CRS Issue Statement on Peacekeeping, Stabilization, and Conflict Management

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Among the many national security problems confronting the second session of the 111th Congress, one set of issues involves efforts to enhance the United States’ ability and capacity to plan, implement, and resource activities and operations to stabilize countries that are at risk of or are experiencing conflict or collapse, and to promote stability during transitions from conflict to sustainable peace. For the past year, the Obama Administration has been engaged in an effort to identify appropriate roles for civilian agencies and the Department of Defense, and perhaps to propose new authorities for such activities and operations. While some Congressional offices and committees are studying reform options, Congressional action may await Administration initiatives, which may commence with the annual budget request submission on February 1. Although during its first session the 111th Congress advanced the initial steps of previous Congresses to enhance and create both civilian and military stabilization and reconstruction (S&R) capabilities, and to increase international military peacekeeping operation (PKO) capabilities, many questions remain. These include whether and how to further enlarge new civilian capabilities; how to strike an appropriate balance between U.S. civilian and military resources and capabilities; how to improve interagency cooperation and collaboration; and how best to assist in developing international S&R and PKO capabilities. Decisions on these matters will likely involve tough budget choices and other policy tradeoffs.

Specific policy issues in making such decisions include:

- The relative cost, effectiveness, and desirability of civilian vs. military S&R capabilities, and of governmental vs. private sector capabilities.
- The feasibility of creating new or enhancing existing interagency and other executive processes and structures to plan, implement, oversee and fund S&R operations and the roles of the Department of State, the Office of Personnel Management, and the Chief Human Capital Officers Council under those processes and structures.
- The implications of enlarging civilian capabilities for related military capabilities and force structure.
- The approaches for recruiting and training civilian employees from executive departments and agencies (i.e., other than State and Defense Department employees) to perform S&R assignments.
- The utility and wisdom of increased international capacity-building through civilian and military training.
- Whether there is a need for new or modified legal authorities to facilitate civilian deployments and to increase the accountability of civilian, especially non-DOD, contractors.
- The appropriate legislative mechanisms to oversee and fund activities and operations involving joint or associated civilian and military efforts.
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For detailed information select from the following topical links.

**Peacekeeping, Stabilization, and Conflict Management**

- U.S. Civilian Capacities, Interagency Coordination, and National Security Reform
  - [Peacekeeping/Stabilization and Conflict Transitions: Background and Congressional Action on the Civilian Response/Reserve Corps and other Civilian Stabilization and Reconstruction Capabilities](#)
  - [Department of Defense Section 1207 Security and Stabilization Assistance: Background and Congressional Concerns](#)
  - [Security Assistance Reform: Section 1206 Background and Issues for Congress](#)
  - [Foreign Aid Reform: Agency Coordination](#)

**U.S. Military Roles and Activities**

- [Instances of Use of United States Armed Forces Abroad, 1798-2009](#)
  - [War Powers Resolution: Presidential Compliance](#)