



USIPeace Briefing

June 2008

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Domestic Agencies in Reconstruction and Stabilization: The “4th D”

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Overview:

The “3 D’s,” defense, diplomacy and development, have been pillars of U.S. government reconstruction and stabilization programs. Recently, however, the “4th D” – the domestic interagency community – has come into the picture. This *USIPeace Briefing* describes the distinct value the “4th D” adds to reconstruction and stabilization initiatives and how it can be integrated into the larger U.S. government community.

The practical steps outlined in this briefing could be taken immediately—with low cost and substantial potential payoff.

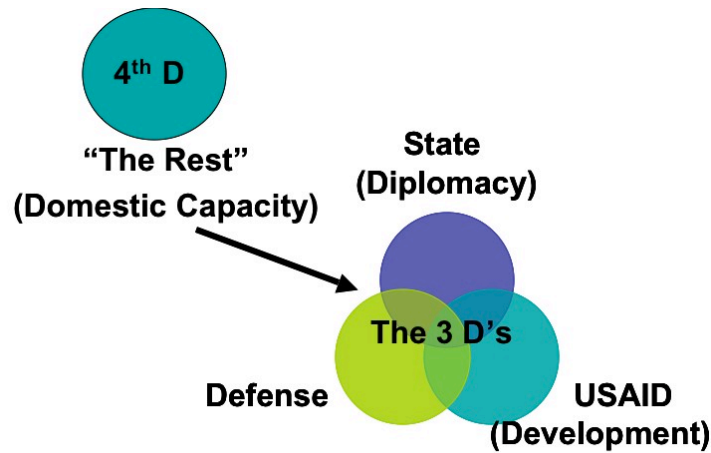
The “4th D” means domestic-focused agencies

In the Reconstruction and Stabilization (R&S) community, the terms “interagency” and “whole-of-government” generally refer to the Department of Defense (DoD), Department of State (DoS), and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), plus a few domestic agencies. In recognition of their dominant role, the 2006 *National Security Strategy* calls them the “3 D’s” of defense, diplomacy and development.

The “4th D” means the remainder of the interagency community, composed of hundreds of departments, agencies, boards, commissions, and programs in the following categories.¹

- Agriculture
- Business and Commerce
- Community Development
- Consumer Protection
- Cultural Affairs
- Disaster Prevention and Relief
- Education
- Employment, Labor, and Training
- Energy
- Environmental Quality
- Food and Nutrition
- Health
- Housing
- Income Security and Social Services
- Information and Statistics
- Law, Justice and Legal Services
- Natural Resources
- Regional Development
- Science and Technology
- Transportation

Each of these functions is further broken down into 176 subcategories.²



Such domestic agencies add value to the 3 D's in R&S, humanitarian assistance, and other areas. This briefing focuses on better preparing domestic agencies to support such operations.³ While the R&S capacity of all the interagency partners should eventually be enhanced, initial efforts should focus on the departments most recently targeted by Congress to receive additional reserve personnel: Agriculture, Commerce, Health and Human Services, Homeland Security, Justice and Treasury.⁴

This briefing describes the distinct value the 4th D adds to R&S efforts and what is needed to begin to empower these domestic departments to participate more effectively in R&S environments. The authors recommend a “traveling team” of planners to assist these departments in:

- 1) Conducting basic orientation to R&S concepts and terms;
- 2) Creating internal department and agency working groups for planning and operating;
- 3) Mapping internal department and agency as well as private sector resources and capabilities;
- 4) Developing generic expeditionary R&S standard operating procedures (SOPs) for mobilization, deployment, forward- and reach-back operations, and;
- 5) Conducting experiments to refine these R&S procedures.

4th D R&S efforts are being developed

The State Department's Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS) has, over the past several years, broken ground in creating numerous interagency working groups to address R&S issues. S/CRS is leading a major Congressional effort to fund the creation and maintenance—for each of the six departments noted above—of both an Active Response Corps (ARC) ready to deploy in 48 hours and a Standby Response Corps (SRC) ready to deploy within 30 days. The ARC is composed of new government employees that would provide the domestic

agencies with additional resources to address R&S tasks. The SRC comprises existing government employees trained to be “on-call” to serve in R&S operations.

These civilians will focus on tasks related to their agencies’ core competencies. A detailed list of tasks is found in the State Department’s *Essential Task Matrix*⁵, which identifies steps necessary in countries transitioning from armed conflict or civil strife to stability. The current matrix is divided into: security; governance; humanitarian assistance and social well being; economic stabilization and infrastructure; and justice and reconciliation. The majority of the hundreds of tasks listed in the matrix are civilian.

The 4th D will add value

The 4th D has potential to add unique value in R&S operations in the following areas.

Long-term government-to-government relationship building—impossible with contractors: The 4th D provides specialized ministerial-level technical expertise for host nation (HN) capacity-building. Government officials possess unique skills in helping to build capacity related to inherently governmental matters. Most importantly, however, HN ministries respect and view as a sign of U.S. resolve the exchange of government officials.

For example, in Iraq:

- Treasury officials assist the central bank
- Commerce officials work with the ministries of trade, industry, and minerals
- Agriculture staff assist Iraqi government experts

Reach-back to a robust and functionally aligned state-side capacity: Reach-back support involves two teams: one operating in the conflict setting and one “state-side” within the U.S. (usually Washington), which supports the deployed team. The key is to establish a seamless virtual team, which, while separated by thousands of miles, leverages a dual approach and enhances performance. Reach-back support adds great value by taking the burden off the forward team. Under this structure, management distinguishes between tasks that must be accomplished in the HN and those that can be performed state-side, where it is easier to operate. For example, the reach-back office can:

- Draft program plans
- Testify before Congress
- Communicate with interagency partners
- Conduct fast turn-around research
- Respond to public inquires
- Develop and maintain the website

If this capacity is developed properly, 4th D domestic agencies can provide unprecedented capacity to mobilize an entire agency for a forward USG representative in a HN. Reach-back offices may also “reach-across” to peer departments in Washington to help coordinate more coherent responses as required. Agencies such as the Federal Reserve Board, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Transportation, while not currently part of the six core agencies of the CSI, could add great technical expertise. Examples of this capability include

coordination with teams of regulators, legal experts and private sector advisors—all of which are abundant within domestic agencies.

Unique, ongoing relationships with the U.S. private sector: Domestic agencies have significant untapped potential in close ties to the private sector, including:

- Helping the private sector to navigate regulations and laws encountered while doing business at home and overseas.
- Working with HN officials to reduce barriers to private sector trade and investment
- Helping the private sector develop mutually beneficial partnerships with HN companies, civil society organizations and government bodies to address sensitive political and public policy issues and to invest in practical projects.
- Promoting activities such as: advocacy for good governance and anti-corruption measures; developing voluntary codes of corporate conduct; and creating innovative public-private financing mechanisms for health, education, civic institution building and infrastructure development.
- Facilitating corporate donations. For the Indonesian Tsunami, the U.S. private sector contributed over \$3 billion⁶, in contrast to the USG’s contracted \$657 million. In addition to cash, many of these donations were in the form of “gifts in kind” as well as staff time and talent.

Pilot programs and traveling teams could catalyze 4th D capacity

Domestic agency colleagues and the departments they represent need help to perform such important functions. Investing in a series of pilot programs in at least two to three of the six selected domestic departments can bring this about. These programs would be tailored to individual departments.

Traveling teams of planners can work with leaders in these agencies to create basic functions common to all R&S operations (or other contingencies), such as:

- *Planning and assessment*
- *Mobilization:* calling-up expertise and preparation for the operation
- *Deployment:* moving experts to the country in question
- *Reach-back headquarters operations:* providing support to deployed personnel from Washington
- *Forward operations:* the work of deployed personnel

Furthermore, each program could use the following cross-functional characteristics⁷ to guide the overarching concept development:

Surge Capacity: Domestic agencies should build the capacity to respond to R&S according to and even beyond their core strengths. In crisis response, they should be able to “surge” across the entire department to meet non-routine requirements, possibly forgoing some traditional work. Alternatively, domestic agencies may be able to tap into retired staff to “backfill” personnel deployed overseas. The key to success will be budgeting and preparation.

Flexibility: Domestic agencies should operate both in support of another lead agency and as independent, self-contained units in an R&S environment. A department will be asked to provide bodies to another lead agency or run an entire program. Every department must be prepared to operate in both modes.

Comprehensiveness with respect to the private sector: Each agency's 4th D planning should include how it will bring private sector capabilities to bear in R&S. This does not mean managing more contracts. Rather, it entails helping the private sector work more closely with the HN to expand markets through fair trade, capacity development, and mentoring, and through donations of funds or other in-kind contributions.

Overcoming Internal Stovepipes: Reaching beyond the sole interests of the individual bureaus is necessary.

With small investments in a few pilot programs, any department or agency—with assistance from a traveling team of outside experts—could develop its R&S support capacity. Such programs could begin immediately and be evaluated later.

Indeed, a self-initiated pilot program—with big potential payoffs and few associated costs—has already begun in the Department of Commerce. Other domestic agencies have noticed and are beginning to ask for similar assistance.

The 4th D concept faces opposition

The 4th D concept has detractors. Within the USG, some believe that these departments have no role in the traditional foreign domains of the 3 D's—except in rare and modest circumstances. These critics suggest that the low amount of R&S funding for domestic agencies is appropriate, for the comparatively small amount of staff and materiel needed for 4th D initiatives. There is also a belief that contractors managed through the existing 3 D's can cover any expertise that the domestic agencies lack. Hence, the 4th D does not need any additional “extraordinary” capabilities to support R&S.

In response, numerous specialists believe in the inherent but untapped potential of the larger interagency to support R&S. Examples of this include the DoD's Directive 3000.5 (Military Support to Stability, Security, Transition and Reconstruction Operations) and National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD) 44 (Management of Interagency Efforts Concerning R&S)—both of which state that the essential role of civilians (both private and governmental) is equal to any other branch of government, including the military. For example, NSPD 44 and the development of the 2,250 member Active and Standby Response Corps leave planning and oversight to government civilians—not contractors.

Some of the greatest skeptics of a stronger role for domestic agencies in R&S are in the 4th D community itself. For them, R&S is an unfunded mandate. Moreover, many domestic agencies lack the legal authority to operate in R&S environments—unless Congress specifically grants exceptions. Hence, preparing for an R&S operation is daunting to many domestic agencies, which lack the planning capacity to keep pace with the 3 D's. Moreover, the 4th D is currently inundated by Homeland Security requirements for a host of domestic contingencies. To

minimize further drain on their resources, some believe that the foreign contingency domain is just a bridge too far.

Without additional funding, in-house planning support, and new legislative mandates, even the best attempts to include domestic agencies in R&S will be hampered. Unless more attention is paid to the 4th D, it may continue to be viewed as a distraction, afterthought or ultimately unfulfilled mandate.

All four D's must synergize

All of the D's need each other for R&S efforts to succeed. For example:

- USAID contracting experts might welcome the help of domestic specialists from the federal government to ensure adequate efforts in areas such as health services, telecommunications, agricultural development, commercial law development and financial systems.
- DoS could benefit from the long-term government-to-government technical assistance that only the U.S. domestic agencies can provide for HNs. Moreover, as R&S operations take shape, domestic agencies could provide the DoS a ready-made bridge in transitioning short-term programs, started by contractors, into long-term capacity building within the HN.
- The DoD has asked for increased civilian skill sets on domestic issues abundant in the 4th D, which can support and complement the DoD's own work as well as those of the HN and other international partners.

The development of these 4th D capabilities must be a two-way street. For both sides to gain, each has to help the other move towards the requisite skill sets and capabilities that constitute a true whole-of-government capacity. A little extra help with planning and program design could bring about a significant tipping point for major change.

About the Authors:

From 2006 to 2007, Merriam Mashatt directed the USIP Center of Innovation for Economies and Conflict under the leadership of Daniel Serwer, vice president for the Center for Post-Conflict Peace and Stability Operations. Currently, Mashatt is the director of Reconstruction and Stabilization for the International Trade Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce. Bob Polk currently serves as adjunct staff member of a federally funded research and development center where he and his team currently provide senior analysis and concept development support for S/CRS, AFRICOM, other COCOMs, and the Department of Commerce. Polk also serves as a senior advisor and founding member of the Project on National Security Reform working on a new National Security Act for the 21st Century. The views expressed in the publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of their employers, the Department of Commerce, the Department of State or USIP, which does not advocate specific policies.

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USIP's Center for Post-Conflict Peace and Stability Operations aims to transform societies emerging from conflict by promoting stability, democracy, economic development, and social reconstruction.

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¹See [Catalogue of Federal Domestic Assistance, 2007 Edition](#).

²Two examples of further breakdowns include: Agriculture - Resource Conservation and Development; Production and Operations; Marketing; Research and Development; Technical Assistance; Information and Services; Forestry; Stabilization and Conservation Service. Business and Commerce - Small Business; Economic Development; Economic Injury and Natural Disaster; Commercial Fisheries; Maritime; International; Statistics; Special Technical Services; Minority Business Enterprises.

³See [Briefing on Civilian Stabilization Initiative](#), Ambassador John E. Herbst, Coordinator for the Office of Reconstruction and Stabilization, Washington, DC, February 14, 2008. See also [Reference Guide to the President's FY 2009 Budget Request for the Civilian Stabilization Initiative](#).

The Civilian Stabilization Initiative is part of a State Department budget request pending in Congress. The request for CSI funding provides \$248.6 million to build the full complement of USG interagency civilian expertise necessary to respond rapidly to a stabilization crisis; partner effectively with the US military, international actors, and host nationals; and promote effective rule of law, economic stabilization and transitional governance. The Secretary of State, in partnership with the United States Agency for International Development and the Departments of Justice, Agriculture, Health and Human Services, Commerce, Treasury, and Homeland Security requests funding for 250 full time employees (\$75.2 million) for an interagency Active Response Corps of trained and equipped stabilization first responders who can deploy in 48 hours to countries in crisis. The budget also funds training for 2000 'standby' responders drawn from within these agencies.

⁴Funding for additional resources and legislative mandates for domestic agencies to operate in R&S environments is currently pending Congressional approval.

⁵See [State Department Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization Essential Task Matrix](#).

⁶See “[New Study Finds that Americans Gave More Than \\$3 Billion to Tsunami Relief Efforts](#),” December 19, 2006, The Center of Philanthropy at the University of Indiana.

⁷These characteristics are an extrapolation of the on-going work by co-author Bob Polk with Project on National Security Reform (PNSR).