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Losing Lessons at the Water's Edge: Applying Domestic Emergency Management's Interagency Doctrine to International Stability Operations

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Arthur D. Simons Center
for Interagency Cooperation

Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

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Applying Domestic Emergency Management's Interagency Doctrine
to International Stability Operations**

by Benjamin Cabana

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Introduction

Interagency coordination for complex contingency operations is an extremely difficult challenge. Bringing together the various tools of American power in a holistic manner is widely recognized as a serious roadblock to successful stabilization and reconstruction operations. Defense, development, and diplomacy are all required for a successful stability operation; however, the U.S. government has largely failed to incorporate all these tools in operational settings. Further, the Departments of State and Defense largely fail to fully incorporate the capabilities of other agencies that offer special skills and authorities in stability operations overseas. A broad array of literature has been focused on the problem of interagency coordination. However, the academic and practitioner literature devoted to the subject has largely focused on either increasing training and collaboration or structural reorganization to remedy the problem. Interagency coordination is largely done on an ad hoc basis, and each time the U.S. government finds itself conducting an international operation, it must construct mechanisms for interagency coordination anew.

Available to the foreign policy community is an extremely insightful and largely untapped resource for bringing together various organizations and authorities to conduct a successful complex contingency operation. The emergency management community has, through decades of experience and doctrinal improvement, developed systems of coordination across a broad range of U.S. government, state, local, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and private sector participants in emergency response. The domestic complex contingency operations faced by the emergency management community are surprisingly similar to stability and reconstruction operations abroad in terms of the challenges of coordination across a broad array of capabilities, jurisdictions, and authorities in managing an effective response. To date, however, there has been no academic research dedicated to comparing the tools of managing domestic emergency response to international stability operations. This paper seeks to demonstrate the utility of this model for complex stability operations and to call for academia and foreign policy practitioners to consider the application of this largely untapped yet extensive and useful field of study to improve interagency coordination during complex contingency operations that take place outside U.S. borders.

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CHALLENGES

The U.S. government has historically created interagency coordination mechanisms for international stability operations in a vacuum, failing to apply lessons from other sectors or from past experience.

In any complex contingency operation, coordination among the various actors from the U.S. government and other national contingencies, local authorities, NGOs, and the private sector are critical to success, yet extremely difficult to achieve. There are several reasons why coordination among the various actors is often problematic. First, an organization will resist any coordination efforts that inhibit its operational autonomy. Every organization recognizes the need for coordination with other parties, but no entity is willing to be coordinated if doing so will risk its autonomy.¹ Further, civilian agencies are not designed or suited for expeditionary missions. They tend to lack sufficient authority and accountability to execute tasks expected or required of them in a complex contingency operation and may choose not to participate at a sufficient level.² These civilian agencies do not have sufficient staff, equipment, training, doctrine, or procedures to conduct these overseas operations.³ Despite these obvious challenges, organizational theory and other academic fields of study have been largely untapped in trying to improve interagency coordination. The U.S. government has historically created interagency coordination mechanisms for international stability operations in a vacuum, failing to apply lessons from other sectors or from past experience. Interagency coordination is not a problem unique to international stability and reconstruction operations, yet the primary actors in these operations, the Department of Defense (DoD), the Department of State (State), and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) have attempted to fix this problem through internal knowledge and know-how, largely failing to establish binding doctrine or incorporating strong academic literature focused on how to organize and manage efforts of multiple organizations working together to achieve a common goal.

THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO INTERAGENCY COORDINATION

Fostering coordination and partnership across different agencies is much more difficult than operating within the confines of individual organizations. Glasby and Dickinson contend that interagency cooperation often lacks common frameworks between partners. One partner normally holds more power than the others, and various partners normally have incompatible views or values and conflicting authorities and methods of communication.⁴ These problems plague interagency coordination in any context but are especially pronounced and acknowledged in international stabilization operations. Organizational theorists have proposed two general theories of organization across multiple independent organizations: hierarchy and networks.

A traditional hierarchy, dating back to the Max Weber's theory

of bureaucratic organization, places all actors under a single, classic, bureaucratic hierarchy.⁵ Hierarchy divides organizations into functional units, and coordination is established with clear lines of authority to develop links among the various functions in a rational manner.⁶ Bureaucracies are historically slow-changing but reliable and predictable forms of organization. Bureaucracy has proven useful in well-established and longstanding organizations, but its applicability to contingency operations is questionable. Contingency operations are, of course, contingencies, meaning they are unexpected and largely ad hoc responses to a given problem. There is no existing bureaucracy in place that governs such operations, nor should there be. Some theorists contend that creating rigid hierarchical structures to coordinate across independent organizations will only complicate things by increasing the system's complexity.⁷ Further, a detailed organizational chart may clarify responsibilities among various actors, but oftentimes the actual practices on the ground may not in any way represent the structure of an organizational chart.⁸ Finally, hierarchy places various actors under the same operational control, failing to recognize the ultimate autonomy of each of the interagency partners within a contingency operation. Hierarchy thus fails in an interagency setting because a manager often lacks authority over other organizations, impeding real coordination.⁹ Hierarchies work effectively for managing single organizations with clear responsibilities but tend to largely fail in interagency settings.

Bureaucracy has proven useful in well-established and longstanding organizations, but its applicability to contingency operations is questionable.

The alternative to a rigid hierarchy is what organizational theorists call "networks." Networks rely on interactions among multiple interdependent organizations based on the mutual need for shared resources, authority, knowledge, and technology.¹⁰ Networks provide an informal mechanism of coordination among various agencies. Lipson sums up the merits of a network:

Networks are "lighter on their feet" than [sic] hierarchies. In network modes of resource allocation, transactions occur neither through discrete exchanges nor by administrative fiat, but through networks of individuals in reciprocal, preferential, mutually supportive actions. Networks can be complex: they involve neither the explicit criteria of the market, nor the familiar paternalism of the hierarchy. [The basic] assumption of network relationships is that one party is dependent on resources controlled by another, and that there are gains to be had by pooling resources.¹¹

Because successful stability operations require rapid decision-making and flexibility in a constantly changing environment, networks are normally seen as a more effective way to coordinate between

In complex stabilization and reconstruction operations, precise coordination is critical to success.

government agencies and other actors. Networks have significant limitations, though. Without any formal system of management across these various actors, a network relies on the individuals within these organizations to take the initiative and work together based on a mutual recognition of need. A solely network-based approach relies on trust, reciprocity, and shared understanding.¹² In complex stabilization and reconstruction operations, precise coordination is critical to success. Networks are useful tools for coordinating day-to-day operations, but the orchestrated response required in contingency operations may require greater coordination than a network can provide. Unfortunately, coordination in stability operations in the past has largely relied on networks and ad hoc coordination mechanisms.¹³ Though an extensive field of literature on public administration and organizational theory exists on how to coordinate interagency operations, “the intellectual resources of those fields have not been mined for insights and lessons.”¹⁴ Somehow by balancing the merits of hierarchy and networks, the U.S. government could greatly improve interagency cooperation. The foreign policy community has failed to bring these lessons to bear, but another type of public servant has made great strides in this regard. The emergency management community has created policy doctrines to guide domestic incident response that seek to blend network and hierarchy approaches through the Incident Command System (See Figure 1.). It has also developed a framework for how the nation conducts all-hazard emergency response, applying decades of best practices of the emergency management community and best practices in management and organizational theory. These doctrines have gained international recognition as the standard for and best practices in emergency response. The following two sections outline the history of interagency response mechanisms for domestic incident response and international stabilization and reconstruction missions, respectively.

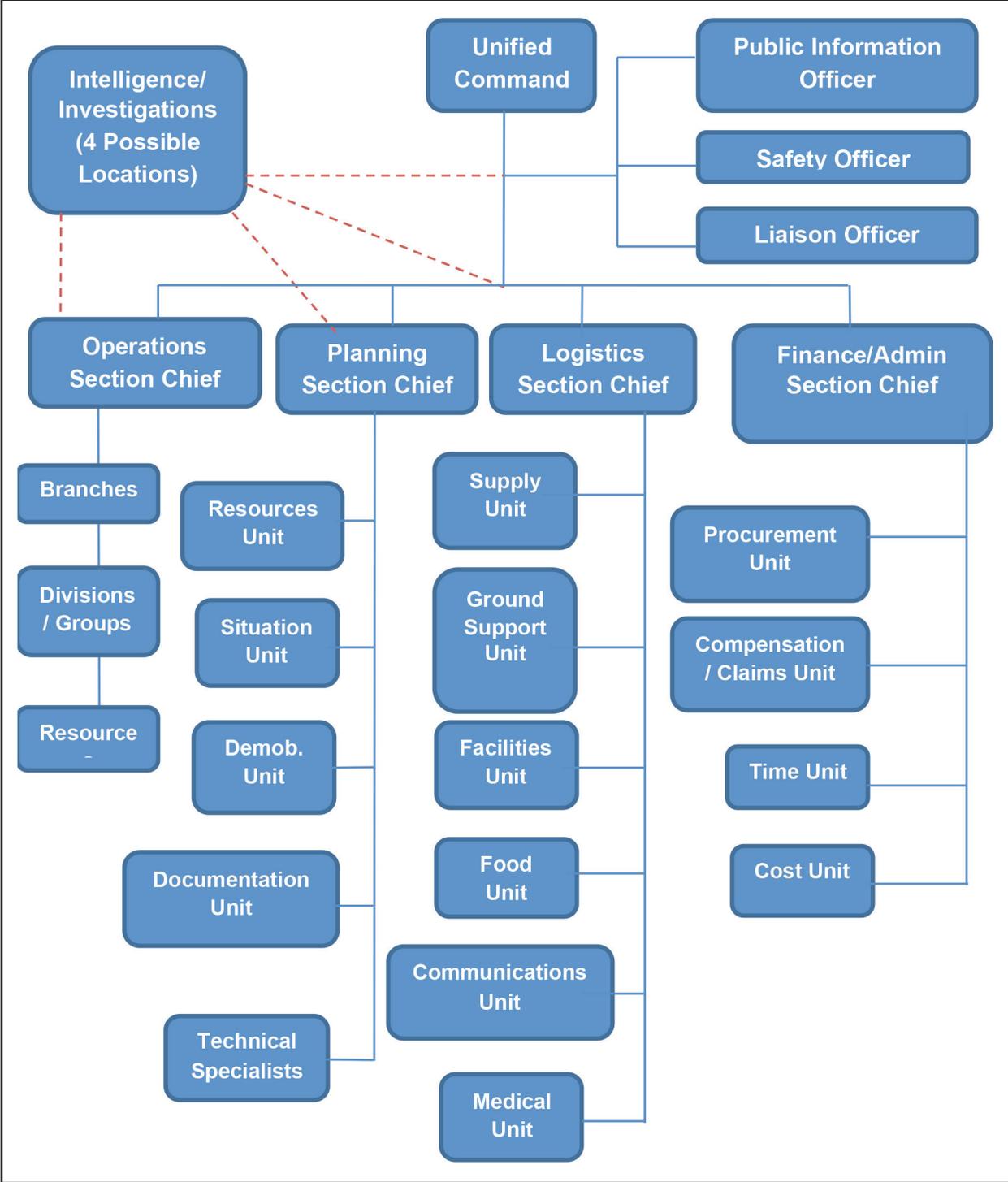


Figure 1: Incident Command System (General) (Source: DHS 2008)

Domestic Incident Response— National Incident Management System (NIMS) and National Response Framework (NRF)

**The failed
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In domestic emergency response, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has developed a systematic approach that blends hierarchy and networks through the NIMS and the NRF. These systems only apply to operations conducted within the U.S. The mission of homeland security is extremely complex and requires the coordinated efforts of all levels of society from the federal government to local, state, non-profit, and private sectors.¹⁵ The decentralized U.S. federal system has posed exceptional difficulties in coordination but, at the same time, offers a plethora of largely untapped lessons and expertise that could be applied to international operational coordination. The failed response to Hurricane Katrina illustrated how the competing structures and authorities of an infantile DHS failed to effectively share information among federal responders and with state and local partners and, ultimately, lacked preparedness for such an operation.¹⁶ These failures led to further amendments to the domestic response mechanisms and new initiatives to improve the U.S. response to domestic emergencies.¹⁷

The federal government had recognized the importance of coordination in a large-scale contingency operation for some time, but it was only within the past decade that the tools for domestic incident response were standardized across the homeland security apparatus. Homeland Security Presidential Directive 5 (HSPD-5), “Management of Domestic Incidents,” published in February 2003, directed the Secretary of Homeland Security to develop a National Response Plan and the NIMS to manage the complex task of coordinating response activities across the federal government and in cooperation with state and local governments.¹⁸ The two documents work hand in hand. The NIMS provides the template for the management of domestic incidents, and the National Response Plan provides the structure and mechanisms for national-level policy for incident management.¹⁹ HSPD-5 requires all federal departments and agencies to implement NIMS for all incident management activities and makes the use of NIMS a requisite for state and local governments to receive federal preparedness assistance.²⁰ Both documents were developed through a collaborative intergovernmental partnership across the federal government and in collaboration with state and local officials and the private and non-profit sectors.²¹

The current NRF is a fourth-generation doctrine. It explains how the nation conducts emergency response operations. The founding document was the 1992 Federal Response Plan, which focused mainly on federal roles and responsibilities in incident response.²² The original National Response Plan, mandated by HSPD-5, superseded the Federal Response Plan and was the first step toward integrating the roles and responsibilities of all levels of government into the framework.²³ It was superseded by the predecessor of the current NRF in January 2008, which amended the National Response Plan based on lessons learned from Hurricane Katrina, further defining the roles and responsibilities of the whole community in incident response, including the private sector and nongovernmental organizations.²⁴ After President Obama issued Presidential Policy Directive 8, “National Preparedness,” the NRF was again updated to align itself with frameworks for the four other elements of national preparedness: prevention, protection, mitigation, and recovery.²⁵ The framework is a “guide to how the nation responds to all types of disasters and emergencies.”²⁶ Recognizing that the turnover of elected and appointed officials can impede the effectiveness of incident response, the NRF is intended to provide a “structure for implementing nationwide response policy and operational coordination for all types of domestic response.”²⁷

According to the NRF, the Secretary of Homeland Security is the principal federal official for domestic incident management, coordinating with other federal agencies to provide unity of effort for incident response.²⁸ Unity of effort, which is a driving principle of the NRF, is different from unity of command. The Secretary’s coordination role does not in any way impede other departments and agencies or state or local partners from carrying out their statutory responsibilities, but rather ensures that overall federal actions are conducted in a synchronized manner.²⁹ Even in response to events that fall under another federal department or agency’s jurisdiction, the head of that department or agency may request that the Secretary of Homeland Security activate NRF structures to provide more effective interagency coordination across various parties to the response.³⁰ When any federal department or agency has a responsibility for managing a response coordinated by the Secretary of Homeland Security under the NRF, that organization is represented in the unified command structure overseeing the incident at the field, regional, and national levels.³¹ This is a critical point because DHS coordinates efforts from various organizations, but it never exerts control over them.

For Stafford Act disasters and emergencies, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) coordinates the response activities across the federal government and of certain NGOs with

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critical roles in the response. To do so, it activates 14 emergency support functions (ESFs). The ESF system is the structure through which a wide array of response capabilities across various federal departments and agencies are coordinated.³² Each ESF has lead and supporting agencies, and these 14 ESFs applied together constitute a holistic response to any incident (See Table 1). ESFs are not built on the capabilities or authorities of any single department or agency. Each of the 14 ESFs is assigned a coordinator to oversee the preparedness activities under that ESF.³³ Under each ESF are also primary agencies with authorities, resources, and capabilities necessary for the accomplishment of the capabilities under that ESF. Finally, various other supporting agencies do not have specific authority for the mission area but have capabilities and resources that may support primary agencies in executing the objectives of the ESF.³⁴ The ESF structure of the NRF is based on capabilities necessary for response and taps all entities that have those necessary capabilities required for holistic response. Stafford Act authorities allow FEMA the unique ability to direct other agencies supporting ESFs to do work under a mission assignment, a more direct and rapid tasking than under a typical interagency agreement.

At the field level, the NRF mandates joint field offices be established to coordinate federal, state, local, private sector, and NGO actors under the organizational structures established in the NIMS.³⁵ A unified coordination group (NIMS unified command) oversees the operation and consists of federal, state, local, tribal, and private sector leadership with significant jurisdictional authorities or responsibilities for the operation.³⁶ The unified coordination group ensures that the capabilities of all ESFs are orchestrated toward the incident objectives. All federal departments and agencies are required to implement the concepts and structures established in the NRF, ensuring that all federal responders are operating under a common framework.³⁷

The NRF is structured under NIMS principles. The NIMS is built upon a common and proven command and management system: the Incident Command System. The Incident Command System, initially developed in the 1970s in California as a coordination tool for combating forest fires across multiple jurisdictions, is a fundamental management system designed to enable efficient management of any incident across six functional areas: command, operations, planning, logistics, finance/administration, and intelligence/investigations.³⁸ It is based on 14 proven management characteristics that strengthen efficiency: common terminology, modular organization, management by objective, incident action planning, manageable span of control, incident facilities and locations, comprehensive resource management, integrated communications, establishment

ESF #	ESF Name	ESF Coordinator
ESF #1	Transportation	Department of Transportation
ESF #2	Communications	DHS/National Communications System
ESF #3	Public Works and Engineering	DOD/U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
ESF #4	Firefighting	USDA/U.S. Forest Service DHS/FEMA/U.S. Fire Administration
ESF #5	Information and Planning	DHS/FEMA
ESF #6	Mass Care, Emergency Assistance, Temporary Housing, Human Services	DHS/FEMA
ESF #7	Logistics	General Services Administration DHS/FEMA
ESF #8	Public Health and Medical Services	Department of Health and Human Services
ESF #9	Search and Rescue	DHS/FEMA
ESF #10	Oil and Hazardous Materials Response	Environmental Protection Agency
ESF #11	Agriculture and Natural Resources	Department of Agriculture
ESF #12	Energy	Department of Energy
ESF #13	Public Safety and Security	Department of Justice/Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives
ESF #14	<i>Superseded by National Disaster Recovery Framework</i>	
ESF #15	External Affairs	DHS

Table 1: Emergency Support Functions and Lead Agencies (Source: DHS 2013)

and transfer of command, chain of command and unity of command, unified command, accountability, dispatch/deployment, and information and intelligence management.³⁹ In other words, the NIMS was created using proven management and organizational practices, not through an ad hoc system created largely in isolation. No such mechanism exists for international stability operations.

NIMS is designed to be flexible enough to manage any incident, regardless of size, complexity, cause, or location.⁴⁰ The NIMS establishes a standard organizational structure for management of contingency operations but respects the autonomy of each organization involved in a response. It allows agencies with different legal, geographic, and functional authorities to work together effectively without impeding any individual organization's authority, responsibility, or accountability.⁴¹ At the heart of this is the concept

of unified command. Unified command is extremely important for a multijurisdictional response because it allows each agency to maintain its lead role while still coordinating efforts effectively.⁴² Within a unified command, the leaders of each organization responding to the incident jointly determine objectives, strategies, plans, resource allocation, and priorities.⁴³ A single set of objectives is established for an incident, and the efforts of all participating agencies are optimized by performing their assignments under a single incident action plan approved by the unified command.⁴⁴ Under the unified command are operations, logistics, planning, finance, and intelligence/investigations sections.⁴⁵ The effectiveness of NIMS is not only achieved by its use of proven organizational and management structures used by emergency responders, but because it is used across the entire U.S. emergency management community, not just within the federal government. The National Integration Center manages NIMS implementation, training, administration, and revision and ensures that state and local jurisdictions are compliant with and proficient in NIMS.⁴⁶ It is a living document that may be revised and improved based on lessons learned from application.

These standards were not magic fixes to the problem of interagency coordination, but continual improvement and practice continue to increase their effectiveness. The NRF has been far more successful than its predecessor, the National Response Plan.⁴⁷ Its scope was greatly broadened to incorporate the roles of non-federal actors and critical lessons learned from Hurricanes Katrina, and it has proven to function well in more recent incidents.⁴⁸ The NIMS was initially criticized after Katrina because parallel command structures between federal and state personnel created questions of who was in charge, complicating responsibilities.⁴⁹ Further, state authorities lacked sufficient knowledge of NIMS, and it failed to adequately address jurisdictions, authority, and leadership.⁵⁰ This criticism was largely unfair because NIMS was designed to provide an effective mechanism for joint command without imposing a central command over all contributing partners.⁵¹ Ongoing training and practice of the NIMS will greatly improve its effectiveness.⁵²

The Incident Command System used in the NIMS is an innovative tool that combines the organizational theories of networks and hierarchies.

The Incident Command System used in the NIMS is an innovative tool that combines the organizational theories of networks and hierarchies.⁵³ The capability-based ESF structure established in the NRF and the unified command structure established by the NIMS assist to overcome many of the inefficiencies and duplications of effort across so many overlapping jurisdictions and authorities.⁵⁴ The NIMS and NRF seek to manage a daunting interagency process by establishing key lines of authority and responsibilities, creating common strategies and planning, and optimizing the effectiveness of the network of organizations responsible for responding to a

domestic incident.⁵⁵

In sum, in order to improve interagency coordination in domestic complex contingency operations, the U.S. government has created an effective system of interagency coordination by drawing on organizational theory and proven management strategies and incorporating them in strategic doctrine that is binding across the federal government and a precondition for aid eligibility for state and local partners. No such framework and system of management has been created for international contingency operations. Efforts have been made to improve interagency coordination, but no initiative as bold as the creation of the NRF and the NIMS has been tried to govern complex contingency operations outside U.S. soil. The next section reviews a history of far less ambitious interagency coordination efforts for international contingency operations.

Interagency Coordination Efforts in an International Operation

PRESIDENTIAL DECISION DIRECTIVE 56 (PDD-56), "MANAGING COMPLEX CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS"

The first effort to establish an interagency coordination mechanism for complex contingency operations overseas took place in the Clinton Administration. The U.S. government became more commonly involved in stability operations in the 1990s, and the lessons of Somalia and Bosnia led many high-level government officials to consider the need for a remedy for the significant coordination problems in planning and executing these missions.⁵⁶ After these early failures, many of the lessons learned from those operations resulted in changes to how the U.S. government coordinated its efforts. Operation Restore Hope in Haiti applied many lessons learned from previous operations, and in order to institutionalize these lessons, Clinton signed a Presidential Decision Directive so these interagency planning and coordination improvements would not be lost.⁵⁷ After two years of planning and vetting across the government, PDD-56 created an internal management tool for complex contingency operations.⁵⁸ Prior to this directive, little guidance was available to govern managing complex contingency operations. Joint manuals did not explain methods for interagency planning and execution, so the DoD and other agencies welcomed the policy guidance in the presidential directive.⁵⁹

PDD-56 mandated reform in the interagency coordination process, recognizing that the U.S. will continue to conduct complex

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contingency operations, and that greater coordination is required to effectively utilize all instruments of national power.⁶⁰ The directive had five central pillars: a National Security Council Executive Committee provided unified planning guidance and oversaw the day-to-day management of the operation; a political-military plan established a whole-of-government strategy to achieve success; interagency rehearsals refined agency plans and unity of effort; interagency after-action reviews allowed for assessing and capturing lessons learned; and interagency training created a cadre of officials with improved interagency management skills.⁶¹

PDD-56 was largely focused on achieving strategic consensus in Washington but provided no guidance on translating this action into effective coordination on the ground at the operational level.⁶² The heart of PDD-56 was the political-military plan. The plan would cover, at minimum, a situational assessment, the U.S. national interest, a mission statement, objectives, concept of operations and organization, the desired end state, preparatory tasks, transition/exit strategies, functional or mission area tasks/agency plans, and lead agency responsibilities.⁶³ The political-military plan would provide the strategic objectives to govern the interagency operators on the ground in the operational area. After-action reviews would identify legal, budgetary, and execution problems to ensure that future operations did not repeat these mistakes.⁶⁴ Similar to the NRF, PDD-56 recognized the need for ongoing improvements. However, since there was no strategic “framework,” it is unclear where these lessons learned would be stored for reference in creating political-military plans for future operations. The essential playbook should have been made into a living document, like the NRF, so that amendments could be made. The NRF is in effect at all times. PDD-56 did not have an automatic trigger for initiation of the process, and it required a judgment call at the National Security Council or pressure from a high-level official.⁶⁵ In fact, it was never initiated, even for several operations that would have been well-suited for the process, including Hurricane Mitch and operations in Eritrea-Ethiopia.⁶⁶ Since the process was not used in well-suited contingency operations, the utility of the PDD-56 process was not demonstrated and it fell to the wayside.⁶⁷ PDD-56 was a promising first-step for managing complex contingency operations, but failure to use it and shortfalls in horizontal and vertical implementation of the strategic plan left room for improvement.⁶⁸ The scope of PDD-56 was much smaller than the NRF/NIMS. The strategic planning and training requirements in PDD-56 are critical parts of the NRF but are only one small aspect of a much larger domestic response framework, and PDD-56 process provided no efforts to remedy interagency coordination at the field level. The original National Response Plan

was not a perfect document either, but improvements were made based on lessons learned, and the current NRF was the result. PDD-56, for all of its good intentions, instead just faded away. Hamblet and Kline foresaw the failure of the directive:

The next administration should maintain the momentum of these efforts...Perhaps Congress will establish a continuing requirement which calls on every agency of government to adopt the reforms that are contained in this directive. One can only trust that progress made to date will not be swept away.⁶⁹

Instead, the Bush Administration continued the tradition of failing to initiate either the National Security Council Executive Committee system or the political-military plan. Planning for operations in Afghanistan and Iraq largely removed civilian agencies from the initial planning process.⁷⁰ Three years into the Iraqi operation, it was clear that further interagency coordination and preparation for stability operations were necessary, and a more robust civilian capacity was required to conduct effective reconstruction activities.⁷¹ In other words, the conclusions made after Somalia and Bosnia which led to PDD-56 were relearned in 2005, largely because the initial lessons learned were lost in a failure to implement PDD-56. As a result, Bush signed his own directive to govern interagency management of stability operations.

Three years into the Iraqi operation, it was clear that further interagency coordination and preparation for stability operations were necessary, and a more robust civilian capacity was required...

NATIONAL SECURITY PRESIDENTIAL DIRECTIVE 44 (NSPD-44), "MANAGEMENT OF INTERAGENCY EFFORTS CONCERNING RECONSTRUCTION AND STABILIZATION"

In December 2005, George W. Bush implemented NSPD-44, formally superseding PDD-56. The directive assigned the Secretary of State as the lead coordinator of U.S. government efforts to prepare for, plan, and conduct stabilization and reconstruction activities.⁷² The Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization would coordinate all U.S. government activities relating to reconstruction and stabilization, and participating agencies were responsible for coordinating activities through the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS). The Secretaries of State and Defense were responsible for integrating stabilization and reconstruction plans with military plans and were assigned to jointly develop a framework for fully coordinating stabilization and reconstruction activities with military operations at all levels.⁷³ Finally, NSPD-44 established a Policy Coordination Committee for Reconstruction and Stabilization Operations, chaired by the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization and a National Security Council staff member.⁷⁴

The S/CRS was established in 2004 within State to better coordinate reconstruction and stabilization efforts.⁷⁵ Until S/CRS was created, all elements of the Iraq operation were conducted out of the Pentagon with little coordination with civilian agencies.⁷⁶ NSPD-44 outlined the scope of the S/CRS.⁷⁷ The S/CRS had two major tasks: building a civilian surge capacity and organizing all civilian efforts of the U.S. government and coordinating them with the military.⁷⁸ From the outset S/CRS was hampered, as USAID, the Department of Justice, State regional bureaus, and other participants in reconstruction and stabilization tried to limit the office's role.⁷⁹ Nonetheless, the S/CRS had successfully progressed on each of its mandates by 2007 by creating a Civilian Response Corps and an Interagency Management System (IMS) to coordinate operations.⁸⁰ The IMS was the next generation of coordination for overseas contingency operations. (The Civilian Response Corps will be examined in the "Staffing the Civilian Response" section of this paper).

INTERAGENCY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The IMS was designed to provide loose command and control over stability operations by bringing USAID, State, DoD, and other actors into a loose command and control structure.

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[IMS] is a response mechanism. It does not preclude interagency scenario-based, prevention or contingency planning, which may occur independently. The system will draw upon such plans when they do exist. When a significant crisis occurs or begins to emerge, the Secretary of State may decide to establish an Interagency [Reconstruction & Management (R&S)] Management System based on a decision by the Principals' or Deputies' committees and implemented at the direction of the [National Security Council].⁸²

The IMS has three components of interagency management. First, at the Washington-level, the Country Reconstruction and Stabilization Group, a policy coordination committee with a planning and operational staff, prepares a strategic plan to include a common strategic goal, concept of operations, major U.S. government tasks, and resource requirements.⁸³ It prepares strategic recommendations for decision by the Deputies' or Principals' Committees to guide all U.S. civilians in Washington and in the field.⁸⁴ Second, at the geographic combatant command headquarters, an Integration Planning Cell assists in harmonizing civilian and military planning processes and operations.⁸⁵ The Integration Planning Cell supports the commander by integrating the civilian component of the

operation with the military operational plans.⁸⁶ Finally, in the field or at an embassy, an Advance Civilian Team is the interagency general staff under the Chief of Mission. All civilian field operations are overseen by the assigned Chief of Mission, and the Chief of Mission integrates the Advance Civilian Team into any existing embassy or USAID mission structure.⁸⁷ Further, if field units are required, Field Advance Civilian Teams may be deployed to implement programs at the local or provincial level and integrate with the military to achieve unity of effort.⁸⁸

The IMS, unlike the NIMS/NRF, did not consist of any framework for roles and responsibilities across the U.S. government, coordination mechanisms with non-U.S. government partners, or system of command and management at the operational and tactical levels. It did, however, explain the relationship of the strategic headquarters-based planning and the field-level operational and tactical operations, unlike PDD-56, and designated the Chief of Mission as the leader of all civilian actors (unlike the unified command in the NIMS). Like PDD-56, it was never successfully implemented, and it largely failed to address exactly how civilians under the Chief of Mission would coordinate efforts with the military command. If NIMS was used at the field level, a consistent, rather than ad hoc, structure would exist through which the DoD could interface with civilian leaders. IMS was approved at a high level in the Bush Administration, and it was exercised several times, but it was never used in a real-world crisis.⁸⁹ The State Department's Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR) terminated the unsuccessful IMS and called for the creation of an International Operational Responses Framework (IORF), drawing from the systems of coordination in the NIMS/NRF.

2010 QDDR

Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton published the first ever QDDR in 2010. The QDDR set forth an ambitious review and reform agenda for State and USAID, aimed at working “smarter and better by setting clear priorities, managing for results, holding ourselves accountable, and unifying our efforts.”⁹⁰ One principal challenge identified in the QDDR was the need of USAID and State to improve their ability to address crises and conflicts associated with fragile states, instability, and natural disasters by supporting stability and reconstruction tasks.⁹¹ Though the capabilities and skills needed for successful stability and reconstruction efforts exist in the U.S. government, the QDDR noted that these capabilities are not effectively integrated.⁹² All efforts to coordinate with DoD and other civilian agencies had admittedly been “largely ad hoc or post hoc,” and the U.S. government has failed to make conflict and

The State Department's Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR) terminated the unsuccessful IMS and called for the creation of an International Operational Responses Framework...

The QDDR also identified key functions that other civilian agencies offer for complex interagency response...

crisis management a central mission under an adequate operational structure.⁹³ The QDDR also identified key functions that other civilian agencies offer for complex interagency response: DoD has the unique ability to stop violence and achieve security, the Department of Justice can assist in improving foreign justice systems, the DHS has knowledge on infrastructure protection and border security, the Department of Health and Human Services has skills in disease prevention and sustainable health systems, the Department of Agriculture can assist in food security and rural development initiatives, the Department of Energy has unique knowledge of energy infrastructure, the Department of the Treasury can assist to improve a country's financial systems, and the Department of Commerce can assist to expand business opportunities.⁹⁴ Because so many resources are available in the U.S. government, the QDDR recognizes the need for an integrated framework for crisis management.⁹⁵

The QDDR took the first step to propose an International Operational Response Framework (IORF), which would be vetted across the National Security Council Staff.⁹⁶ The IORF would ensure transparent and accountable leadership, lines of responsibility across the U.S. government, and establish procedures for organizing planning and operations both in Washington and in the field.⁹⁷ It would use lessons learned from both domestic and international interagency response and would “draw on the widely recognized FEMA NIMS and other international mechanisms.”⁹⁸ Further, the QDDR called for a revamping of the Civilian Response Corps to augment the training and deployment of qualified personnel for worldwide deployment.⁹⁹ More than four years later, there has been skepticism over the accomplishments of State in achieving many of the ambitious goals established in the 2010 QDDR. The fate of the IORF is uncertain, but the logical leader in drafting a potential framework, State's Bureau of Conflict and Stability Operations, still has not made much progress on this regard. This failure was a key finding of an Office of Inspector General report on the Bureau of Conflict and Stability Operations.¹⁰⁰ It is unclear whether the U.S. government will go forward with creating a comprehensive framework for international interagency stability operations like the NIMS/NRF. The new administration has launched the second QDDR process, but has no vested interest in the recommendations in the previous QDDR, so that particular goal may lose momentum.¹⁰¹ This author seeks to promote the merits of following through on this particular proposal and establishing an interagency working group to create an IORF.

Civilian Surge Capacities— Staffing the Civilian Response

How the U.S. government responds and coordinates with its many agencies and with other parties is only the first challenge. Even if a broad framework is in place, the resources must be made available to make such a response possible. Currently, the civilian components of the U.S. government do not have a sufficient expeditionary capability. The first step was creating the Civilian Response Corps. The QDDR has reemphasized that this initiative is critical to future success. The Civilian Response Corps was designed to deploy teams of people with functional skills, including area experts and linguists, to a conflict zone.¹⁰² By 2010, the Civilian Response Corps had grown to 1,200 personnel and had sufficient budgeting for up to 2,200 personnel.¹⁰³ However, an Office of Inspector General report found that despite the QDDR goal to strengthen the Civilian Response Corps, the Bureau of Conflict and Stability Operations has actually weakened its capacity, moving the U.S. government further away from the aspired “whole-of-government” approach to stabilization operations.

For further ideas and inspiration, State need look no further than the DHS. The Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act directed the Secretary of DHS to create a surge capacity force to deploy from across the department and the U.S. government to provide additional civilian capabilities during catastrophic disasters.¹⁰⁴ Membership is voluntary, and volunteers train to augment the FEMA workforce in the areas of logistics, community relations, individual assistance, and public assistance.¹⁰⁵ In response to Hurricane Sandy, DHS deployed 1,100 employees, and the program is currently being opened to other federal agencies.¹⁰⁶ The surge capacity force, which seeks to eventually meet a goal of 15,000 volunteers, currently has 3,800 personnel.¹⁰⁷ These personnel remain in pay status with their component agencies, but any overtime and travel expenses in the case of activation are paid by DHS through Stafford Act funds.¹⁰⁸ It is worth considering the merits of combining these two programs. It makes little sense to create one surge capacity for domestic incidents and another for international incidents. State and DHS should seek approval to combine the two programs. Employees could choose to qualify for and to be considered for either international or domestic deployments or both, but having two separate deployment systems is an unnecessary duplication of effort. Further, FEMA has a robust reservist program which allows it to activate a trained reserve component workforce to augment FEMA field operations.

The surge capacity force, which seeks to eventually meet a goal of 15,000 volunteers, currently has 3,800 personnel.

The implementation of such a program could provide State with a much-needed expeditionary workforce. FEMA and DHS as a whole have become extremely proficient in staging complex contingency operations within the U.S. State should leverage the institutional knowledge of DHS while it seeks ways to build an effective civilian capability for complex contingency operations abroad. Failure to do so would be a lost opportunity to harness the institutional knowledge already possessed within the U.S. government.

Recommendations

International and domestic contingency operations may involve different actors and have different mandates, but the challenges posed for interagency coordination are too similar to be overlooked.

This analysis of interagency coordination efforts for complex contingency operations has sought to demonstrate the failure of the U.S. government to apply the same set of lessons to the same problem in two different contexts. International and domestic contingency operations may involve different actors and have different mandates, but the challenges posed for interagency coordination are too similar to be overlooked. In a large-scale emergency response, the Secretary of Homeland Security, through the FEMA Administrator, coordinates a holistic federal response under which seven cabinet secretaries and two independent government agencies have lead roles in ESFs. Further, the decentralized federal system of government creates greater authority at the state and local levels for emergency response, so the federal government must respect the primary responsibility of the state, its governor, and its emergency services for providing for their peoples' security. The federal government is only a supporting agency in most cases, making coordination both extremely important and problematic.

Depending on the nature of the crisis and the main parties involved, the U.S. may find itself unilaterally or multilaterally responding for stabilization and reconstruction efforts overseas and may operate alongside a United Nations mission. The primary principals responsible for international operations are the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of State, and the USAID Administrator (who falls under the authority of the Secretary of State). DoD is probably the most organized, plan-oriented organization in the world, whereas the civilian diplomats and development experts largely fail to plan effectively for expeditionary contingency operations. FEMA has expertise in civilian operational planning for contingency operations that State could leverage but it has largely failed to do.

FEMA has decades of experience in domestic incident response, primarily under the authorities of the Stafford Act for federally-declared disasters and emergencies. However, FEMA has recently been called upon more often to provide its unique ability to coordinate

various interagency operations for non-Stafford Act operations. In June 2014, in response to an influx of unaccompanied alien children at the Southern border of the U.S., the President established a unified coordination group to manage the humanitarian operation.¹⁰⁹ FEMA also conducted a coordination role in response to the Ebola threat later that year. FEMA's coordination role in these types of operations, which are not FEMA's primary missions, are testament to its unique capability to harness the efforts of various organizations and authorities under a unified effort. It is the successful implementation and universal recognition of the NRF and NIMS that have made interagency coordination, so long a pariah of the U.S. government, possible.

The analysis in this paper has demonstrated that the NIMS and NRF doctrine for interagency management of domestic contingency operations is far more advanced than the parallel efforts of our foreign policy civilians to manage the interagency in foreign contingency operations. Further, it contends that the interagency management problems and nature of operations faced domestically and abroad are so similar that the complete absence of academic literature related to the application of NIMS/NRF to an international setting is tragic. The QDDR has taken a first step in calling for this application, but little progress has been made in implementing the IORF. Even in the three years since the QDDR was published, academia has not played its part in analyzing the merits and faults of attempting to apply the NIMS/NRF to an international contingency operation setting.

This paper further contends that all of the knowledge and know-how exists for creating an IORF and implementing the NIMS for an international operation, but government leaders and academia have failed to connect the dots and bring together the appropriate institutional knowledge from the emergency management and foreign policy communities. It is a task for experts in emergency management and foreign policy to analyze the applicability of NIMS and an overarching policy framework to stability operations, and this paper seeks to initiate that largely absent but critical discussion.

The NRF is built around 15 ESFs, which taken as a whole build a comprehensive emergency response to any threat. Similarly, George Mason University's School of Public Policy has developed a Conceptual Model of Peace Operations which breaks down a complex contingency operation for maintaining or restoring peace after a conflict or natural disaster into functions, tasks, and organizations.¹¹⁰ Four functions, Peace Making, Peace Keeping, Peace Building, and Peace Support, are the main functions needed to achieve success in stability operations.¹¹¹ Each function is broken down into various tasks that may be assigned, as appropriate, to individual organizations and may be measured for success.¹¹² Tasks

Even in the three years since the QDDR was published, academia has not played its part in analyzing the merits and faults of attempting to apply the NIMS/NRF to an international contingency operation setting.

are related to the organizations that have the appropriate capacity to accomplish the task.¹¹³ The Conceptual Model of Peace Operations tasks and related organizations could provide the basis for the international version of the domestic ESFs (See Table 2).

Function	Task
Peace Making	Non-Adjudicatory Processes
	Adjudicatory Processes
	Confidence-Building Measures
	Status
	Verification
	Rewards
	Identify Special Representatives/Envoys
	Sanctions
Peace Building	Humanitarian Assistance/ Disaster Relief
	Refugee/IDP/At-Risk Populations
	Human Rights
	Self-Governance
	Economic Stability
	Infrastructure
	Reintegration of Former Combatants
	Environmental Protection
Peace Keeping	Observation
	Force
	Presence
	Military/Force/Unit Movements
	Provide for Law and Order
	Security
	Demining
	Demobilization of Former Combatants Specific Missions
Peace Support	Situational Awareness/Monitoring
	Decision Support
	Supervision/Synchronization
	Information Operations
	Logistics

Table 2: Conceptual Model of Peace Operations: Tasks
(Source: GMU 2002)

An IORF must explain not only the key government functions, but also the functions of other non-U.S. government actors that play roles in stability operations. An early lesson from the initial National Response Plan was that a strictly U.S. government-focused framework that does not account for the other partners involved in the response operation will be inadequate. The IORF should serve as the official “playbook” for stability operations, ensuring that the overall strategic framework will be implemented and improved upon across administrations. The IORF will be a living document, continuously improved but always in effect to guide the U.S. government in its ongoing role in stability and reconstruction efforts. The original National Response Plan was not perfect, but it has matured and improved through four iterations. As testament, the long-term recovery ESF in the third-generation NRF was superseded in 2014 by a new and separate yet related National Disaster Recovery Framework, which like the NRF builds a framework for whole-of-government recovery operations and organizes efforts across lead and support agencies for six recovery support functions. At some point in the future, as the international framework matures, it may prove wise to break out separate frameworks for stability operations and other frameworks for longer-term reconstruction and nation-building operations, with a seamless transition similar to the transition from domestic response to recovery.

The original National Response Plan was not perfect, but it has matured and improved through four iterations.

Like the NRF, the IORF should also be unclassified, leaving classified material for classified annexes to the original document, so that the overall strategic plan of U.S. government stability operations may be understood by all actors. The writers of the NRF understood the importance of providing non-federal partners with a familiarity with the baseline concepts and mechanics of the document, and an IORF would also benefit by achieving such an understanding. The IORF would not just clarify how the whole of government conducts stability and reconstruction operations and how the transition from stabilization to reconstruction to demobilization will take place. It would also hold agencies responsible for the functions of the operation they are responsible for. This would greatly assist State in getting much-needed buy in and support from other civilian agencies that have primarily domestic focuses.

The NRF is nothing without the NIMS, and the NIMS is nothing without the NRF. The NIMS provides a systematic approach to incident management that can be applied to any incident, regardless of size, cause, location, or complexity. As such, the NIMS should be directly adopted in international contingency operations. No revision or amendment to the NIMS is necessary, because the flexibility of the system specifically makes it applicable to any incident management scenario. Its contents are the inspiration for emergency management

systems around the world.¹¹⁴ The IORF should work hand in hand with the NIMS, as does the NRF.

In order to implement such a sweeping reform of how the U.S. government conducts international stability operations, the direct adoption of the NIMS and the development of an IORF that is binding across the various participants within the U.S. government should be mandated by Presidential Directive, as was the NRF/NIMS in HSPD-5. The Secretary of State should be assigned with vetting the IORF across the U.S. government before issuing the final draft to the President for approval. The IORF will constantly be improved and updated based on lessons learned in future operations, but it should be broad enough to capture best practices and authorities acceptable to any future administration.

Conclusion

The NRF and NIMS, which effectively guide domestic contingency operations, should be used as models for improving international response efforts.

This paper seeks to demonstrate that all required institutional knowledge exists to improve the interagency coordination problems that plague international stability operations. Despite the plethora of institutional and academic knowledge that exist for managing interagency contingency operations domestically, no academic literature exists to apply the proven principles used in domestic emergency management to international stability operations. Academics and practitioners should further the proposals made in this paper and in the QDDR by focusing their attention at the application of tried and proven emergency management functions for incident management and response to international stability operations.

The NRF and NIMS, which effectively guide domestic contingency operations, should be used as models for improving international response efforts. To ensure that such an initiative is implemented successfully and applied consistently, an IORF should be created and approved by the President as the international version of the NRF. It should be the playbook for how the U.S. government conducts stability operations overseas, defining concepts, identifying key players and responsibilities of U.S. government agencies, and explaining the interactions of and U.S. government with local governments, NGOs, the private sector, and other international actors. It should use the Conceptual Model of Peace Operations as a basis for establishing the international version of the ESF structure, and assign lead agencies for each task. The NIMS is widely known around the world and has been used by many countries as the inspiration for their own emergency response management systems. The NIMS, based on its flexibility to be used

in any incident, should also eventually become an international standard for management of stabilization and reconstruction activities, and the United Nations, NGOs, and foreign governments should be encouraged to utilize the principles of the NIMS. Many already use it for domestic emergency management. The NIMS is successful because all emergency responders in the U.S. use it. Utilization of the NIMS is required for a state or local organization to receive federal preparedness assistance.¹¹⁵ Similar incentives could eventually be used for awarding development contracts to NGOs. If all parties involved in a stability operation were to eventually use the principles and systems of NIMS, the U.S. government's ability to successfully unite efforts among various organizations would be greatly increased. U.S. government activities in stability operations do not occur in a vacuum. The NRF incorporated doctrine for coordinating with non-U.S. government parties to a response, and any U.S. government effort to coordinate interagency cooperation without taking into account the other various parties to a conflict would greatly diminish the effectiveness of the effort.

International contingency operations requiring a large civilian response for stabilization and reconstruction tasks are largely in their infancy. Emergency management mechanisms for effective response have evolved over decades. Yet civilian responses in stability operations have, thus far, failed to incorporate any of the tried and proven principles of civilian response in emergency management, nor has any attention been made in academia to the application of these principles. It would be tragic if the foreign policy community continued to ignore the large field of knowledge and expertise in coordination for domestic contingency operations. A contingency operation is a contingency operation, whether it occurs domestically or internationally. As the old saying goes, politics is lost at the water's edge. In the case of managing complex contingency operations, perhaps it would be more appropriate to say that lessons learned stop at the water's edge. It falls to the academic community and to policy makers to advance the ideas in this paper and evaluate the applicability of the NIMS and NRF to international stability operations. It is the best tool for managing complex contingency operations that currently exists. If a better system for managing them existed, the emergency response community would probably already be using it. **IAP**

A contingency operation is a contingency operation, whether it occurs domestically or internationally. As the old saying goes, politics is lost at the water's edge.

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