National Security Professionals Conference

Big Picture

Fundamentals of Interagency Decision-making and Planning for International Crisis Response

By
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"Do it wisely and do it well"

NSC Advisor Brent Scowcroft

Importance of Interagency Processes

- **Reduces the complexity of a crisis situation**
- **Conceives policy aims in the near and long term**
- **Builds consensus across agencies and among partners**
- **Develops realistic options for policy-makers**
- **Crafts a Pol-Mil Plan that gives direction to agencies**
  - **Purpose & Strategy**
  - **Mission Elements & Objectives**
  - **Integrating Organizational Constructs & Mechanisms**
  - **Practices for Managing Implementation**
- **Mobilizes several coalitions with capabilities and resources**
- **Fixes accountability with political appointees**

Recurring Cases for Interagency Action

1. **Domestic Disasters & Emergencies:**
   Hurricanes, ice storms, river flooding, wild-fires, CBRN attacks, etc.

2. **Foreign Regional Crises:**
   Rwanda, Haiti, Kosovo, North Korea, Iraq, Afghanistan, Lebanon, Congo, Somalia, Burma, etc.

3. **Transnational "Plagues":**
   Swine flu, Narcotics trafficking, Nuclear materials transfer, Computer virus, Financial meltdown, Food contamination, Piracy, Islamist terrorism, etc.

4. **Cooperation and Capacity-building Initiatives:**
   Nonproliferation, Legal financial transactions, Water management, Emissions control, Immigration control, Law enforcement, etc.

… each case has different players and rules

The Policy-making Triad: An Iterative Process of "Strategizing"

Policy Options
& Strategies of Intervention

Recurring Issues:
- Assessments Credible?
- Goal Realistic?
- Issues Important?
- Options Desirable?
- Commitments Reliable?
- Risks Manageable?
- Success Attainable?

Intelligence Assessments
& Analysis of the Situation

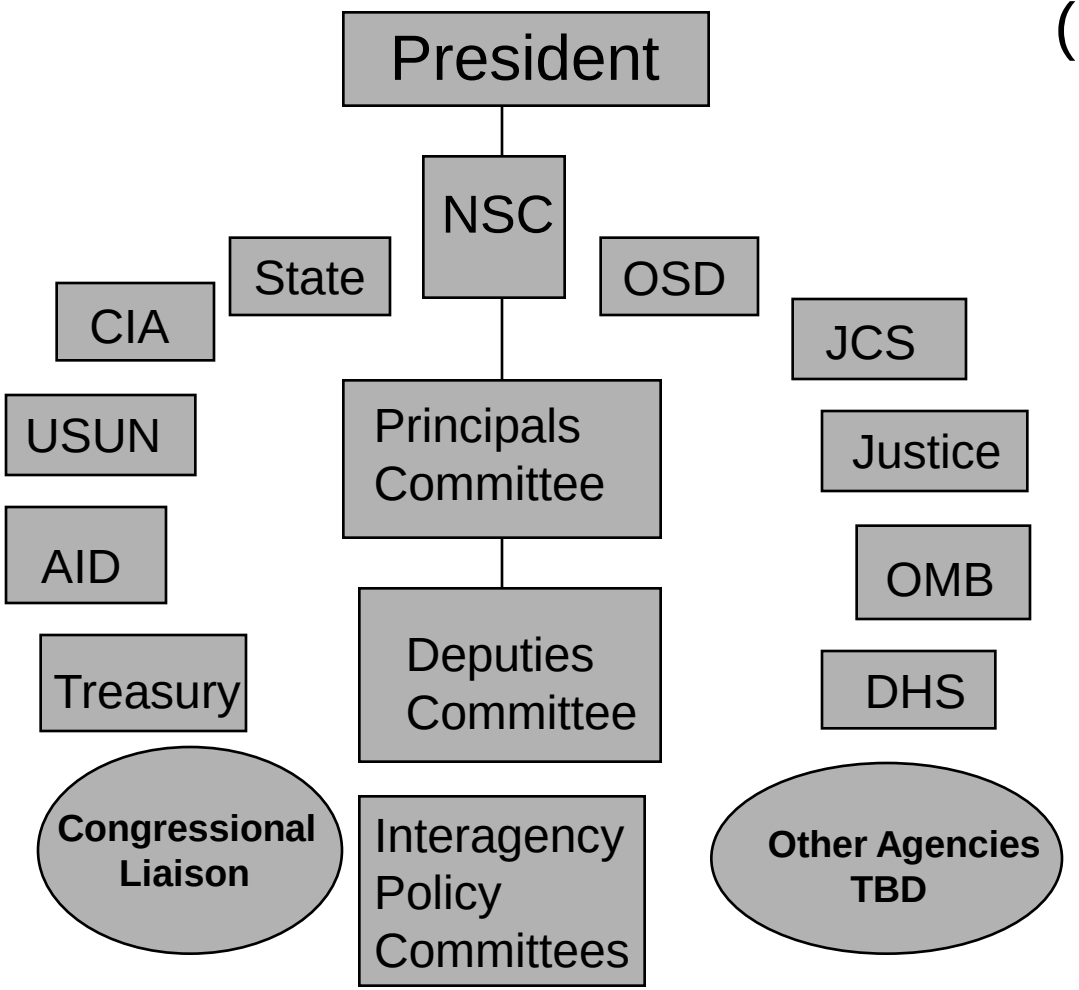
Policy Instruments: Resources
& Component Strategies

Recurring Issues:
- Actors' Aims and Commitment?
- Actor Perception of our Resolve?
- Actor Influence on other Nations?
- Sensitivity to Costs and Risks?
- Willingness to Escalate?
- Power of Regional Networks?

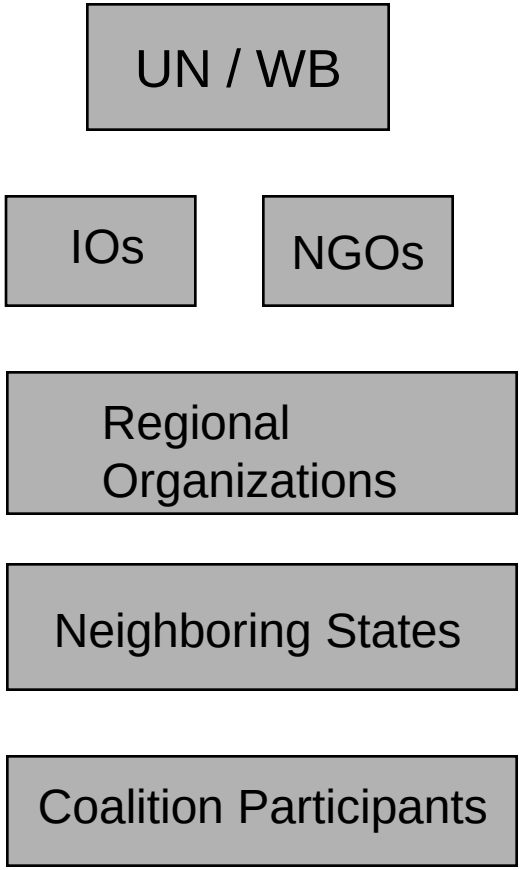
Recurring Issues:
- Tools Available DIME + LE, CO, etc.?
- Coalition Contributions?
- Inherent Limitations?
- Understanding Effects in Time?
- Applied in a Coherent Effort?
- Mechanisms for Integration?
- Agency Costs and Expected Return?

Interagency Players

Key US Participants



Major Partners
(Depending on Situation)



Systemic Tensions & Levels of Interagency Collaboration

Drivers of Fragmentation

- **Regional vs. functional offices**
- **Civilian vs. military officials**
- **Short vs. long-term time horizons**
- **Political ambiguity vs. defined objectives**
- **Share information vs. control the agenda**
- **Policy preferences vs. legal requirements**
- **Rapid vs. organized response**
- **Programmed vs. unresourced activities**
- **Crisis responders vs. funding managers**

Levels of Interagency Collaboration

- **Disunity**
- **De-confliction: plan in isolation, then avoid clashes**
- **Coordination: stitch together agency plans at the seams**
- **Integration: follow top-down direction w / common objectives**
- **Coherence: weave actions together under common strategy**

Attributes of High Performing Interagency Groups

High Conceptual Level

- Share an understanding of goals and priorities
- Expand frames of reference (dip, pol, mil, econ, hum, dev, legal, etc.)
- Seek a broad situation assessment (sources: intel, dip, partners, etc.)
- Search for ambiguous assumptions and information gaps
- Focus on a realistic time horizon
- Clarify the tough value trade-offs in the policy decisions
- Match commitments with political will

Prudent Consensus Approach

- Agree on an effective process plan
- Strengthen interagency team identity
- Control internal politics among team members
- Foster competitive debate
- Forge a consensus approach for action

Vigilant Group Management

- Keep pace--stay ahead of the crisis environment
- Recognize press issues in advance
- Manage time
- Adjust and self-correct

Twelve Building Blocks
Mobilizing Int'l Will and Coalitions

1. **Clarify the Compelling Justification for Intervention**

   -- **Basis of urgent necessity for extraordinary action**
   -- **Need a persuasive justification for several years**
   -- **Focus on domestic audiences political, security, moral views**

2. **Gain Consensus on an Achievable Political Solution**

   -- **Major powers and contributors have a keen interest**
   -- **Need solution to be achievable in a realistic timeframe w/ locals**
   -- **But maintain ambiguity…clear end states create enemies**

3. **Pass an Empowering Security Council Mandate**

   -- **Built on Settlement and Regional Org statements**
   -- **Need to empower the International Mission to act decisively**
   -- **Int'l civilian leader establishes the primacy of the peace process**

Twelve Building Blocks
Mobilizing Int'l Will and Coalitions (cont)

4. **Gain Backing by Regional Powers and Int'l Organizations**

   -- **Exercise considerable political, military, and economic clout**
   -- **Need to be engaged diplomatically to shape their involvement**
   -- **Most have some historical tie to at least one faction**

5. **Gain Operational Assistance by Neighboring States**

   -- **Assistance is crucial to a variety of mission tasks**
   -- **Need to anticipate how neighboring state will act**
   -- **A neighbor's vital interests are usually at stake**

6. **Contain Transnational Non-state Actors**

   -- **Flourish during conflict and weak gov't control**
   -- **Need to understand networks before going in**
   -- **Usually operate with support of a neighboring state**

Twelve Building Blocks
Mobilizing Int'l Will and Coalitions (cont)

7. **Define an Acceptable Military Role (A Green-helmet Force)**

   -- **Need to impose stability, demobilize groups, defeat militants**
   -- **Requires a cohesive, combat-ready MNF**

8. **Demobilize Armed Groups**

   -- **Need to remove arms from politics and guard against attacks**
   -- **Requires a credible force and innovative approaches**

9. **Impose Public Order and Rule of Law**

   -- **Need to impose public security at the outset and win support**
   -- **Requires taking ownership of the entire ROL system**

10. **Undercut Funding to Hard-line Obstructionists**

   -- **Need to get control of economic predation by obstructions**
   -- **Requires hard political and economic decisions**

Twelve Building Blocks
Mobilizing Int'l Will and Coalitions (cont)

11. Field an Integrated International Mission w/ Unified Direction

- -- All these missions are ad hoc, rapid deployments
- -- Need capable mission leadership to lead diverse group
- -- A "Genuine Partnership" of military and civilian leaders is key

12. Implement a Rolling Three-year Financial Plan

- -- Funding takes a long time to get flowing, not enough initially
- -- Need to identify costs (high) in the first three years and donors
- -- No intervention is ever easy to pay for in the first years
- -- Support of big donors tends to wane

Table of Contents of a Pol-Mil Plan

1. **Introduction – the geo-strategic context and planning scenario**
2. **Policy Direction – policy guidance, aims and strategic posture**
3. **Situation Assessment – comprehensive situation assessment**
4. **Strategic Purpose, Mission, Endstate & Objectives – core**
5. **Pol – Mil Strategy – most important aspect of the intervention**
6. **Mission Organization & Concept – structure, phases, financing**
7. **Preparatory Tasks – mobilizing conditions & getting ready**
8. **Mission Area Tasks – meat of the plan**
9. **Follow-on Mission – guidance for pol-mil planners**
10. **Interagency Management – how the intervention will be managed**

Annexes

Who will get the job done?

- **An *intervention* requires several *coalitions*:**
  - **a political coalition (led by France)**
  - **a relief coalition (UNHCR)**
  - **a military coalition (UK under NATO)**
  - **a rule of law coalition (UN)**
  - **an institution building coalition (OSCE)**
  - **a economic reconstruction coalition (EU / World Bank)**
  - **a donor coalition (The G-8 Finance Ministers)**

- **Some coalitions are largely *multinational* while others are mostly *multilateral*. Some are mixed.**

- **The political and structural foundations of each coalition have to be set in place. Each coalition will have its own structure, leadership, participants, operating parameters, and planning capacity.**

- **Intervention planning and diplomacy go hand-in-hand. Gaining consensus among coalition partners is key.**

Fundamental Skills of a National Security Professional

1. **Emerging Conflict Environments**
2. **Innovative Problem-solving**
3. **Policy Decision-making and Planning**
4. **Interagency Best Practices**
5. **Programmatic Resource Coherence**
6. **Building Blocks of International Intervention**
7. **Relevant Regional / Local Knowledge**

Questions?