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AUTHOR:

Charles J. Brown

Currently Managing Director,
Strategy for Humanity, LLC, Mr.
Brown formerly served as Senior
Advisor for Atrocity Prevention
and Response, US Department of
Defense.

A LIVING MEMORIAL TO THE
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AN ASSESSMENT OF USG ATROCITY PREVENTION TRAINING PROGRAMS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In August 2011, President Barack Obama issued Presidential Study Directive 10 (PSD-10), which resolved that preventing genocide and mass atrocities is a core national security interest, established the Atrocities Prevention Board (APB), and instructed National Security Staff to prepare a study on how the APB could best accomplish its objectives. One of the resultant study's recommendations was that agencies should strengthen training on atrocity prevention to give United States Government (USG) officials the knowledge, capacity, and understanding to recognize and respond to emerging crises.

Every day, USG personnel—in particular foreign service officers and members of the armed services—must operate in and respond to events in countries at risk of mass atrocities. As recent events in Syria, Iraq, Burundi, Burma, and elsewhere demonstrate, these situations often impact other national security interests as well. To their great credit, US officials have often worked long hours in extraordinarily difficult situations to attempt to forestall, mitigate, and end mass violence. Unfortunately, they have often done so without the training or tools that could make their work more effective. It, therefore, is vital that US officials have the experience and knowledge necessary to identify, anticipate, prevent, and mitigate atrocities.

Given that four years have passed since senior officials approved the PSD-10 report, it is valid to ask whether agencies have implemented this recommendation. To that end, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum conducted a three-month study to look at what the APB, the Department of State (State), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and certain Department of Defense (DoD) components have done to develop and implement training on atrocity prevention.

Key Findings. The report determines that current USG training programs are significantly better than they were at the time PSD-10 was issued. Although

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efforts have been largely ad hoc, early adopters at State, DoD, and USAID deserve great credit for developing new courses and materials. Also encouraging are recent efforts by the APB's working-level sub-committee (sub-APB) to identify opportunities for additional training. Although these achievements are important, significant challenges to a more comprehensive approach to atrocity prevention training remain. The report identifies a number of opportunities for improvement, including:

- *Overcoming Bureaucratic Resistance.* Although training can help broaden the community of practitioners, it will not influence policy unless senior officials embrace atrocity prevention. For that to happen, the APB must play a stronger role.
- *Strengthening Coordination.* In the absence of leadership from the top, departments and agencies have focused on their own needs. The APB needs to work with agencies to develop a common framework and curriculum that will help break barriers to information sharing not only among agencies but also within them.
- *Addressing Funding Constraints.* New training initiatives are severely limited by funding concerns. Although the APB may encourage agencies to devote additional funds, it should also work with the Office of Management and Budget to increase training budgets across the board.
- *Mandating Training & Education.* Personnel in key positions—including those individuals deploying to at-risk posts and desk officers working on countries of particular concern—do not receive sufficient instruction on recognizing the warning signs and developing prevention and response strategies. Agencies should mandate training for those personnel who most need to know how to recognize, prevent, and respond to atrocities.

Major Recommendations. The report also makes a number of specific recommendations on how the APB, sub-APB, and the three agencies should improve current training efforts. These include:

For the White House and the Atrocities Prevention Board:

- Incorporate a training mandate into the proposed executive order on atrocity prevention.
- Provide agencies with clear policy guidance on training expectations and priorities.
- Instruct agencies to provide additional funds to support training on atrocity prevention.
- Instruct the sub-APB to work with agencies to develop a common training framework and curriculum that could be adapted to the specific needs of departments and agencies.

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For the Department of State and USAID:

- Develop a core course on atrocity prevention concepts that would be mandatory for key personnel, especially those deploying to countries designated as at-risk.
- Incorporate a module on atrocity prevention into key introductory and mid-level courses.
- Explore alternative approaches to training that cut costs and expand opportunities for learning.

For the Department of Defense:

- Instruct the service academies, command staff colleges, and war colleges to incorporate atrocity prevention concepts into mandatory academic programs and leadership and ethics training.
- Mandate and fund the National Defense University to develop a semester-long course on atrocity prevention and to update *Shrouded Horizons*, its popular tabletop exercise on atrocity prevention concepts.
- Work with curriculum experts to develop a progressive approach to professional military education on atrocity prevention that ties course content to student experience.

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BACKGROUND

In August 2011, President Barack Obama issued Presidential Study Directive 10 (PSD-10), which resolved that preventing mass atrocities and genocide is a core national security interest and core moral responsibility of the United States. In doing so, the president acknowledged that mass atrocities, if left unchecked, could pose a great threat to US national interests. As the 2015 National Security Strategy (NSS) notes, “The mass killing of civilians destabilizes countries and regions, pushes refugees across borders, and creates grievances that extremists exploit.”¹ As part of PSD-10, the president ordered National Security staff to review existing policy and make recommendations on how agencies could better prevent and respond to mass atrocities. Senior officials approved the subsequent study, usually referred to as the PSD-10 report, in December 2011.

PSD-10 also mandated the creation of an Atrocities Prevention Board (APB) both to coordinate a whole-of-government response to potential or emerging atrocities and to determine how best to implement the report’s recommendations. Since April 2012, the APB has met monthly to discuss countries of particular concern and to strengthen interagency cooperation. Although media and nongovernmental organization (NGO) reports have largely focused on the former, both the APB and its working-level subcommittee (known as the sub-APB) have devoted considerable time to developing what former APB chair and current US Ambassador to the United Nations Samantha Power has called the “toolkit”—a collection of policy instruments that gives senior officials the capacity to act swiftly to prevent mass atrocities or mitigate them should they start. Most of the PSD-10 report’s recommendations focused on these tools, which include effective early warning mechanisms; targeted development assistance; smart sanctions, financial controls, and travel bans; support for international justice efforts; military contingency planning in support of peacekeeping operations; interagency assessment missions to at-risk countries; and preventative diplomacy.

The report also recommended that relevant departments and agencies devote greater resources to training United States Government (USG) officials to recognize and respond to atrocity crises. It urged them not only to strengthen and improve existing training, but also to explore developing new courses and modules. It recommended that agencies review current training on atrocity prevention and make recommendations on how to improve and better coordinate training both within each agency and among agencies.

Beyond the PSD-10 report and the NSS, the Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR), Quadrennial Defense Review, Defense Strategic Guidance, and the Department of Defense’s (DoD’s) general planning guidance all explicitly reference atrocity prevention as a national security priority. The QDDR, for example, states that the Department of State (State) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) will “strengthen [their] ability

¹ The White House, *National Security Strategy*, February 2015, https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/2015_national_security_strategy.pdf.

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to prevent and respond to internal conflict, atrocities, and fragility.”² Although these documents make no explicit link between atrocity prevention and training, the QDDR commits to expanding the Foreign Service Institute’s (FSI’s) core curriculum to include new concepts to ensure that foreign service officers (FSOs) have a “deeper knowledge” of the fundamentals of diplomacy.³

Since the APB first convened, the White House has provided periodic public updates on both its work and departmental efforts to implement the PSD-10 report’s recommendations; several highlighted efforts to strengthen training. An April 2013 fact sheet noted that agencies were “promoting training ... to ensure the U.S. Government is effectively using all the tools at its disposal.” It highlighted USAID’s training of humanitarian first-responders on civilian protection, a State-sponsored course on atrocity prevention in multilateral policy, and a DoD tabletop and warfighter exercises. It also noted that State and USAID were “working to ensure that their officers receive dedicated atrocity-prevention training before or shortly after deploying to countries at risk for mass atrocities.”⁴ An April 2015 White House blog post reported that USAID was “working to ensure that its officers deploying to countries at risk receive atrocity-prevention training,” but the post did not mention whether State was doing so as well.⁵

Although such reports are encouraging, they do not provide much detail on what the APB and individual agencies have done to ensure that civil servants, FSOs, and members of the armed services are trained to recognize and respond to emerging mass atrocity situations.

METHODOLOGY AND REPORT STRUCTURE

The purpose of this report is to examine the progress the APB, sub-APB and three key agencies (State, USAID, and certain DoD components) have made to improve and expand training on atrocity prevention since the PSD-10 study first recommended further action. It also identifies opportunities for improvement and makes specific recommendations on what the APB and agencies could do to strengthen and expand existing training and education efforts.

The report is the product of a three-month study conducted between August 1, 2015 and November 1, 2015 commissioned by the Levine Institute for Holocaust Education and the Simon-Skjoldt Center for the Prevention of Genocide of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (the Museum). It is based on a review of publicly available materials currently being used in USG training programs as well as interviews with educators and practitioners working on atrocity prevention in State, DoD, USAID, and several public and private entities. Although members of

² US Department of State, *Ensuring Leadership in a Dynamic World: The 2015 Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review*, 10, <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/241429.pdf>.

³ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁴ The White House, “Fact Sheet: The Obama Administration’s Comprehensive Efforts to Prevent Mass Atrocities Over the Past Year,” May 1, 2013, https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/fact_sheet_-_administration_efforts_to_prevent_mass_atrocities5.pdf.

⁵ The White House, “A Comprehensive Approach to Atrocity Prevention, Three Years On,” April 30, 2015, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2015/04/30/comprehensive-approach-atrocity-prevention-three-years>.

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the project team sought to meet with as many practitioners and educators as possible, within the project's limited time frame, it was not feasible to interview everyone involved.

Because of the large number of training opportunities within the DoD, this report focuses on efforts within the Departments of the Army, Navy, and Air Force and National Defense University (NDU). It is the project team's hope that the work of other DoD components—including the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the geographic combatant commands—might be included in a future report, along with the efforts of other APB member agencies (including the Departments of Justice, Treasury, and Homeland Security, and the intelligence community).

Interviewees spoke confidentially to encourage a frank discussion of the relevant issues. Their views do not necessarily represent those of their agencies or the Museum.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS TO DATE

The state of training and education on atrocity prevention is significantly better than it was at the time PSD-10 was issued. A small group of early adopters in key agencies have helped develop a range of new courses and materials. Although largely ad hoc, their efforts have helped promote the crucial role that training can play in ensuring that US officials are prepared when an atrocity event takes place. Many have successfully developed courses and materials in addition to their regular duties; in some cases, they have served not merely as champions but teachers.

New Courses and Training Opportunities

New courses and modules have helped introduce key atrocity prevention concepts to interested officials (and in some cases key staff). USAID, State, and certain DoD components all offer elective courses.

- USAID has played a leadership role.
 - The Center of Excellence on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance (DRG) in the Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance has developed an interactive online module on atrocity prevention and response concepts, including early warning, available tools, and current policy. Although the module is not yet mandatory, DRG staff have introduced it to key agency personnel, with a particular focus on mission directors in at-risk countries.
 - The Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance includes a module on civilian protection in its training for humanitarian first-responders.
- Since PSD-10 was promulgated, State has devoted additional resources to atrocity prevention training.

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- In its new role as the Secretariat for atrocities prevention, the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations (State/CSO) has mandated that its personnel receive training on atrocity prevention. Four times a year, it offers a two-day course with modules on definitions and theory, the relationship between conflict and atrocities, early warning, the State/USAID Atrocity Assessment Framework, and the best strategies to anticipate, prevent, and respond to atrocities. To date, the course has targeted State/CSO staff, but the Bureau is exploring how to open it up to other State and interagency personnel.
- Also at State, the Bureau of International Organization Affairs (State/IO) has developed, in conjunction with FSI, a two-day elective course at FSI on atrocity prevention and response for interested members of the civil and foreign service. Although the course focuses on multilateral approaches to civilian protection and atrocity prevention, it also provides an introductory overview of current US efforts, including the work of the APB.
- FSI’s Senior Executive Threshold Seminar, a mandatory course for new senior FSOs, includes two half-day modules on genocide and atrocity prevention. It uses a variant of the *Shrouded Horizons* tabletop exercise (see below) and incorporates a visit to the Museum.
- Two other FSI courses currently include modules on atrocity prevention:
 - A five-day course on promoting human rights and democracy for human rights officers going out to posts.
 - A course on diplomacy at high-threat posts, which focuses on semi-permissive and non-permissive environments and how to balance US strategic goals with security threats.
- Thanks to the initiative of individual instructors, some sessions of A-100, the FSI introductory course for new FSOs, include a module that examines State’s response to the refugee crisis during the Holocaust. The study seeks to provide a historical framework through which students can look at some of the ethical and professional challenges they may confront.
- The DoD has initiated a number of efforts.
 - US Army components have led the way in developing electives and promoting additional opportunities to integrate atrocity prevention into other disciplines.

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- The US Military Academy (West Point), the Army Command and General Staff College (CGSC), and the Army War College all offer courses on atrocity prevention, genocide, or Holocaust studies.
- In addition to offering courses, West Point's Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies serves as a hub for research, curriculum development, education, and programming on the causes, context, and consequences of genocide and mass atrocities at the service academies and within DoD.
- The Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies at West Point and the Museum jointly conduct an annual Mass Atrocity Education Workshop for service academy professors. The workshops are designed to promote the incorporation of modules on the Holocaust, genocide, and atrocity prevention into courses including economics, political science, psychology, ethics, leadership, and law.
- The Army CGSC at Fort Leavenworth and the CGSC satellite campus at Fort Belvoir offer courses on genocide and mass atrocity prevention.
- The Army War College's Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute (PKSOI) conducts a semester-long course on humanitarian intervention that devotes significant time to mass atrocity prevention and response concepts.
- Both the US Naval Academy (USNA) and the US Air Force Academy have made important strides in incorporating Holocaust, genocide, and atrocity prevention concepts into course offerings.
 - Currently, professors at both schools offer semester-long elective courses on Holocaust and genocide studies.
 - In conjunction with training on character development and ethical decision-making, USNA midshipmen attend a program on the Holocaust and genocide prevention at the Museum.
- DoD's Joint Knowledge Online (JKO) platform currently offers two courses: one on Mass Atrocity Response Operations (MARO) and one on protection of civilians (PoC). The JKO courses, which are based on PKSOI's handbooks on MARO and PoC (see below), are designed to familiarize students with basic concepts. Although intended for DoD personnel, they can be accessed by any USG employee with a JKO account.
- Public and private entities also have worked with USG practitioners to develop courses.

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- The Museum designs and hosts on-site sessions as part of courses on atrocity prevention and response offered by the service academies (including West Point’s Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies), the Army CGSC, and the Army War College.
- The Auschwitz Institute for Peace and Reconciliation (AIPR) and the US Institute for Peace (USIP) have developed a three-day pilot course on atrocity prevention. About 25 officials from several agencies participated in its inaugural offering.
- AIPR also offers the Raphael Lemkin Seminar on Genocide Prevention, which brings mid-level officials from the United States and other governments to Auschwitz for a one-week course on atrocity prevention topics.
- USIP also offers courses on human rights and international humanitarian law, preventing electoral violence in Africa, United Nations peacekeeping, war-to-peace transitions, and mediating violent conflict.
- USG personnel have participated in courses offered by the Montreal Institute for Genocide Studies (MIGS).

New Instructional Materials

A number of entities have developed manuals, guides, and tabletop exercises (TTXs) that serve as resources for individuals in the field and as key curricular elements in training courses.

- USAID’s DRG has developed *Field Guide: Helping Prevent Mass Atrocities*, a reference designed to serve as a toolkit for USAID field officers on how to prevent mass atrocities. The guide introduces key concepts, describes USAID and government-wide policies, and provides guidance on specific issues. The field guide is designed to serve as a resource for officers deployed to at-risk posts, providing “frameworks for analytic thinking, not highly prescriptive operational methodologies.” In addition to providing an overview, it introduces numerous options for programming, suggests potential theories of change, offers examples of past successful efforts, and presents a project design scaffolding. Although much of the guide’s content is USAID-specific, other agencies have drawn on it for their own training programs.
- The Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies at West Point and the Museum have produced *Ordinary Soldiers: A Study in Ethics, Law, and Leadership*, a case study in which German military officers during the Holocaust demonstrate dramatically different responses to the same illegal order. The module, which explores decision-making in an atrocity context emerged from a 2011 Mass Atrocity Education Workshop during which West Point faculty examined ways to incorporate lessons from the Holocaust in the education of US military cadets.

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- PKSOI has developed three handbooks: *Mass Atrocities Response Operations: A Military Planning Handbook* (2010, in conjunction with Harvard University’s Kennedy School of Government and its Carr Center for Human Rights Policy); *Mass Atrocity Prevention and Response Options: A Policy Planning Handbook* (2012, in conjunction with DoD’s Office of Stability and Humanitarian Affairs and State/IO); and *Protection of Civilians: A Military Reference Guide* (2013). Chapters in all three handbooks on concepts, definitions, and policy development have been integrated into courses throughout the government.
- NDU’s Center for Applied Strategic Learning, in conjunction with State/IO, DoD’s Office of Stability and Humanitarian Affairs (SHA), and three public and private entities,⁶ designed and developed *Shrouded Horizons*, a TTX that uses a fictional scenario involving an escalating ethnic conflict between two countries to help policymakers identify and respond to a potential mass atrocity crisis. Originally developed for senior US officials in the run-up to PSD-10 and the establishment of the APB, *Shrouded Horizons* has subsequently been used in a variety of settings across the government. Its design permits variations in duration and multiple outcomes depending on participants’ actions. NDU has developed alternate introductory and “red team” scenarios, but these have yet to be incorporated into courses. Many of the courses mentioned include variations of *Shrouded Horizons* as a capstone exercise.
- In 2012, the CGSC, together with PKSOI, NDU, and DoD/SHA, organized a two-day TTX in conjunction with a larger III Army Corps warfighter exercise on a fictional US-led operation in response to a mass atrocity event. The TTX served as an interagency complement to the larger exercise, providing policy guidance to subsequent III Army Corps exercises.
- In the fall of 2015, *Reconstructing Atrocity Prevention*—a volume edited by AIPR’s Tibi Galis, Cardoza Law School’s Sheri Rosenberg, and Alex Zucker—was published by Cambridge University Press. The volume addresses the topic of the prevention of mass atrocities from the theoretical, policy, and practicing standpoints and contains articles by noted scholars and practitioners in the field.
- In February 2016, the Museum will publish *Fundamentals of Genocide and Mass Atrocity Prevention*. Written by Scott Straus, the text is designed to serve as a comprehensive resource on atrocity prevention and response concepts for potential and current USG and international practitioners. Portions of the handbook are already being used by State/CSO in its introductory course.
- Courses also have used other USG documents as course materials. These include PSD-10 itself, President Obama’s April 2012 speech at the Museum announcing the creation of the

⁶ Human Rights First, the United States Institute of Peace, and the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame.

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APB, joint doctrine on mass atrocity response operations, and Army doctrine on protection of civilians.

Preliminary Efforts at Coordination

Although training and education on atrocity prevention remain largely ad hoc and agency specific, the small network of early adopters have shared materials and, when possible, coordinated trainings.

- State/CSO, DoD/SHA, and PKSOI are working together to develop a one-day MARO familiarization training for the US Africa Command. The course, which is designed to examine the concepts in the context of ongoing military operations, targets contingency planners, desk officers, and exercise developers. If successful, the training could be offered at other combatant commands.
- State/CSO has made USAID's online training available to all State personnel despite bureaucratic obstacles.
- West Point's Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies and PKSOI have jointly developed a TTX on the crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.
- USAID/DRG and State/IO officials contributed to the development of the AIPR/USIP interagency course.
- State, USAID, DoD, and White House officials have regularly presented to or participated in roundtable discussions during courses and seminars.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

Although the achievements are significant, a number of challenges have inhibited a more comprehensive approach to atrocity prevention training.

Overcoming Bureaucratic Resistance

Training is not a panacea. It can help build a constituency for atrocity prevention as a core national security interest, but it is not a substitute for high-level engagement. If senior officials—whether explicitly or implicitly—signal that atrocity prevention is not a priority, then all the training in the world will not change attitudes. As one practitioner noted, “You’re not going to [build support for atrocity prevention] through another training course. You need to get high-level officials to become those advocates. You’re not going to get that in a day-and-a-half of training.”

The APB was supposed to play that leadership role. Only recently has the APB begun to engage on the issue. However, a number of individuals interviewed for this project said that the APB's efforts to date have not been consistent or strong. “It wasn't a strong push,” one official said.

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Another said that the APB “hasn’t articulated what it wants.” A third agreed. “I feel like the mandate is pretty vague—‘You need to do training. It’s important.’ But people on high haven’t said what exactly they want.”

Before 2015, the sub-APB’s efforts were inconsistent. As one official noted, “The sub-APB periodically flirted with training but hadn’t carried through in any significant way. We were just kind of scrambling in an ad-hoc way. We didn’t have a game plan.” Another said that the sub-APB was regularly “talking about how to consolidate training, how to make it better...I think people are generally committed to [training], but we don’t have much traction yet.”

In recent months, however, the sub-APB had increased its efforts, discussing how agencies can more effectively promote and expand training. By the end of 2015, some discussions had occurred regarding training throughout various agencies. The sub-APB will likely continue this work in the coming months, but it is not yet clear whether the effort will lead to more coordinated action.

The sub-APB also should not forget its own training needs. As is true of any governmental body, sub-APB membership is fluid; new participants regularly join the process. The sub-APB should consider how best to ensure that individuals joining in its deliberations can be brought up to speed. One possible option would be to conduct an annual offsite meeting that includes a training component such as *Shrouded Horizons* or another TTX. The sub-APB also should explore whether the APB itself could benefit from periodic participation in such exercises.

In fairness, the APB and sub-APB have made only limited progress in implementing the study’s recommendation on training during a period of four years when the USG has had to confront an unprecedented series of atrocity events that have demanded far more of the APB’s attention than the administration ever could have anticipated it established the APB. These crises have overwhelmed both the APB’s and sub-APB’s capacity for reflection and action.

That said, the number of crises only reinforces further the importance of and the need for training. Personnel in the field—whether foreign service officers assigned to at-risk posts or members of the armed services deploying on stability operations—regularly confront situations that may or may not represent warning signs of a potential mass atrocity. As one educator noted, without additional training, individuals in the field will find it more difficult to distinguish isolated incidents from warning signals. In addition, both those in the field and those in Washington need to learn what policy options—such as those in the “toolkit” that the APB has spent so much time developing—are available. Furthermore, if key personnel received training, the APB and sub-APB’s own work would benefit greatly from more informed reporting and analysis. The APB’s recent stock-taking is a good start, but it now needs to explore how it can push agencies to strengthen and expand training opportunities.

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Strengthening Coordination

In the absence of leadership from the top, stakeholders have independently developed new courses and materials. They have largely operated in isolation from one another, focusing on the needs of their agencies (or even specific offices within agencies) rather than developing comprehensive solutions. Some officials expressed frustration that the USG has not developed an interagency course. As one official noted, “We’re ostensibly in a whole-of-government effort, but our training is totally stovepiped.”

Others are not convinced. A number of officials in all three agencies expressed doubts about the utility of interagency training. “It could be a helpful mechanism,” one said, “but it’s just sharing information. Training gives people opportunities to share information and ideas. But when you need the interagency to cooperate, training isn’t necessarily the solution. It is not going to work out policy differences.” A practitioner from another agency agreed. “I feel like most of the bigger [interagency] trainings, they’re not as relevant. The typical officer is asking us how to deal with the challenges in the context of [our agency]. [The APB’s] theory of change is that you’re going to create an interagency network of like-minded individuals. That’s fine, but ... that’s at a higher level than we need.”

Currently, the only course that targets the interagency system is the one run jointly by AIPR and USIP. The three-day seminar, offered for the first time in April 2015, explicitly sought to bring together representatives from throughout the interagency system to hear about a range of topics, with a particular focus on the role of perpetrators and victims. The course included modules on atrocity prevention basics, current US policy, early warning, early prevention, the role of perpetrators, the role of sanctions, and “downstream” response to emerging atrocity events. It concluded with a half-day simulation based on a potential new crisis in Rwanda. Although organizations have indicated that they plan to offer the course again, the exact timing remained uncertain as this report went to press.

The State/IO training on multilateral approaches to atrocity prevention (held at FSI) has had some success in attracting the participation of non-State officials, because State/IO’s officers actively recruited fellow sub-APB members to attend the first several iterations of the course. More recently, the course has drawn students almost exclusively from State.

Bureaucratic and technical obstacles have hindered even the most basic efforts at cooperation. Perhaps the most illustrative example is the story of State/CSO’s efforts to make DRG’s online module available to all State employees. DRG’s staff worked to arrange for State personnel to log onto USAID University’s online portal (where the training is housed). Technical obstacles made that impossible. DRG’s officials then offered to port the files to a State platform, but that too was not possible. The two offices banded together to develop a workaround: they rented space on a private server and shared the cost. “It shouldn’t be this hard to design something that both State and USAID [FSOs] can take,” one of the officials involved in the effort acknowledged. “It’s a

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pretty powerful example of bureaucratic dysfunction.” Ultimately, State and USAID were able to make the course available on a temporary basis to State personnel.

Although a single interagency course may not be feasible, the APB and sub-APB should work with the agencies to consider how best to develop a common knowledge base from which to operate. One option would be to encourage participation in existing courses such as those offered by USIP, AIPR, and MIGS. Another would be to develop a common framework and curriculum from which agency course planners could work. The sub-APB explored the common framework idea at one point, but it was set aside due to other, more immediate demands.

A second and related problem is the lack of *intra*-agency coordination. Not only are departments largely reluctant to cooperate on developing interagency programs, offices within each agency have sometimes failed to coordinate. On more than one occasion, actors within a single agency have developed separate courses, often with considerable overlap in content. In most cases, practitioners and educators recognize the problem and are working to resolve it. State/CSO and State/IO staff, for example, are discussing how best to consolidate their separate trainings into a single course that meets both bureaus’ needs.

In the Department of the Army, educators have acknowledged the need to develop an overarching framework that ensures that officers receive increasingly challenging instruction as they move up the ranks. Currently, four different schools—West Point, the CGSC at Fort Leavenworth, the staff college’s Fort Belvoir satellite campus, and the Army War College offer semester-long courses that address the Holocaust, genocide, civilian protection, and atrocity prevention. All four have similar syllabi, use many of the same course materials, and utilize similar outside speakers. All four hold one or more sessions at the Museum. The instructors, who regularly speak to one another, have begun to explore how they can work together more effectively.

Addressing Funding Constraints

State, USAID, and DoD practitioners and educators agree that one of the biggest challenges they face is resource constraints. A number of officials interviewed spoke wistfully of what they could do with even small sums of money: online modules, new course materials, interagency participation, and travel were among the potential uses that additional funds could support. “The biggest impediment is resources,” one educator said. “You can’t simply add a course because you then obligate staff, which obligates the [training institution], which obligates [the agency], which obligates the taxpayers.”

Although money is tight across the board and agencies have only so much to devote to new mandates, the White House has identified training on atrocity prevention as a priority. When agencies claim poverty—or refuse to reallocate funds—they convey the message that they do not think atrocity prevention is a good use of their money—and by implication not a priority. This kind of signal can have second- and third-order effects: suppressing enrollment in existing

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courses, discouraging practitioners from pushing for additional training, and dampening enthusiasm among educators for developing new approaches.

Bureaucratic obstacles also have an influence on how money can be spent. A good example is the difficulty State/IO has had in attracting interagency participation in its course on multilateral approaches to atrocity prevention. From the beginning, State/IO has encouraged other agencies to send personnel to attend the course. Although bureaus can subsidize the participation of students in courses they develop themselves, they are not permitted to fund those from other agencies. The *Foreign Affairs Manual* directs that non-State Department personnel can receive training at FSI only on a reimbursable basis.⁷ This applies even to USAID officers. The APB and sub-APB should explore whether there are ways that agencies could overcome this obstacle.

Mandating Training & Education

Currently, personnel in all three agencies have multiple opportunities to receive training on a range of topics over the course of their careers. The service academies provide a comprehensive education for aspiring officers. FSI and USAID University provide entry-level training for new personnel, and FSI, USAID University, NDU, the command staff colleges, and the war colleges offer advanced study programs for mid-level and senior-level officials. Although many of these programs include opportunities to learn more about atrocity prevention concepts, no mandate requires that the courses include them. Students' exposure to key concepts often depends on the interest and enthusiasm of the teacher. As a result, many of those most in need of training on atrocity prevention concepts never receive it.

Practitioners and educators across all three agencies believe that mandating training for key personnel is the single most important step the USG could take. Many of them privately bemoan the lack of a mandate. "To me, it has to be mandatory," one said. "And it has to be real leadership. Two/three/ten/twelve people can't create that momentum." Another expressed amazement that it hasn't happened yet. "We have so many people ... who need atrocity prevention training. It should be easy to make that mandatory."

The problem, of course, is that it is *not* easy. According to several administration officials, the PSD-10 report did not recommend that atrocity prevention be made mandatory, in large part because of State Department concerns about mandating any of the content of certain core courses at FSI. They want the flexibility to decide what should be included. Training bureaucracies in USAID and DoD also have resisted incorporating new issues into introductory and mid-level courses for officers deploying to the field.

At State, FSI does not include a module on atrocity prevention in mandatory courses for FSOs, including the introductory course for new officers (known as A-100) and mid-level "tradecraft"

⁷ United States Department of State, "Funding for Training," *Foreign Affairs Manual, Volume 13: Training and Professional Development*, <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/88534.pdf>.

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courses. At the military academies, students can take electives that address the Holocaust, genocide, and atrocity prevention, but these concepts are not incorporated into the mandatory academic programs or leadership and ethics trainings required of all cadets and midshipmen. At USAID, practitioners have struggled to translate an early promise by senior agency officials to incorporate atrocity prevention into mandatory training, in large part because those leaders have since left government service.

Part of the problem is that training institutions have resisted incorporating new concepts into core courses. Reasons for this include budget concerns, the time and effort involved in developing new materials, and the zero-sum game of course length. As one educator acknowledged, “[One office] comes and says that we need [atrocity prevention] training; it’s a priority. But then the next office says we need training on this other thing. Instead of looking at this ad hoc, issue by issue, we need to ask: what is the knowledge that officers need?” Although a holistic approach makes sense, it also can inspire rivalries over “air time” within key courses. Regional offices and more traditional functional issues do not want to give up limited course space. “There can be some regional negativity,” one educator acknowledged. “Tensions definitely come up on some of these issues.”

Educators planning courses have a legitimate point when they argue that something has to be removed if something else is to be added. One obvious solution would be longer courses. In many cases, the zero-sum squeeze is a product of budget cuts: courses like A-100 have seen their duration shortened because FSI’s overall budget has shrunk. The APB should work with the Office of Management and Budget and agencies to push for greater funding for FSI and other USG educational institutions. Such a step would benefit not only the effort to strengthen training on atrocity prevention but also other efforts to update and strengthen existing training and education so that they are more responsive to the myriad of challenges the United States faces.

If incorporating training on atrocity prevention into core courses proves too heavy a lift, a second approach would be to develop an intensive mandatory course on atrocity prevention concepts for personnel most in need of it. Individuals interviewed for this report identified personnel deploying to at-risk posts as a priority. “We need to educate political officers in high-threat posts about when they should be in upstream prevention mode and when things are going from bad to worse,” one educator said. Another practitioner agreed. “For political officers going to high risk posts, atrocity prevention should be a requirement.”

This approach is also not without challenges. As one practitioner noted, “Mandating in-person training on a specialized topic prior to deployment is very hard for some legitimate reasons. Deployments are already complicated and slower than people would like.” Another noted that policymakers would have to find a way to figure out just who should have to take the training. “At-risk posts are the biggest concern, but they are logistically [difficult] because the at-risk country list will change over time.”

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Personnel deploying to the field are not the only ones who would benefit from mandatory training on atrocity prevention concepts. Those interviewed for this report identified a wide range of individuals: desk officers assigned to at-risk countries; staff working in functional bureaus; intelligence officers; people working as special assistants and senior advisers in front offices; attorneys; service members specializing in civil affairs, information operations, and stability operations (including peacekeeping); and new political appointees. One practitioner went further: “[Everyone] should know about it. They need to know the warning signs, what to keep on their radar screens when they are at post. They need early exposure. They need to know what they need to know.”

Although mandating the incorporation of a module on atrocity prevention in key courses and the development of an intensive course for key practitioners remains the most effective solution, practitioners and educators should explore whether, in the interim, modules on atrocity prevention could be integrated into other electives on related issues. A good current example of this approach is the five-day FSI course on human rights, which currently incorporates a section on atrocity prevention. Still, the course is not mandatory.

Expanding Opportunities for Critical Thinking and Advanced Learning

Most atrocity crises are the product of numerous interlocking factors that require a nuanced understanding not only of the causes of atrocities but also of the most effective ways to prevent them. Practitioners need to have a clear understanding of what tools are available, how they can be used, and what is most likely to work (and not work). They need not only to understand the basic concepts, but also to develop the more in-depth knowledge and critical thinking that most atrocity crises require. As one educator noted, “Most of the work we do on atrocity prevention is more gray area. You have to pick from a range of options.”

Currently, much of the federal training on atrocity prevention focuses on the basics—“What are the concepts? What are the warning signs? What are the tools? What is US policy?” as one official said. Like many such courses, they are designed to quickly impart specific technical knowledge. Although this approach is a useful way to introduce core concepts, it does not help develop a community of practitioners able to think about how best to respond to complex crisis situations. Often the concepts are introduced with little time to examine their practical application in the field. In some cases, the training is more rote—“do this, not that” as one practitioner put it. An educator expressed frustration about the mixed signals that a training mindset can send: “Students are told to do the right thing, but it’s in a handout—here’s the BLUF [bottom line up front]. It’s not thoughtful.”

In part, the focus on rote learning is a function of time constraints. Most USG training programs run anywhere from a half-day to two weeks. (Online courses are even shorter in length, rarely running for more than an hour.) Such limits can, as one official noted, “start you up the prevention curve,” but they leave little time to think critically about how best to develop nuanced solutions to

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complex crises. In addition, individuals targeted for training are rarely given a long enough break from their day jobs to pursue more advanced concepts. Given such limits, the most that current training can provide, as another official acknowledged, is to “get people excited” about the issue so they want to learn more.

Providing training on the basics is important and necessary, but so too are more in-depth opportunities for reflection and critical thinking. Currently, no follow-on courses exist to provide those who need it most a greater understanding of the problems and challenges. Individuals willing to read existing USG publications (such as the USAID *Field Guide* and the *Mass Atrocity Response Operations* handbook) can learn a great deal, but they have no guided process through which to explore more advanced concepts with peers.

Given the number of tools (old and new) that the APB, sub-APB, and constituent agencies have identified or developed, it is not unreasonable to ask how best to give people the skills and knowledge they need to wield them as they move through their careers. As one educator noted, “The challenge is not only knowing how to use the new tools but also recognizing the preventative value [and] impact ... of the policy tools you already have.” A practitioner agreed. “People need to know the bureaucracy—how to activate the tools. If you want to do radio jamming, what questions need to be answered? The list of tools can be daunting. How do you pick one tool versus another? Which tool is going to be more effective?”

Such an approach would require developing more advanced courses that incorporate systems thinking and game theory concepts into a broader theory of change. As one official observed, “It’s good to have tools, but we’re not just building a table. It’s much more complex than that. We need the kind of training that will make people effective in building and implementing strategies to address confusing situations. It’s got to operate at a different level. Usually when we talk about something [at an APB or sub-APB meeting], we go around the room. The people with hammers offer hammers, the people with screws offer screws, and so on. We don’t think strategically about levers, points of influence. We’re not addressing the harder question: in what circumstances do these tools work?”

Few USG-run educational institutions offer the kinds of courses that impart more advanced atrocity prevention concepts. Currently, FSI, USAID University, and NDU do not offer in-depth courses on genocide or atrocity prevention.⁸ The exceptions are all found in the DoD universe: the three service academies, the Army CGSC, and the Army War College regularly offer at least one semester-long course on the Holocaust, genocide studies, and/or atrocity prevention. In almost all of these cases, however, the courses are the result of the individual initiative of professors and instructors with personal or professional interest in the topic. It, therefore, is not clear whether the

⁸ FSI reportedly is in the middle of reviewing what key skills and “attitudes” typical FSOs should learn. The idea is to move away from ad hoc course development that is driven by bureau advocacy and toward a clear set of training parameters.

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electives would survive their departure or retirement. Only West Point, with its Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, has created a permanent infrastructure—and even in that case, it resulted from the support of private donors rather than a formal institutional mandate.

A related issue is a lack of scaffolding that could help ensure that those who take training at different points in their career are learning concepts comparable to their experience and needs. The lack of any mandatory training contributes to the problem. Because existing training programs are electives, courses are often predicated on the assumption that their students have little previous exposure to the topic. The same concepts are presented in courses designed for those entering government service and those serving at the most senior levels. One good example of this is the prevalence of the *Shrouded Horizons* tabletop exercise. Although the NDU has developed what essentially are introductory, mid-level, and advanced versions of the simulation, almost every course uses the original, mid-level version.

Supporting Course Design and Development

Another challenge is that USAID and the State Department do not currently have individuals with expertise in course development who can devote significant time to designing courses on atrocity prevention concepts. That means that the burden for course development often falls on practitioners rather than on educators. At FSI, for example, bureaus pushing for a new course are responsible for its development; although FSI will assign someone to work with the practitioner, course content is the responsibility of the bureau. That creates two problems.

First, practitioners are forced to choose between taking time away from their main work to develop a course and not spending time on course development. What often happens is that a particular practitioner will devote considerable time and energy to initial course development, but over time, other demands or burnout will pull the person away from maintaining the same level of personal investment. The end result is weakened courses that garner less and less enrollment. This creates a vicious cycle in which training institutions do not provide the necessary resources for course development and then cite declining enthusiasm and weakening enrollment as justification for not providing additional support. The course gradually fades away—unless a new practitioner steps in to reinvigorate it.

Second, as one long-time observer of USG training programs noted, “[Practitioners] aren’t necessarily the best people to teach. Many times people who work on this issue don’t have experience transmitting knowledge. That’s a problem with lots of trainings in the executive branch, not just mass atrocity prevention.” One practitioner involved with course development agrees. “I’ve learned a tremendous amount, but I’m already [using] 95 percent of what I know. I need more in reserve. The challenge is that you have people with subject matter expertise and people who know how to convey it. And they’re not always the same people.”

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RECOMMENDATIONS

If atrocity prevention is to remain a core national security interest of the United States, both the APB and its constituent agencies will need to develop a more comprehensive approach to training. The APB needs to explore how it can best work with agencies to implement the relevant PSD-10 recommendation. State, USAID, and DoD officials need to take the necessary steps to integrate mass atrocity prevention concepts into mandatory training. We believe that the following recommendations represent the best means to make that happen.

For the President, National Security Staff, and APB:

- Incorporate mandates on and funding for training into the proposed executive order on atrocity prevention.

For the APB:

- Provide clear policy guidance to agencies on the APB's training expectations and priorities.
- Task the sub-APB with the responsibility for working with agencies to develop a common training framework and curriculum that could be adapted to the specific needs of departments and agencies.
- Recommend to deputies that they mandate and fund their agencies' training arms to incorporate atrocity prevention into core introductory and mid-level courses for officers deploying to at-risk posts.
- Instruct agencies to fund the participation of their personnel in trainings conducted by other departments.
- Work with the Office of Management and Budget and agencies to identify additional resources for training institutions in the President's FY 2017 budget.

For the sub-APB:

- Establish a working group to implement the APB's mandate to work with agencies to develop a common training framework and curriculum.
- Work with agencies to find a permanent home for the framework and curriculum.
- Work with agencies to explore creative solutions to funding challenges, including the use of regional hubs to conduct atrocity prevention training for officers assigned to at-risk posts.

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- Work with agencies to incorporate the framework and curriculum into trainings conducted in-country and in-region.
- At least once a year, participate in *Shrouded Horizons* or another tabletop exercise.

For the Department of State:

- Mandate and fund the FSI to develop an in-depth course on atrocity prevention concepts. The course would be mandatory for:
 - FSOs deploying to countries designated as at-risk in the most recent National Intelligence Estimate on mass atrocities;
 - Regional bureau desk officers assigned to countries designated as at risk in the National Intelligence Estimate;
 - Officers in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research;
 - FSOs and civil servants working in those bureaus making up the Office of the Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights;
 - New Schedule B and Schedule C appointees; and
 - Senior advisors and special assistants working in the offices of all under and assistant secretaries.
- Mandate and fund the incorporation of modules on atrocity prevention concepts into
 - The A-100 course for new FSOs and, if feasible, comparable introductory courses for new civil servants;
 - The tradecraft courses for political, public diplomacy, economic, and consular officers; and
 - The deputy chief of mission/principal officer course.
- Explore alternative approaches to training that could cut costs while expanding opportunities for learning. These could include:

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- Implementing a regional hub approach to training that would bring field officers to trainings in the region, thus significantly cutting travel costs and encouraging greater engagement on and interest in atrocity prevention among those posted to at-risk posts;
 - Incorporating a module on atrocity prevention into the annual chiefs of missions conferences;
 - Developing a progressive professional development scaffolding that ties course content to the rank and experience of the students; and
 - Designing an online distance-learning course modeled after the one developed by USAID.
- Instruct FSI to work with the Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies at West Point and the Museum to explore how their work on incorporating atrocity prevention into a range of disciplines could be applied to FSI's own course development.

For USAID:

- Mandate that all USAID personnel take the introductory online module on atrocity prevention.
- Mandate and fund USAID University to work with the Bureau of Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance to develop a classroom-based course on atrocity prevention concepts that is mandatory for all USAID FSOs deploying to at-risk posts. The course should be based on and built from of the new USAID *Field Guide*, using concrete examples that can help deploying officers explore how they can use programming to prevent and respond to atrocities.
- Explore alternative approaches to training that could cut costs while expanding opportunities for learning. These could include:
 - Implementing a regional hub approach to training that would bring field officers to trainings in the region, thus significantly cutting travel costs and encouraging greater engagement on and interest in atrocity prevention among those posted to at-risk posts, and
 - Developing a progressive professional development scaffolding that ties course content to the rank and experience of the students.

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- Instruct USAID University to work with the Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies at West Point and the Museum to explore ways that their work on incorporating atrocity prevention into a range of disciplines could be applied to USAID University's own course development.

For the Department of Defense:

- Instruct the service academies, war colleges, and other institutions responsible for professional military education to incorporate atrocity prevention concepts into mandatory academic programs and leadership and ethics training.
- Mandate and fund the NDU to develop
 - A semester long course on atrocity prevention and protection of civilians; and
 - An update to *Shrouded Horizons*.
- Work with the Departments of Navy and Air Force and the Marine Corps to incorporate atrocity prevention concepts into their course offerings at their command and staff colleges and war colleges.
- Designate the PKSOI at the Army War College as the Joint Proponent for Mass Atrocity Response Operations.
- Instruct the Minerva Initiative, which sponsors university-based social science research on areas of strategic importance to US national security policy, to fund research on atrocity prevention and response.

For the Department of the Army:

- Conduct a thorough review of existing training on atrocity prevention and make recommendations on course development and consolidation.
- Designate West Point's Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies as a Center for Excellence for mass atrocity prevention and response.
- Work with curricular experts at West Point, the CGSC, and the Army War College's PKSOI to explore how best to create a progressive approach to professional military education that ties course content to the experience of the students.

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100 Raoul Wallenberg Place, SW Washington, DC 20024-2126 ushmm.org

