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Directorate of Strategic Operational Planning

NATIONAL COUNTERTERRORISM CENTER



CVE Review Team – 10 September

DSOP's Approach to Strategy

A good strategy directs priority to those lines of effort deemed most critical to producing desired end-states and builds upon ongoing efforts, processes and institutions. Our strategies must be focused, specific, dynamic and relevant in translating policy into action.

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Policy to Operations

- **Policy** is a statement of political purpose. It articulates Presidential intent and provides principles that guide decision making. Policy is a guideline for action at the highest levels of our government.
- **Intent** defines the most important tasks that must be accomplished in order to achieve desired outcomes.
- **Strategy** translates presidential, (or political) intent into whole-of-government activities. It is the bridge between Policy and objectives. A good strategy articulates a prudent set of ideas for aligning interagency activities across time and space to achieve national objectives.
- **Operations** provide the design, the required coordination between strategic objectives and execution. It involves the planning and implementation of assigned responsibilities, tasks and resources in time and space required to accomplish a common objective.

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Strategic Imperatives

- At a minimum, a good strategy:
 - Should offer some level of prioritization and have mechanisms to synchronize and integrate Departments and Agencies activities as they relate to intent.
 - Should account for strategic RISK (Less than expected returns due to under-resourced or unrealistic end-states)
 - Should incorporate a mechanism to counter the efforts of our opponents (stated and non-stated) to prevent you from reaching our desired end-state
 - Should include a feedback mechanism that accommodates adjustments, assessments and/or re-appraisals...a mechanism that can look ahead, 2 maybe 3 years out beyond the vision of the national security staff or even the department and agencies who are continually caught up in the crisis of the day, the current battle; far enough ahead to anticipate the next crisis and make timely adjustments to the strategy.
 - Must address Ends, Ways, and Means

Strategists craft imaginative ways of achieving their ultimate goal within the confines of limited resources and other constraints

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Ends = Ways + Means

- **Ends:** “What” do we want to accomplish? (Goals, Objectives, Outcomes or End-states)
 - Clearly defined, decisive and obtainable (may be slightly aspirational) goals that explain what is to be accomplished often within a given timeframe
 - *Prevent violent extremists and their supporters from inspiring, radicalizing, financing, or recruiting individuals or groups in the United States to commit acts of violence...*
- **Ways:** Answers the question “How” (Action Plans or Lines of Effort)
 - Activities or events that explain how the ends are to be accomplished by the employment of resources. Actions must be explicit enough to provide planning guidance for implementation
 - *Enhance Federal Engagement with and Support to Local Communities that May be Targeted by Violent Extremist*
 - *Building Government and Law Enforcement Expertise for Preventing Violent Extremist*
 - *Countering Violent Extremist Propaganda While Promoting Our Ideals*
- **Means:** “Resources” and so much more
 - Capabilities that can be applied to specific actions to accomplish the objectives. Means can be tangible (forces, people, equipment, money, facilities) or intangible (political will, public opinion, implementation governance, whole-of-government planning, timing)
 - An insufficiently resourced Strategy is often doomed

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Strategic Risk and Constraints

- **Strategic Risk:** Occurs when Ends $\neq$ Ways + Means
 - When we anticipate the likelihood of achieving less-than-expected outcomes within a strategy, we incur RISK. Strategic Risk may arise from the incompatibility of strategic objectives with desired end-states, the failure to adequately resource the actions designed to achieve those objectives, or the failure to establish and maintain a process of monitoring, assessing, and updating the strategy. Strategic Risk can be mitigated by focusing on the alignment of strategic objectives with realistic end-states, proper resourcing and implementation of activities, and routinely assessing progress and making adjustments where necessary.
- **Constraints** are activities we must do and Restraints, are those activates we can't do
 - Guiding Principles:
 - *Enhance our understanding of the threat*
 - *Protect the Civil Rights and Civil Liberties*
 - *Build partnerships and provide support to*
 - *Use a wide range of good governance programs*
 - *Support local capabilities and programs*
 - *Protect strong religious beliefs*
 - *Tolerate peaceful opposition*

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