

PKSOI partners with Harvard to discuss tough topics

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A mix of military, academia and governmental agencies came together for a two-day Mass Atrocity Response Operation workshop was held Dec. 8-9 in Gettysburg, Pa, and hosted by the Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, in collaboration with the Carr Center for Human Rights Policy at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government. Photo by Thomas Zimmerman.

Dec. 10, 2010 – Fighting for, and protecting the rights and lives of others has long been a hallmark of the American people and military. So it's only fitting that a workshop focusing on those very topics was held mere miles from battlefields where thousands of Americans died fighting for the rights of others.

The two-day Mass Atrocity Response Operation workshop was held Dec. 8-9 in Gettysburg, Pa, and hosted by the Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute in collaboration with the Carr Center for Human Rights Policy at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government. It was open to interested members of academia, civil society, government, and U.S and international military to analyze a variety of topics related to mass atrocities .

The MARO initiative is a response to the historical lack of planning for similar atrocities in Rwanda and Srebrenica, which both demonstrated that the policymaking and planning communities were not prepared to respond adequately to such crises.

The project was started in 2007 by **Sarah Sewall** at Harvard's Carr Center. Sewall is a highly-respected expert on security issues and former Deputy Assistant of Defense for Peacekeeping and Humanitarian Assistance. Sewall also wrote the introduction to the commercial version of Field Manual 3-24: the U.S. Army's Counterinsurgency manual. PKSOI and Sewall began their collaboration on the project shortly

after it was published. In addition to the MARO Handbook which was published earlier this year, they have conducted two MARO table top exercises with European Command.

“Over the past ten years our military has increasingly understood the importance of a ‘comprehensive approach’ that integrates military and non-military actors, using military and non-military instruments of power, to achieve military and non-military goals,” said **Dwight Raymond**, PKSOI. “One of PKSOI's main attributes is its relationships with organizations outside of the US military. We have partnered with numerous organizations such as the United Nations, the United States Institute of Peace, the Department of State Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stability and, during the MARO project, with Harvard Kennedy School's Carr Center for Human Rights Policy.”

Sewell delivered the keynote address for the workshop, and spoke about a variety of challenges including the full impact of mass atrocities, and how to start to integrate it into the operational planning process.

“Working with PKSOI I think that we have been able to accomplish more jointly than we would have individually,” she said. “The challenge we both face is that institutional change is hard, so it will take time to make it an actionable concept. The Army and PKSOI are both far ahead in thinking about and finding out how to accomplish this but there is still work to be done.”

Workshop attendees said that these types of relationships and discussions are important in tackling tough issues like mass atrocity response.

“It’s vital that we discuss these types of issues because we will be faced with these challenges in the future,” said **Col. Walter Piatt**, an Army War College Fellow at Georgetown.

“Dealing with a mass atrocity situation brings to light many legal, logistical and moral challenges that many times we don’t always consider,” said **Dr. J. Holmes Armstead**, a professor emeritus at Washington and Lee University and former Army officer and Naval War College instructor. “We need to look at these issues from all perspective so we can make sure that we have the right plan and the right people and equipment in the right place to bring about a solution.”

“These partnerships are valuable because we benefit from the incredible talent resident in these organizations, and because we can contribute to an influential and broad community of interest,” said Raymond. “Mass atrocity prevention and response is a distinct area in which human rights organizations, policy-makers, and military forces can share a common understanding regarding desired objectives.”

The workshop included presentations by Tori Holt, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for International

Organization Affairs; Rosa Brooks, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Rule of Law and International Humanitarian Policy; Mike McNerney, Principal Director for Plans in the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, and Dr. James Waller, who holds the Cohen Chair of Holocaust and Genocide Studies at Keene State College.

During the workshop a panel of discussions focused on the Sudan. Panel members included Dr. Linda Bishai, Senior Program Officer at United States Institute of Peace, Tim Shortley, Deputy to the Special Envoy to the Sudan and Col. Stephen Mariano, United States Army Africa.

“We chose Southern Sudan because of the potential for mass atrocities to occur in conjunction with the referendum scheduled for January 9,” said Raymond. “The referendum will likely result in Southern Sudan seceding from the rest of the country, which could in turn lead to violence over the oil-rich Abyei region that sits astride the boundary, a fragile southern state that is unable to prevent violence between tribal and political groups in the south, and the potential return of the Lord's Resistance Army which could flow back into Southern Sudan to exploit the resulting security vacuum.”

“In February of this year, the Director of National Intelligence testified before Congress that ‘a number of countries in Africa and Asia are at significant risk for a new outbreak of mass killing. Among these countries, a new mass killing or genocide is most likely to occur in southern Sudan.’”

How to prevent these situations is a large topic of conversation across the world said Raymond.

“Mass atrocity fits into a broader topic known as ‘Protection of Civilians’ which is being heavily addressed in the United Nations, academia, and governmental circles,” he said. “It also relates to population-centric COIN strategies. By focusing on the topic and developing better capabilities to prevent and respond, the international community may also make such incidents less likely to occur.”

This workshop was only one part of a continually evolving program.

“In the future, we intend to conduct additional tabletop exercises, assist with the development of related contingency plans, support the development of related policy-making, and assist in the development of Protection of Civilian doctrine that could be used by international government organizations such as the UN,” said Raymond.

As part of the conference attendees broke into working groups and discussed issues related to the topic and heard updates from participants like the FBI, the US Holocaust Memorial Museum, the Stimson Center, academic institutions, and the Raphael Lemkin Seminar Program. Attendees were also able to discuss concerns during question and answer periods.

Agency backgrounds

The US Army Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute (PKSOI) is located at the US Army War College at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, and is the Army's Center of Excellence for stability and peace operations at the strategic and operational levels. PKSOI facilitates information sharing, project development, and integration of efforts among military and civilian government agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and international and multinational institutions.

The Carr Center for Human Rights Policy is located at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government. The mission of the Carr Center is to make human rights principles central to the formulation of sound public policy in the United States and throughout the world, and to train future leaders in the field of human rights. The Center contributes to public policy formulation through the research and public engagement of its faculty and fellows.

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