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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

May 20, 1997

PRESIDENTIAL DECISION DIRECTIVE/NSC-56

TO: The Vice President
 The Secretary of State
 The Secretary of the Treasury
 The Secretary of Defense
 The Attorney General
 The Representative of the United States to the
 United Nations
 The Director, Office of Management and Budget
 The Director of Central Intelligence
 The Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff
 The Administrator, Agency for International
 Development

SUBJECT: Managing Complex Contingency Operations (U)

In the wake of the Cold War, attention has focused on a rising number of territorial disputes, armed ethnic conflicts, and civil wars that pose threats to regional and international peace and may be accompanied by natural or manmade disasters which precipitate massive human suffering. We have learned that effective responses to these situations may require multi-dimensional operations composed of such components as political/diplomatic, humanitarian, intelligence, economic development, and security: hence the term complex contingency operations. (U)

For the purpose of this directive, "complex contingency operations" are defined as peace operations such as the peace accord implementation operation conducted by NATO in Bosnia (1995-present) and the humanitarian intervention in northern Iraq called Operation Provide Comfort (1991); and foreign humanitarian assistance operations, such as Operation Support Hope in central Africa (1994) and Operation Sea Angel in Bangladesh (1991). Since the specific type of initiative or operation to be conducted in response to a troubled area, if any, is seldom known

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when the crisis management process must begin, the Deputies Committee, as described in PDD-2, will decide in which of these situations to invoke the management processes of this PDD. Unless otherwise directed, this directive does not apply to domestic disaster relief or to relatively routine or small-scale operations, nor to military operations conducted in defense of U.S. citizens, territory, or property, including counter-terrorism and hostage-rescue operations and international armed conflict. (C)

In recent situations as diverse as Haiti, Somalia, Northern Iraq, and the former Yugoslavia, the United States has engaged in complex contingency operations in coalition, either under the auspices of an international or regional organization or in ad hoc, temporary coalitions of like-minded states. While never relinquishing the capability to respond unilaterally, future operations will continue to be conducted in coalition whenever possible. (U)

In many instances, the appropriate U.S. Government response will incur the involvement of only non-military assets. However, we have learned that the deployment of military forces in a complex contingency operation can quickly affect the dynamic of the situation and may create the conditions necessary to make significant progress in mitigating or resolving the underlying conflict or dispute. However, we have also learned that many aspects of complex contingency operations are not best addressed through military measures. Furthermore, given the level of U.S. interests at stake in most of these situations, U.S. forces should not be deployed in an operation indefinitely. (U)

We must also be prepared to manage the humanitarian, economic and political consequences of a technological crisis where chemical, biological, and/or radiological hazards may be present; the introduction of any one of these elements could significantly increase the sensitivity and complexity of a planned response. In addition, it is essential that the necessary resources be provided to ensure that we are prepared to respond in a robust, effective manner. To foster a durable peace or stability in these situations and to maximize the effect of judicious military deployments, the civilian components of an operation must be integrated closely with the military components. (U)

However, while agencies of government have developed capacities to respond individually to crises to various degrees, military and civilian agencies have often operated independently of each other and have required special mechanisms to coordinate their efforts effectively. Failure to plan properly and integrate operations early on can cause delays, increase pressure

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on the military to expand its involvement in non-military tasks and jeopardize the overall success of an operation. (S)

Intent (U)

The need for complex contingency operations is likely to recur in future years, demanding varying degrees of U.S. involvement. I expect all U.S. Government agencies to institutionalize what we have learned from our recent experiences and to continue the process of improving the planning and management of complex contingency operations. This directive is designed to ensure that the lessons learned -- including proven planning processes and implementation mechanisms -- will be incorporated into the interagency process on a regular basis. My intent is to establish these management practices to achieve unity of effort among U.S. Government agencies and international organizations engaged in complex contingency operations. Dedicated mechanisms and integrated planning processes will be needed. From our recent experiences, we have learned that these can help to:

- identify appropriate missions and tasks, if any, for U.S. Government agencies in a U.S. Government response;
- develop strategies for early resolution of crises, thereby minimizing the loss of life and establishing the basis for reconciliation and reconstruction;
- accelerate planning and implementation of the civilian aspects of the operation;
- intensify action on critical funding and personnel requirements early on;
- integrate all components of a U.S. response (civilian, military, police, etc.) at the policy level and facilitate the creation of coordination mechanisms at the operational level and
- rapidly identify issues for senior policy makers and ensure expeditious implementation of decisions. (U)

I also expect all agencies to review their legislative and budget authorities for supporting complex contingency operations and, where such authorities are inadequate to fund an agency's mission and operations in complex contingencies, propose legislative and budgetary solutions. (U)

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Executive Committee (U)

As determined in PDD-2, the Deputies Committee is responsible for crisis management and will establish appropriate sub-groups to assist in policy development, planning, and execution. In recent operations, the Deputies have established an Executive Committee (ExCom) with Assistant Secretary-level membership to supervise the day-to-day management of U.S. participation in each complex contingency operation. Unless otherwise decided by the Deputies Committee, the appropriate NSC staff member will chair the ExCom. The ExCom brings together representatives of all agencies that might participate in the operation under review, including those not normally part of the NSC structure. When this is the case, both the Deputies Committee and the ExCom should be augmented so that they include representatives from all agencies that might participate in the operation under review. The chair of the ExCom should designate an agency (or the NSC itself) to chair a legal and fiscal advisory sub-group, whose role should be to consult with the ExCom to ensure that tasks assigned by the ExCom can be performed by the assigned agencies consistent with legal and fiscal authorities. This ExCom approach has proved useful in clarifying agency responsibilities, strengthening agency accountability, ensuring interagency coordination, and developing policy options for Deputies and Principals. ~~(S)~~

The guiding concept behind the ExCom approach to interagency management is the personal accountability of Presidential appointees. Members of the ExCom effectively serve as functional managers for specific elements of the U.S. Government response (e.g., refugees, elections, economic assistance, police, intelligence, public diplomacy, etc.). They implement the strategies agreed to by the interagency and report to the ExCom and Deputies Committee on any problems or issues that need to be resolved. (U)

In future complex contingency operations to which the United States contributes substantial resources, I expect that the Deputies Committee will establish organizational arrangements akin to those of the ExCom approach. (U)

The Political-Military Implementation Plan (U)

A political-military implementation (or pol-mil) plan shall be developed as an integrated planning tool for coordinating U.S. government actions in a complex contingency operation. The pol-mil plan will include a situation assessment and will specify the missions, objectives, and desired endstates. It will outline a concept of operations for all agencies, synchronize agency efforts, and provide a game plan for individual agencies to

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follow. (Annex A is an illustrative outline of a pol-mil plan.) With the use of the pol-mil plan, my goal is to centralize planning and decentralize execution during the operation. The desired unity of effort among the various agencies that will be created by these initiatives will contribute to the overall success of these complex operations. (S)

When a complex contingency operation is contemplated, the Deputies Committee shall task the development of a pol-mil plan and assign specific responsibilities to Assistant Secretary-level officials. I expect to be provided with such a plan for those complex contingency operations in which the U.S. Government plays a substantial role. (S)

Individual elements of the plan describe major functional areas and implementation tasks (e.g., humanitarian assistance, public security/law and order, economic reconstruction, human rights protection, social development, etc.) as well as the principal preparatory and organizational issues of the operation (e.g., legal authorities, funding, intelligence, coalition troop recruiting, and relations with allies, non-governmental organizations, and international organizations). (S)

Each ExCom official shall develop their respective chapter of the plan, which will be fully coordinated among all relevant agencies. This development process will be transparent and analytical, resulting in issues being posed to the Deputies Committee, the Principals Committee, and, when necessary, to me. Based on the resulting decisions, the plan will be finalized and widely distributed among relevant agencies. (S)

The pol-mil plan shall include demonstrable milestones and measures of success, including detailed planning for the transition of the operation to activities which might be performed by a follow-on operation or by the host government. Because time constraints often force operations and planning to take place concurrently, the pol-mil plan will be updated as the mission progresses to reflect milestones that are (or are not) met and to incorporate changes in the situation on the ground. (S)

Interagency Pol-Mil Plan Rehearsal (U)

A critical aspect of the planning process will be the interagency rehearsal/review of the pol-mil plan. This activity shall involve a rehearsal of the plan's main elements, with each ExCom official presenting to the Deputies or Principals Committee the elements for which he or she is responsible. By simultaneously reviewing all elements of the plan, differences over mission objectives, agency responsibilities,

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timing/synchronization, and resource allocation can be identified and resolved early, preferably before the operation begins. The interagency review also underscores the accountability of each program manager in implementing their assigned area of responsibility. Regular reviews of the plan ensure that milestones are met and that appropriate adjustments are taken when they are not. The Deputies or Principals shall convene to review the entire implementation plan as presented by the ExCom before an operation is launched (or as early as possible once the operation begins), at the planned mid-point or as major changes occur, and prior to an operation's termination. (S)

After-Action Review (U)

After the conclusion of each operation in which this planning process is employed, the Executive Committee shall charter an after-action review involving both those who participated in the operation and Government experts who did not participate. This comprehensive assessment of the operation shall include a review of interagency planning and coordination, (both in Washington and in the field) and legal and budgetary difficulties encountered, as well as proposed solutions, in order to capture lessons learned and to ensure their dissemination to relevant agencies. (U)

Training (U)

The U.S. Government currently lacks adequate means to prepare agency representatives for the responsibilities they will be expected to take on in a complex contingency operation. Creating a cadre of professionals familiar with this planning process will improve the USG's ability to manage future operations. (U)

With the support of the State and Defense Departments, the NSC shall work with the appropriate U.S. Government educational institutions -- including the National Defense University, the National Foreign Affairs Training Center and the Army War College -- to develop and conduct an interagency training program. This program, which should be held at least annually, will train mid-level managers (Deputy Assistant Secretary level) in the development and implementation of pol-mil plans for complex contingency operations. Those participating should have an opportunity to interact with expert officials from previous operations to learn what has worked in the past and what has not. Appropriate U.S. Government educational institutions shall also explore the appropriate way to incorporate the pol-mil planning process into their curricula. (U)

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Agency Review and Implementation (U)

Each agency Principal and Deputy should review the adequacy of their agency's structure, legal authorities, budget levels, personnel system, training, and crisis management procedures to ensure that we, as a government, are learning from our experiences with complex contingency operations and institutionalizing the lessons learned. To implement the recommendations contained herein, NSC will establish and chair an interagency working group including State, OSD, JCS, AID, OMB, and other agencies deemed relevant to the subject, as soon as possible. (C)

William J. Clinton

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Annex A

*Illustrative Components of a
Political-Military Plan for a Complex Contingency Operation (U)*

- Situation Assessment. An interagency assessment of the situation in the region to identify essential elements of information that, in the aggregate, constitute a comprehensive understanding of the situation. ~~(S)~~
- Assessments of U.S. Interests and Capabilities. An interagency assessment of U.S. interests at stake in the crisis and an analysis of US government abilities to defend those interests. ~~(S)~~
- Mission Statement. A statement of the overall USG strategic purpose for the intervention and the pol-mil mission for the operation. ~~(S)~~
- Objectives. The key objectives to be accomplished by the mission/intervention -- both civilian and military components. ~~(S)~~
- Desired Pol-Mil End State. The conditions the mission is intended to create before the operation transitions to a follow-on operation and/or terminates. It integrates military and civilian dimension and describes how success of the operation will be judged. ~~(S)~~
- Concept of the Operation. A conceptual description of how the mission will be accomplished -- how the various components of USG policy will be integrated to get the job done throughout all stages of the operation. ~~(S)~~
- Transition/Exit Strategy. A strategy that is linked to the realization of the end state described above, requiring the integrated efforts of both civilian and military officials of the USG and the international community. ~~(S)~~
- Lead Agency Responsibilities. A definition of the areas of responsibility for different USG and international agencies. (U)
- Pol-Mil Organizational Concept. A portrayal of the organization for the operation, in Washington and in theater,

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including a description of the chain of authority and associated reporting channels for the operation. (S)

- Preparatory Tasks. A layout of specific tasks to be undertaken before the operation begins (diplomatic consultations, troop recruitment, legal authorities, funding for the operation, intelligence requirements, congressional consultations, media relations, etc.). (S)
- Functional Element Plans. Key operational and support plans written by USG agencies that pertain to critical parts of the operation (humanitarian assistance, public security/law and order, infrastructure and economic restoration, human rights and social development, etc.). (S)

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