



Joint Urban Warrior 2009

Examining A Comprehensive Approach to Conflict Prevention



Quicklook Report

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Wargaming Division, Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory



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Joint Urban Warrior 09 (JUW09) – Quicklook Report


OVERVIEW

This Quicklook Report is intended to summarize the highlights of JUW09, and does not include all the outputs of the game. A full report will be written after complete analysis of game interaction and outputs.

JUW09's problem statement was: "How will the joint force contribute to a Whole of Government Conflict Prevention approach?" From this problem statement, the following game objectives were developed:



Objectives



- Whole of Government Objectives (Core Competency 6)
 - Outline different definitions of Conflict Prevention
 - Identify how each organization perceives its role
 - Explore more effective means to accomplish Whole of Government objectives
 - Assessment, collaboration, synchronization
 - Identify gaps that exist in supporting and executing a holistic approach to conflict prevention
 - Utilize and disseminate planning frameworks
 - Responsibilities of USG agencies
 - Capabilities and capacities of USG agencies to accomplish assigned tasks
 - Collaboration and integration
- Identify joint and service shortfalls in supporting Conflict Prevention activities, and offer improvements with regards to: (Core Competency 1, 2, 5)
 - Common assessment
 - Campaign design
 - Steady State Campaign Plan design
 - Inform GCC Theater Campaign Plan assessment methodology
 - Examine indicators for one of AFRICOM's desired strategic effects
 - Collaborative planning
 - Training and advising
 - Preparation of the Environment
 - Urban
 - Understanding relevant population

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JUW is co-sponsored by the U.S. Marine Corps (USMC) and U.S. Joint Forces Command (USJFCOM) and is designed to address and improve joint and combined urban operations concept development and experimentation (CD&E). JUW involves service, joint, multinational, and interagency participation throughout the pathway. The JUW09 lead organizations for the USMC and USJFCOM were the Center for Irregular Warfare and the Joint Irregular Warfare Center, respectively.

JUW09 was conducted from April 20-24, 2009 at the William F. Bolger Leadership Center in Potomac, Maryland. Participants represented all five services, the Department of State (Bureau for African Affairs, Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization), U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), think tanks, academia, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and more than a dozen multinational partners. (See Appendix A for a complete list).

METHODOLOGY

Simulation

JUW09 was designed as a discovery game consisting of plenary, simulation and seminar elements. The intent of the simulation was to have subject matter experts and real-world participants (along with surrogates) play through the processes of assessment and planning in a comprehensive approach to conflict prevention. Twenty-seven entities were represented in the simulation (see Appendix B). Each organization or agency had its own table, and all the tables were arranged facing each other in a circle in a large hall. The large hall provided military and civilian U.S. government (USG) personnel, NGOs and international participants a venue for exchanging ideas and collaboration.

The simulation was structured to identify points of collaboration and friction, which could be further analyzed and discussed in the seminar portion of the game. Participants in the simulation were instructed to play real-world constraints and processes as much as feasible within the limitations of the game. Game designers recognized that any simulation would necessarily be constrained and artificial. The simulation was limited by time, expert staffing and resources, and these artificialities were acknowledged. Overall, senior mentors and other expert participants deemed the high-level processes replicated during the simulation to be quite realistic and sufficiently valid for game discussion purposes.

ICAF

A significant departure from real-world play in JUW09 was the directed use of the Interagency Conflict Assessment Framework (ICAF). ICAF is a tool that enables an interagency team to assess conflict situations systematically and collaboratively, and supports USG interagency planning for conflict prevention, mitigation and stabilization. In July 2007, the USG Reconstruction and Stabilization Policy Coordination Committee (R&S PCC) authorized the Principles of the ICAF as the interagency conflict assessment framework. However, ICAF is currently not in widespread use. JUW09 directed the players to use ICAF in the interest of focusing player activity and socializing this new tool. Due to time constraints, players were not fully trained on how to conduct an interagency conflict assessment using the ICAF, nor were all the steps of the process followed in detail. Any insights on ICAF from JUW09 should be limited to general observations, since the game was never intended to rigorously experiment with the framework.

Scenario

The simulation portion of JUW09 played a fictional 2015 Horn of Africa (HOA) regional scenario with transnational actors and a host of problems and potentials for conflict at the country and regional levels. JUW09 did not intend to identify or fix the problems in the Horn of Africa; the fictional HOA scenario was simply a vehicle for examining conflict prevention issues.

Seminar

After each simulation move, the participants were evenly divided into seven interdisciplinary seminar cells. Facilitators led each cell through a series of discussion questions crafted to focus thinking and analysis about the simulation move, and synthesizing that discussion into insights to address game objectives. At the end of the game, each cell produced and briefed their recommendations.

PRELIMINARY INSIGHTS ON A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO CONFLICT PREVENTION

Conflict Prevention and Interests

Recognizing that any goal is partially defined by interests, the United States' conflict prevention interests and goals are unclear. Currently, there is no doctrine to guide conflict prevention efforts in the Department of Defense (DOD). USG efforts may intend to prevent violent conflict in cases where such conflict is perceived to threaten U.S. interests. In other cases, the U.S. seeks to manage a conflict in which U.S. interests (economic, security or otherwise) are perceived as either not threatened by or positively served by the conflict.

Nuances Between Conflict Prevention vs. Conflict Mitigation / Management

Preventing violent conflict *per se* is not a general USG goal. U.S. interests will determine how and to what degree the USG will be involved in a potentially violent conflict. In some circumstances, the U.S. may determine that it would be better to manage the risk of conflict, or to act to mitigate the impact on U.S. interests if violent conflict should occur. At JUW09, players realized that comparing U.S. interests and perceived conflict impact was essential as a first step in determining if conflict prevention, conflict risk management or conflict impact mitigation were to be pursued. An initial conflict assessment should incorporate national interests in order to provide for an explicit linkage between interests and conflict prevention. Given that government conflict prevention efforts may be conflict risk management or conflict impact mitigation at their root, this stands in contrast with some other actors who will be present in the conflict zone. Many NGOs and international organizations (IOs) seek to prevent conflicts of any type.

Phased Approach Pre-Supposes Crisis

Existing crisis response and military planning constructs are inappropriate for steady-state conflict prevention. An activist approach from an actor perceived as typically "crisis-oriented" may inadvertently drive the situation toward crisis. By getting involved, the USG could possibly exacerbate the crisis it seeks to manage or prevent. The DOD's six-phase planning construct view of the environment is predisposed toward activating a contingency plan. In fact, a "Phase Zero/Shaping" approach to conflict prevention, mitigation or management could lead to perceptions which encourage actions that fundamentally differ from conflict prevention, risk management or impact mitigation goals. With this in mind, it is important to avoid confusing conflict prevention with contingency planning. USG planners should ensure "doing nothing" is included as an option. National-level defense planning scenarios should include a steady-state conflict prevention scenario, created in concert with U.S. country teams.

Nomenclature – “Comprehensive” over “Whole of Government”

The term “Whole of Government” is limiting, as it focuses attention on USG actors – excluding multinationals, NGOs and IOs. A “comprehensive” approach is a preferable and more descriptive term, capable of including coalition partners, regional powers, host nations, NGOs, IOs and others.

Mismatch of Authorities and Capacity

Civilian USG agencies are the executive agents in steady-state efforts, but they generally lack the capacity, expeditionary experience and, in some cases, statutory authority to lead large-scale multi-institutional, multinational efforts abroad. Resource asymmetry causes imbalances in planning and execution. The USG is drastically unbalanced with respect to military/civilian ratios (210:1 in personnel, 350:1 in budget). Military and civil authorities interact more effectively in environments that are more balanced. At J UW09, practitioners noted that those with authorities often lacked resources and capacity; those with resources and capacity lacked authorities. Resource disparities and differences in cultures often result in muddled planning and execution. Education, practice and structural reform are needed for better unity of effort.

Assessing the Environment

The J UW09 final report will present detailed explorations into USG assessment and planning for conflict prevention. On early reflection, however, there are many terms currently in use for the activity of assessing the environment – framing the problem, appreciation, assessment and design, as well as the R&S PCC-approved ICAF. A multi-faceted, comprehensive approach to assessing a conflict is critical; this may be the interagency conflict assessment as articulated in the ICAF. It is critical to assess the conflict prior to planning, positioning the assessment to inform planning (not vice versa, with plans driving assessment). The specific details of a particular framework may or may not be significant, but the process of including broad participation in order to produce a shared understanding of the conflict and the environment must be prioritized.

Planning Process

The lack of common planning architectures, terminology and perspectives can feed organizational cultural anxiety among government and NGO communities. At J UW09, game play showed that planners and practitioners are often unaware of existing capabilities and capacities (i.e. knowledge and skills). This does not suggest following a formula. Host nation and NGO involvement in planning will vary as their presence may be uncertain and will depend on the presence of other departments, agencies and NGOs.

An NSC-sponsored Interagency Working Group should develop and communicate complementary planning approaches to support integrated assessment and information sharing in the comprehensive and/or whole-of-government context. The USG should broaden interagency educational and experience base through exchange programs. The USG should include host nations and NGOs (when practical) in planning.

Training and Education

It is unclear if there is a central organization to establish and coordinate training for a comprehensive approach to conflict prevention. At J UW09, some viewed the State Department's Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS) as the coordinating authority for these functions; others saw OSD Readiness and Training as the implementing office. J UW09 recommendations included the establishment of a formal training and education institution (styled after U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, or TRADOC) to train and educate government civilians, military, NGO, IO and coalition partner professionals. Just as the Goldwater-Nichols Act tied promotions to serving in a joint billet, departments and services should require participation in cross-departmental training/education and related exchange positions as a factor in the consideration for promotion.

SENIOR MENTORS' RECOMMENDATIONS

J UW09 benefited from a robust group of senior mentors led by counterinsurgency strategist Dr. David Kilcullen. Among the group were seven retired U.S. ambassadors, five retired general officers, and numerous distinguished career veterans from inside and outside government. Their recommendations and action agencies follow:

- Treat conflict risk mitigation as a component of shaping which will modify the doctrinal intent of Phase 0 operations. (Action: DOD)
- Educate decision-makers at Planning Committee / Deputies Committee / Interagency Planning Committee level on conflict mitigation and prevention concepts and approaches. (Action: All Agencies)
- Identify conflict assessment as a specific sub-discipline of planning, and teach it at the School for Advanced Military Studies, School for Advanced Warfighting, Foreign Service Institute and relevant interagency courses. (Action: DOD and DOS)
- Familiarize military planners with embassy Mission Strategic Plans (MSPs), USAID Mission Performance Plans (MPPs) and other non-military planning approaches, including non-threat-based planning. All planners need to understand that there are many ways to plan. (Action: DOD and DOS)
- Educate U.S. country teams and COCOM staffs on the ICAF. (Action: DOD/DOS)
- Develop a concise interagency handbook based on identified success factors. (Action: International Community of Interest)
- Enable U.S. country teams to exercise interagency field authorities through a modified foreign emergency support team (FEST) augmentation during crisis response. (Action: DOS)

- Broaden the authorities for police assistance funding beyond SOCOM and 1208 authority. (Action: Congress/DOD)
- Capture conflict risk data in an accessible form. There is a lot of data “floating” around in the USG that needs to be captured perhaps by the Consortium for Complex Operations (CCO), U.S. Army Peace Keeping and Stability Operations Institute (PKSOI), or U.S. country teams (possible Project Minerva task). (Action: CCO)
- Continue to build Civilian Response Corps and S/CRS into field-capable organizations. Include conflict assessment, crisis response and risk mitigation in their task list and training. (Action: DOS)
- A joint USMC-JIWC team will be formed to create a pathway that addresses the above action items.

LINKAGES OF INSIGHTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO CCJO AND QDR

The recently published Capstone Concept for Joint Operations (CCJO) (15 Jan 09) specifically recognizes the limitations of military power in the nation’s endeavor to achieve its aims and goals. As noted in CCJO Chapter 1, military power is only one of several instruments from which the nation’s leadership may choose when formulating and implementing policy. Military capabilities exist to serve the political interests of the nation, and those political interests will often constrain military power. The results of JUW09 should be leveraged to improve military support to conflict prevention, in turn implementing the concept as articulated in CCJO Chapters 2 (The Joint Operating Environment), 4 (Joint Operations as the Integration and Adaptation of Combat, Security, Engagement, and Relief and Reconstruction), and 5 (Basic Categories of Military Activity).

To ensure improved military support to conflict prevention, the results of JUW09 should inform the ongoing development of the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR). A cursory review of the larger issues suggests that the results of JUW09 could be particularly salient for Issues 1 (IW Capabilities) and 3 (Civil Support at Home and Abroad).

CONCLUSION

JUW09 succeeded in bringing together hundreds of practitioners from different organizations and backgrounds throughout the USG, the international community and non-governmental arenas. The game encouraged cross-pollination of ideas and relationship-building among different organizations and cultures. This seminar-style wargame, focused on conflict prevention, was enabled by the presence of a sizable number of participants from the NGO conflict prevention community including groups such as Alliance for Peacebuilding, Search for Common Ground and the 3D Security Initiative. The U.S. State Department, U.S. Institute of Peace, World Bank and U.N. World Food Program were also represented at the main event. Non-military conflict prevention practitioners were able to articulate their perspectives to their

military counterparts in a venue that was non-confrontational and constructive for all parties. This was an intangible but important first step toward building bridges between these divergent cultures and organizations. Ideas evolved significantly throughout the game. This occurred partly because of the disparate organizations represented at the main event. Aside from the ICAF, no one doctrine, construct or process dominated the assessment, planning and execution of the problems depicted in the whole of government simulation and scenario.

POINT OF CONTACT

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APPENDIX A

Participating Organizations

- DOD
 - U.S. Army
 - U.S. Marine Corps
 - U.S. Navy
 - U.S. Air Force
 - U.S. Coast Guard
- OSD
 - Policy
 - African Affairs
 - Readiness and Training
 - Policy and Programs
- Combatant Commands
 - USSOCOM
 - USJFCOM
 - USAFRICOM
- DOS
 - Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization
 - Bureau of African Affairs
- U.S. Intelligence Community
 - Central Intelligence Agency
 - Defense Intelligence Agency
- U.S. Agency for International Development
 - Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation
- U.S. Public Health Service
- UN World Food Program
- World Bank
- Think Tanks/FFRDCs
 - American Security Project
 - Center for American Progress
 - Institute for Defense Analyses
 - Institute for Defense and Business
 - U.S. Institute of Peace
- Non-profits/Academia
 - Alliance for Peacebuilding
 - Search for Common Ground
 - Eastern Mennonite University/3D Security Initiative
 - Purdue University
 - University of Massachusetts, Amherst
- Multinational
 - NATO ACT
 - Afghanistan
 - Australia

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- Canada
- Denmark
- France
- Germany
- Israel
- Italy
- Netherlands
- New Zealand
- Norway
- Singapore
- Spain
- Sweden
- United Kingdom

APPENDIX B Simulation Table Layout

