, education and training programs must create opportunities for both public and private sector organizations to: (1) discuss frankly the impediments to on-the-ground collaboration, in an impartial, non-threatening environment; (2) identify operational-level solutions to strategic problems; and (3) train, plan and exercise together *before crises arise*.

3. Why is the Imbalance a Problem?

The U.S. depends excessively on the Department of Defense and our military forces to plan, resource, staff, and execute post-conflict and post-disaster stabilization and reconstruction.[7] Lead agencies of government for crisis management, especially the State Department[8] and USAID[9] have suffered from downsizing and consolidation over the past twenty-five years. Other agencies, e.g., Treasury, Commerce, Agriculture, Energy, Justice and Homeland Security, whose skill sets should contribute enormously to rehabilitation and revitalization of crisis-stricken societies have not benefited from funding or mandates to step up to the challenges of 21st century crises.

Over-reliance on the uniformed services for civilian tasks has many deleterious effects: it undermines military readiness, risks producing inefficient and counterproductive "development" projects whose outcomes actually subvert long-term development strategies, jeopardizes the impartiality and security of NGOs and corporations trying to work in the same space, and tends to validate attempts to paint America as a militaristic hegemon.[10]

On the ground, at the tactical level, the military's attempts to collaborate with non-military actors often founder because the military will overwhelm the civilian presence. The military will show up at a planning meeting in full force, both vertically (the principal military representative will have a complete staff in attendance three levels deep) and horizontally (different military units having different competencies will be present, even including individual liaison officers representing military agencies at remote locations). Many of these personnel will have some experience in crisis management, some will have had a modicum of training, and all can bring

more resources to the table than their civilian agency counterparts could ever dream of. The military personnel are well staffed to identify tasks, issue instructions, and execute them on time.

As for the civilian actors on the ground, seats at the table reserved for them are often empty, sometimes because the few civilian representatives available are torn among several such meetings. Humanitarian-based NGOs rarely participate in such gatherings, in part to preserve their "neutrality" and independence; however, they take strong exception to military personnel performing development tasks, especially out of uniform.[11] As a result, civilian representatives, both governmental and private sector, feel resentful and besieged when the military are able to perform tasks that civilians should do[12]

The meager resourcing of civilian capacity has other harmful consequences as well. In the 1970s and 1980s, civilian agencies, particularly USAID, had developed cadres of Foreign Service personnel highly experienced and trained in key aspects of international economic development, notably health, agriculture and education. This capacity has all but dried up; few of these precious human resource assets are left.[13] All too often USAID resorts to hiring contractors to execute projects.[14] [15] Adding to the vicious circle, the gross understaffing of these agencies reduces training and readiness so that staffs are thin, rotated frequently, over utilized, and in some cases "burned out".[16] At best, government personnel collaborating with private sector counterparts pay insufficient attention to policy content and relevance, and more of their time on contracting, security, supplies, and other logistical issues. They must have the opportunity to reach a better balance between substance and process.

Among the most wasteful of these sins of omission is the under-utilization of private sector capacity to fulfill national interests in crisis scenarios. As noted above, administrative issues tend to dominate and crowd out proper attention to substantive issues, especially the delivery of essential goods and services. Unfortunately, our crisis response procedures have acquired quite a negative reputation, and many private sector players just refuse to participate – including those who have exactly the right skill sets or products to deliver. Most of the time, the "usual suspects" in the corporate world will show up: those large corporations that have years of experience working with the U.S. government and the military in one form or another.[17]

Invariably, organizations from all three of these cultures – military, civilian government, and private sector – arrive on the scene, or in a neighboring country, when conflicts and disasters peak. They arrive ready to deliver goods and services, but stovepiped – each with its own decision cycles, resource base, analytical skills, database management, goals and priorities, logistical requirements and capabilities, and most importantly, a yearning to receive "credit" for what must get done in order to satisfy its own stakeholders.[18] Rarely do they collaborate on the basis of a consensus on common goals, information, and priorities. Cooperation and sharing lose their value. The result is equally predictable: unnecessary gaps and redundancies, with the victim populations paying the price of the lack of cooperation.

4. How to Transform our Capabilities

The good news is that the problems above are well known. Many efforts in and out of government are working on institutional transformation, including the "Project on National

Security Reform," "Beyond Goldwater-Nichols", NSDD-44, DoD Directive 3000.05, and the State Department Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS).[19]

Similarly, some educational and training opportunities have sprung up, usually with connections to the Defense or State Departments, for example at the National Defense University, the Army War College, the Naval Postgraduate School, Joint Forces Command, the Foreign Service Institute, and at a limited number of U.S. universities.

As usual, the military is out front and leading the way in training and education, but their programs fall short of adequate preparation for effective civil-military collaboration. It is true that military officers and NCOs by the score receive relevant training in political-military affairs, economics, civil affairs, and stabilization operations/economic reconstruction issues. They attend courses at military institutions and civilian universities, but usually in the absence of a full spectrum of their civilian counterparts. Moreover, only recently have civilian institutions like the State Department and USAID placed emphasis on training and education; but welcome though it is, even that is hampered by the lack of sufficient personnel to attend training (the "training float").[20] [21] The staffing and resource situation is even worse for other civilian agencies relevant to stabilization and reconstruction operations, such as the Departments of Treasury, Justice, Commerce, Agriculture, Energy, and Homeland Security.

Thus, most of the training and education opportunities are military-based and likely to be heavily laden with military perspectives, language, and, of course, participation. Private sector training in collaborative crisis management is limited and usually associated with courses run by and for the military. Many companies and NGOs decline to be associated with the military environment of these training centers. They assume that the courses will be intimidating and co-opting, as the military predominance will try to constrain their independence and stifle their perceptions of how reconstruction should proceed. Participants that do show up tend to be those representatives of corporations most comfortable with military, often their business development personnel, but not necessarily the units that produce the goods or services that victim populations require.

Therefore, if/when the abovementioned reform efforts produce vastly larger numbers of civilian government actors for crisis response; those new cadres of responders will require significant amounts of training and education. This executive education, in the form of workshops and seminars, must include participants from the core organizational cultures involved in crisis preparedness, management and resolution: civilian agencies, the private sector, and the military. The civilian participants, especially those from NGOs and reluctant corporations, must perceive the training environment as impartial, non-threatening, and conducive to open debate and discussion. Most of the participants should be non-military. Additional stakeholders, such as congressional staffers, Office of Management and Budget employees, and representatives of media organizations (corporate executives as well as senior journalists) should also participate periodically in relevant programs.

If thousands need immediate education and training over the next few years, the U.S. will require a diverse choice of educational institutions that can effectively shift the psychological center of gravity away from military predominance toward that of civilian actors – especially private

sector – with emphases on all levels of interaction, strategic, operational, and tactical. The venue should be a setting that is open, unbiased, and stimulating.

Executive education curricula should center on targeted issues according to specific geographic/cultural environments – the responses to African crises will be different from those in East Asia, with important differences even within those regions. Educational institutions should select faculty that can address the issues that practitioners will face, focusing on latest research, best practices, and viable theoretical constructs. One must keep in mind that often the classroom participants will be better informed than the lecturers. At a minimum, they will challenge the lecturers with hard questions and relevant personal anecdotes that contradict the theory.

Participating organizations from the private sector, civilian government and military must help the educational process by building, maintaining, and most of all, utilizing archives of lessons-learned from past crises. Educational institutions should be able to access these archives.

After breaking down cultural barriers and miscommunications, much of the content in the classroom will involve finding solutions to impediments among the three cultures to smooth collaboration. This will include overcoming legal or regulatory constraints; security, communications, transportation, and supply requirements; the sharing of information and databases; creative management of scarce resources to achieve common goals; and most importantly, establishing trust. Each of the organizations will no doubt have its own "bill of particulars" that will improve cooperation and achieve results. Of course a large part of the solution is also cooperation to agree on overall goals and priorities.

5. What is the Way Ahead?

➢ Increase agency human resources

The next administration and the next Congress must act quickly on the various proposals to reorganize and resource our international and domestic crisis response capabilities, especially the State Department's Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS). Identification and hiring of its civilian reserve corps should proceed without delay.
  Restructuring should also encompass congressional committees and OMB.[22] The administration, with authorization and sufficient appropriation from Congress, should immediately increase the human resource capacity of relevant civilian agencies and re-tool in-house long-term education and training to provide appropriate skills.

➢ Identify and fund existing education and training opportunities

At the same time, agencies must receive appropriations that permit outsourced education and training in crisis management. Relevant offices within newly restructured government agencies should seek out available courses that invite government officials, military personnel and civilian private sector counterparts. When necessary, the government should also task educational institutions to develop curricula and areas of expertise in emerging disciplines that are not readily available. To help the government identify relevant institutions and their capabilities, the DOD has organized a Consortium for Complex Operations[23] and has hired USIP to develop a database

of those organizations from which to draw for rapid training and education of newly reorganized and recruited crisis response personnel.

> ➢ Diversify and fund executive education across the U.S.

Some of this training will take place within agencies and military institutions. Other executive education programs – particularly those that focus on private sector collaboration – should occur in diverse locations around the U.S. Not only does this diversity help appeal to a broader range of private sector participants, but it helps take government and military officials away from the pull of their daily routines. Getting away from Washington or the military base helps cleanse the mind and "level the playing field." Diversity also helps to broaden the spectrum of lecturers and experts to prevent the "speaker fatigue" that materializes whenever the same experts are called on time and again to speak at conferences. While government agencies, through appropriations from Congress, should bear the lion's share of the funding requirements – per the paragraph above, the private sector, especially foundations and corporations, should also contribute to the creation and sustainment of such programs at educational institutions and non-profit organizations. The corporate world will no doubt benefit from these programs as much as the public sector.

6. Conclusion

Without collaborative education and training of military, governmental, and private sector actors, improvements in our crisis response infrastructure and staffing will continue to suffer from unnecessary gaps, redundancies, and inefficiencies. Congress, the Executive Branch, and the private sector must contribute to funding executive education programs from which all will benefit. These programs should target specific obstacles to cooperation with an eye toward improving operations on the ground. The programs should also be geographically diverse in order to enrich the content of America's contribution to stabilization and reconstruction.

The Center for Stabilization and Economic Reconstruction, a part of the non-profit Institute for Defense and Business, based in Chapel Hill, NC, and affiliated with the University of North Carolina, is proud to be a pioneer in the field of public-private sector executive education. We intend to continue to contribute to the ability of our nation to excel in assisting crisis-affected nations in the most effective way possible.

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USAID U.S. Direct hires	1992	2006	Percentage Change
Total number	3,163	2,349	(26)
Number Assigned overseas	1,082	806	(26)
Number of countries receiving USAID assistance with U.S. direct-hire presence	66	86	237
Number of countries receiving USAID assistance with no U.S. direct-hire presence	16	88	450

Primary Source: endnote 9
Additional Source: <u>USAID Policy and Budget 2007</u>. Table 9.
<http://www.usaid.gov/policy/budget/cgj2007/summtabs.st_9.pdf>

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