

What can be done to reverse the pattern of Somalia - Haiti - Bosnia, build on the foundation of PDD- 56, and reform U.S. policymaking to improve U.S. capacity to respond to complex emergencies? This study suggests that three steps can lead to substantial improvement:

- Institutionalize the EXCOMM
- Prepare contingency plans
- Engage others early

INSTITUTIONALIZE THE EXCOMM

In PDD- 56, the president mandates the establishment of an EXCOMM to handle each future complex emergency. This new policy should be implemented immediately for Bosnia. As discussed above, the Bosnia case

(End p 31)

desperately requires increased coherence in U.S. policy; applying the new PDD is an appropriate first step. EXCOMM members should be assistant secretaries of the executive departments and agencies involved in the ongoing operation, but it should be possible to tailor membership as needed for specific issues. For example, if an operation involves training indigenous police, then ICITAP could be represented on the EXCOMM; or when considering transition to a UN operation, the EXCOMM might invite a representative of the UN'S Department of Peacekeeping Operations to participate. The role of the EXCOMM should be to link the executive branch bureaucracies to the policy decision makers sitting on the Deputies and Principals Committees of the NSC.

Beyond PDD-56, the EXCOMM should be held accountable for meeting the four requirements of policy coordination throughout the entire life cycle of the response operation: it leads the interagency response effort, oversees the development of the comprehensive strategic plan, assembles adequate resources, and monitors implementation of the plan. To be effective the EXCOMM must have sufficient authority to move beyond narrow bureaucratic interests and to craft a comprehensive, coherent policy. In short, the EXCOMM must have teeth.

The experiences of Somalia and Bosnia demonstrate that there is no substitute for starting the policy process early. In the future, it is important to create the EXCOMM early before U.S. policy options are foreclosed by decisions of other contributors or before changes in the situation on the ground make the problem more difficult. An EXCOMM should be created as soon as the government recognizes that a complex emergency is likely to arise and the senior decision makers begin their assessment of potential U.S. involvement.

PREPARE CONTINGENCY PLANS

The U.S. government should move beyond PDD- 56 and undertake as a matter of priority the preparation of contingency plans that outline the coordination requirements of U.S. policy options in potential complex emergencies. These plans should be based on intelligence assessments of potential crises, produced by the executive departments with input from their experts in the regions, and should address the full range of coordination required in response operations. The key is to broaden contingency planning beyond the military. The process of producing these plans can be as important as the plan itself. The planning will promote interagency dialogue and the generation of policy options which avoid gaps, seams and myopia.

(End p 32)

The contingency plan becomes the EXCOMM's starting point when an actual crisis arises. Armed with a preliminary plan on which to base its comprehensive strategy, the EXCOMM will be able to take the early lead in a response operation, when viable policy options are most numerous. The time saved early in the policy process pays dividends later as agencies contributing to the response operation gain time to prepare. This preparation time is especially important for civilian agencies that - unlike their military counterparts - do not maintain in-place capabilities for rapid crisis response.

ENGAGE OTHERS EARLY

Today's complex emergencies pose problems that are simply beyond the capacity of the United States alone. PDD-56 recognizes that U.S. involvement will likely be as part of a coalition. The United States must engage other potential international contributors - states, international Organizations, NGOs - with the aim of including them in the U.S. contingency planning process. Planning for complex emergencies should be a regular item on the agenda for bilateral meetings with key U.S. allies. Further, the United States should use its leadership standing to promote contingency planning within the international organizations likely to play a role in future response operations.

The benefits of engaging other actors go beyond burden sharing. One objective of such planning should be to enhance the specialization of particular organizations; for example, one organization could specialize in reforming civilian police, while another develops a capability for water purification. Specifying roles can lead to improved preparation, shared expectations, and more efficient division of responsibility among all the key players when a crisis arises.

SUMMING UP

There is no end in sight to the pattern of complex emergencies that has developed in the 1990s. None of the cases discussed in this paper have come to a definitive end, yet others already loom on the horizon: North Korea, Albania/Kosovo, and Zaire are examples. While the U.S. role in future operations can vary widely - as it did across the three cases considered here - some U.S. role in response to future complex emergencies is likely. Improving the United States' capacity to respond begins with reforms at the policy level in Washington, where conducting "business as usual" has produced less than optimal results.