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Teaching Notes for CHAPTER 9: The Kuwait Task Force: Postconflict Planning and Interagency Coordination

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TEACHING NOTES

The Kuwait Task Force: Postconflict Planning and Interagency Coordination

By Dennis Barlow*

Virtually all national security planners decry the lack of interagency planning and cooperation, yet very few attempts have been made to codify or solidify this critical process successfully. This case study demonstrates that a great part of insuring interagency cooperation and integration rests with mid-level planners and staff members. They must not only know their own area of expertise, but need to be ready to advocate courses of action by identifying and utilizing interagency mechanisms and “openings” to energize the system.

1. Objectives

- a. To understand that policy guidance is often difficult to ascertain and transmit.
- b. To appreciate that civil-military planning is important in the context of current national security strategy.
- c. To grasp the fact that interagency coordination is difficult owing to:
 - i. organizational prerogatives;
 - ii. lack of coordinating mechanisms; and
 - iii. understanding “who’s in charge,” which is not always apparent or accepted.
- d. The U.S. military is not a monolith but is made up of diverse and often competing agencies and forces.
- e. Civil Affairs forces and doctrine can be valuable to national security policy but need to be assessed and addressed more precisely.

2. Target Audiences

- a. U.S. government agency officials with national security responsibilities:
 - i. National Security Council

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- ii. State Department
- iii. U.S. Agency for International Development
- iv. Office of the Secretary of State/Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization
- v. Commerce Department
- vi. High-level U.S. military staffs (Joint Staff, regional commands)
- vii. Potential senior military leaders
- viii. Civil-military planners
- ix. Civil Affairs officers
- x. Army Reserves planning and employment in support of operations

3. Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes to be Considered in this Case Study

- a. Knowledge of Civil Affairs capabilities
- b. Knowledge of prerogatives and authorities relating to planning and conducting national security operations:
 - i. Joint Staff
 - ii. Regional Command
 - iii. Other U.S. government agencies
 - iv. Armed services
 - v. National Security Council
- c. Appreciation of complexities of policy formulation
- d. Appreciation of sensitivities and prerogatives of Defense Department agencies
- e. Appreciation of the need for appropriate, timely, and effective development of policy guidelines
- f. Understanding of the personality factors that are always in play in high-level politics
- g. Consideration of when aggressive staff actions are appropriate

- h. Consideration of the best ways to coordinate State Department/embassy and regional commander/Pentagon actions

4. Analysis and Process

During this case study, have the students adopt different organizational roles in order both to understand and to evaluate the motivations and perspectives of various organizations involved in formation and oversight of national security policy.

- a. Perspectives to Consider:
 - i. Civil Affairs:
 - ii. Planners at each level
 - iii. Commanders and unit members
 - iv. Department of the Army-- prerogatives and concerns
 - v. USSOCOM-- prerogatives and concerns
 - vi. USCENTCOM-- prerogatives and concerns
 - vii. Joint Staff-- prerogatives and concerns
 - viii. Office of the Secretary of Defense-- prerogatives and concerns
 - ix. State Department
 - x. U.S. Ambassador to Kuwait
 - xi. National Security Council, White House
- b. Issues to Consider and Questions to Ask:
 - i. What is the relationship between the service provider, the regional commander, the Joint Staff, and the Office of the Secretary of Defense with regard to civil-military plans and operations?
 - ii. What is the proper relationship between CA staff officers and other agency (for example, Department of State, USAID, embassy, Department of Commerce) officials?
 - iii. How does the State Department, the U.S. Ambassador and embassy officials engage and impact military plans? And how/ who decides who has the lead?
 - iv. Should there be more structured ways of bringing military and civilian agencies together on civil-military matters?
- c. Roles of CA commanders and their unit members:
- d. Are CA commanders also advisers? If so, to whom?
- e. How can CA Reserve soldiers make more of an impact on active duty commanders and civilian agencies?
- f. How proactive can one be without being insubordinate?
- g. Is the National Security Council informed of civil-military interagency concerns and issues? If so, how regularly and at what depth of granularity?
- h. Who should coordinate civil-military plans and guidance?
- i. Who is in charge of policy oversight during an operation?
- j. How could unity of effort have been achieved better?

- k. Can we trust to this process to work in the future?
5. Lessons learned:
- a. Have we learned from this and other civil-military challenges (Panama, Somalia, Haiti, Iraq, Afghanistan) so that the problems encountered here have been solved and will not be repeated?
 - b. Was the creation of the Kuwait Task Force merely due to fortuitous circumstances and was it the best option? What points of friction existed forming the Kuwait Task Force?
 - c. Have these points of friction been overcome, or are they still there? Are potential points of friction even greater today?

6. TEACHING PLAN

The commonly accepted view of the restoration of Kuwait is that it worked well only because of the deep pockets of the Kuwaitis. The simple fact is that the operation was a success because of the efforts of a few dedicated officials to create good policy quickly.

How much initiative should middle managers exercise in driving national security issues?

a. Introduction

- i. Assign the case study as a read-ahead. Provide the following guideline questions to be considered from the frame of reference of each organization that took part in the scenario described in the case study.
- ii. What authority did each organization represent as this situation played out?
- iii. Were its prerogatives, capabilities, and authorities properly framed and carried out or was the organization marginalized, left out, or ill used?
- iv. What organizational prerogatives did each organization believe were important for it to protect?
- v. What organizations were necessary or appropriate for each organization to coordinate with; which of these should have been regular meetings?
- vi. Were there meetings or planning linkages that occurred that you think were inappropriate?

b. Priming

- i. **Lead a short discussion of the opening days of Desert Shield/Desert Storm to set the stage.**

c. Questions and Process

- i. Assign groups of two to three students (or one each if small class size will allow) to represent the views of the agency assigned to him or her. Allow students to volunteer for organizations they would like to represent. Assign the following roles:
 - 352d CA Commander, Brigadier General Howard Mooney
 - State Department and 352d member, COL Randy Elliott
 - Office of the Secretary of Defense CA staffer, LTC Paul Mikesh
 - Joint Staff CA planner, LTC Dennis Barlow
 - Member of the staff of the headquarters of the Department of the Army
 - Member of the staff of USSOCOM
 - Member of the staff of USCENTCOM
 - Chief, Army Reserves
 - Ambassador to Kuwait Edward “Skip” Gnehm
 - National Security Council member Robert Gates
- ii. Task the student groups to answer the following questions:
 - What authority did your organization have in this situation? Was it properly framed, or were you marginalized, left out, or ill used?
 - What organizational prerogatives did you believe were important for your organization to protect?
 - What organizations do you feel were necessary or appropriate to coordinate with; which of these should be regular meetings?
 - What meetings or planning linkages occurred that you think were inappropriate?
 - If you (your organization) could have a “redo” on this, what would you do differently?

Allow the student teams fifteen minutes to develop answers to these questions, then have one of the group answer the questions in such a way that they can be presented to the class. Do not allow any critique or discussion at this point—just capture the responses.

Now reassign the roles, this time assigning students to organizations to which they showed the greatest disdain or negativism during the first round. Give the new groups ten minutes to develop answers to the same questions, and have those answers posted directly under the comments of the first group for the same organization.

d. Class Discussion

- i. Review both sets of comments for each organization, and pull out consistencies/discrepancies between the two different student groups.
- ii. Develop consensus on what were effective and ineffective actions of each group (including acts of omission and commission).
- iii. Discuss whether difficulties arising from this action seventeen years ago have been remedied, remain the same, or have grown worse.
- iv. Allow students to opine about the best ways to assure adequate implementation of policy guidance.

e. Homework assignment:

Have each student take the list of persons involved (both by-name individuals and those named only by organization) and place the following “Personnel Action to be Taken” for each player. Each must be assigned one of four actions: (1) promote early, (2) give a poor evaluation (precluding promotion), (3) give an impact award, or (4) take no action.

f. Board Plan

Use ten slides (butcher block paper, etc.)—one for each organization involved in the process—and identify the key prerogatives, considerations, an