



Democracy on the Front Lines:

An After Action Report on Tabletop Exercises to Assess the Risk of
Civil Unrest and Threats to the Rule of Law
in the 2024 Presidential Election

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Center for Ethics and the Rule of Law
at
The University of Pennsylvania

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On September 19 and October 10, 2024, the Center for Ethics and the Rule of Law (CERL) at the University of Pennsylvania held two tabletop exercises in which over 30 high-ranking retired military leaders, state and local officials, national security experts, and civil society leaders gathered to address scenarios relating to the 2024 presidential election, one involving the risk of election interference by malign foreign or domestic actors and the second involving the possibility that a President would seek to deploy U.S. Armed Forces domestically to quell inauguration-related civil unrest. While both scenarios took place in Pennsylvania, the findings that emerged from these exercises have broad applicability to other states in the country.

I. Description of Exercise

The tabletop exercises provided participants with an opportunity to identify legal and operational shortfalls inherent in U.S. preparedness to address civil unrest in the 2024 election cycle as well as to consider key points of vulnerability within U.S. legal structures and practices that could enable misuse of the military chain of command, risking its integrity. The goal was to simulate scenarios that could result in challenges to the certification of the election due to disinformation or other malign disruptions that could result in the disqualification of a county or even possibly an entire state from the electoral count, with attendant civil unrest and the need for state and federal intervention, as well as a scenario that tested misuse of the military and the chain of command in the face of a domestic deployment in aid to civilian law enforcement authorities. The exercises were intended to challenge participants to identify legal and practical vulnerabilities and to propose solutions that would improve operational readiness and diminish the impact of foreign or domestic

interference with democratic governance and the rule of law in the election cycle and the transition of power.

These exercises sought to simulate the deployment of law-enforcement and active-duty U.S. military in assistance to civil authority to quell civil unrest during a contested election, as well as in the aftermath of the election through to Inauguration Day. Participants were presented with seemingly conflicting legal authorities in a complex legal and moral environment. The hypothetical scenarios called on participants to address the nuances of decision making in such contexts under a series of unprecedented, yet realistic, circumstances. Participants had the opportunity to test the various aspects of decision-making involving the federal military, the National Guard, and state and local police to quell protests and other potentially illegal activity in Pennsylvania. The first exercise involved civil unrest in the wake of the swearing in of the next U.S. President following the election. The second exercise involved a contested election scenario in Pennsylvania which explored civil unrest in the face of accusations of fraud and manipulation of voting protocols. The scope of both exercises extended to a variety of organizations and legal authorities, including the executive, various state National Guards, and federal and local law enforcement. For the sake of chronological exposition, we present them in reverse order, beginning with the contested election scenario and ending with the Inauguration Day hypothetical.

The overwhelming lesson from the two days of tabletop exercises was that **civil unrest in the face of the 2024 presidential election and beyond is a realistic if not likely possibility**. Further, the group concluded that federal, state, and local authorities are **inadequately prepared for a scenario of mass civil unrest** that could easily result from disinformation circulating around the election, particularly on election day itself or in the immediate aftermath of the election based on a closely contested race. The group concluded that leaders at all levels of government **should be preparing to counter threats to the security of our elections**, including threats to the peaceful transition of power, and threats to the rule of law stemming from potential misuse of the military. A primary takeaway from the exercises was that there are numerous vulnerabilities stemming from unresolved points of state and federal law, and that in the face of an emergency involving massive civil unrest, **federal and state courts would likely not have the ability to resolve critical ambiguous points of law**, given the time frame involved and the fact that most judges would be reluctant to engage with the merits of orders to military assisting civilian authority.

II. Scenario Involving Contested Election in Lancaster County

One of the two tabletop exercises explored a scenario in which disinformation and misinformation produced false claims of fraud in the election. False reports of fraud are marshaled to discredit election integrity to interfere with the accurate and lawful reporting of election results in this scenario, resulting in widespread protests. Participants assessed what might happen if disinformation interfered with peoples' faith in the electoral process, resulting in violence that

disrupted the ordinary workings of electoral counting and certification in a critically important swing state. A rough summary of the scenario, which was complex and contained many updates and developments, is as follows:

On Election Day, supporters of Candidate B in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania allege a glitch in the electronic voting machines when casting their votes, suggesting to local media that Candidate A has instigated voter fraud as part of a grand plan to rig the election and steal votes. Unrest grows, leading to demonstrations within the polling area. When the County Board of Elections makes the decision to temporarily close the polling station, violence erupts. Despite attempts by the Governor and local law enforcement to quell the unrest, protests become increasingly violent, and the certification of election results at state level is impeded by the outstanding vote tallies from Lancaster. The Governor declares a state of emergency and deploys the Pennsylvania National Guard to assist the overwhelmed local police, with the assistance of the National Guard from Maryland. Polling locations resume voting with law enforcement on scene. However, violence resumes when a group of disgruntled election workers refuse to compute the remaining results, alleging voting irregularities. The County Board of Elections is unable to finalize this process and inevitably misses the deadline.

In the meantime, all other states successfully tabulate and certify their votes. Candidate A and Candidate B receive an equal number of electoral votes, but neither achieves the 270 electoral votes necessary to prevail. All eyes are on Pennsylvania. Candidate B files a complaint with a Federal District Court in Pennsylvania arguing that Congress should commence the tie breaking process under the 12th Amendment. A conflict emerges when the Pennsylvania Legislature, controlled predominately by Candidate B loyalists, passes a resolution in favor of the tie breaking process under the 12th Amendment, while the District Court rules that Pennsylvania's votes must be included in the final tally of the electoral college. The U.S. House of Representatives ultimately decides to vote on the outcome of the presidential election in favor of Candidate B. Candidate A challenges this result by appealing to the Supreme Court for an emergency ruling.

The goal of the exercise was to identify vulnerabilities in the election administration process and to develop strategies to safeguard U.S. elections against domestic violent extremism and disinformation. Roughly 30 high-ranking current and retired state and local officials, members of Congress, election lawyers, federal officials and community leaders across civil society participated in the full-day exercise.

While the scenario was set in Lancaster County, panelists noted that the issues of domestic violent extremism spurred by disinformation, as well as intentional interference in the certification of election results, are deeply relevant to counties across the United States.

Key questions relating to this exercise are as follows:

1. **What are the key vulnerabilities that could result in civil unrest surrounding election security?**
2. **How plausible is it that civil unrest could result in a failure to timely certify the election results in a given state?**
3. **What are the current safeguards in place at local, state, and federal levels to protect against domestic violent extremism in the administration of the elections and consequent impact on the certification of votes?**
4. **How might the foregoing safeguards be enhanced to protect the electoral and certification processes?**
5. **How effective might federal and state courts be at responding to interference with the certification of votes in a contested election scenario?**

Participants in the contested election scenario concluded that it is highly realistic that violence could erupt on election day at polling sites, and that places the presidential election at grave risk. Federal and state officials must be prepared for the very real possibility of civil unrest at levels that could interfere with vote counting. Extensive civil unrest could interfere with certification of the votes. That could have a devastating impact on the ability to certify the results of the election for the country when such unrest occurs in a critical swing state like Pennsylvania.

III. Scenario Involving Civil Unrest on Inauguration Day

The second full-day tabletop exercise assessed what might happen if a new administration seeks to use the U.S. military illegally for domestic law enforcement purposes. In this hypothetical scenario, the President seeks to deploy the Pennsylvania national guard to suppress inauguration-related protests in Philadelphia.

Candidate A is declared the winner of a presidential election where he lost the popular vote but won the electoral college by a narrow margin. He immediately declares the results of the popular vote fraudulent, leading to protests against him in Philadelphia. By inauguration day, violence and looting erupt around the city as initially peaceful protesters and President A's counter-protesters clash. The Philadelphia police struggle to regain control over the city. President A calls on the Governor to deploy the PA National Guard, but he refuses, so President A federalizes the PA National Guard and sends them to Philadelphia under the Insurrection Act. The Governor objects, states that the President has breached Posse Comitatus, and accuses the President of attempting to

commandeer the PA National Guard and to suppress the First Amendment rights of those opposing his presidency.

The Governor files a suit against President A in the Federal District Court in Philadelphia, seeking an injunction to stop the President's use of federalized PA National Guard troops. He argues that the President's use of Section 253 of the Insurrection Act in this context is both unauthorized by the statute and unconstitutional, given that it is being asserted against the stated opposition of state and local leaders, and that it violates the anti-commandeering doctrine established in the Tenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and *Murphy v. National Collegiate Athletic Association*. He urges the Guard to ignore the President's orders. The Governor and President continue to issue clashing declarations about whose control the National Guard is under, and to ignore the instructions of the other. The Guard requests clarification of command and joins the Governor's suit.

Armed groups of far-right extremists arrive in Philadelphia in large numbers and begin confronting looters. President A attempts to call out National Guards from neighboring states and declares a national emergency to justify deploying the Army against the Governor, PA National Guard, and original protesters. He orders the head of the National Guard to answer to the authority of the Army command. Some within the ranks of the PA National Guard declare allegiance to the Governor, which the President declares seditious; he invokes the Insurrection Act to deploy the federal military against the Guard. Violence breaks out between the National Guard and the Army.

The goal of the exercise was to identify vulnerabilities in the military's chain of command and to develop strategies to ensure that military responses to illegal orders align with democratic values.

Key questions addressed from the second exercise include:

- 1. What if there's a conflict between the President and a Governor about utilizing the National Guard?**
- 2. How would the military respond to potentially illegal orders with regard to civil law enforcement?**
- 3. What is the likely impact of the U.S. Supreme Court Immunity Decision, *Trump v. U.S.*, on the chain of command?**
- 4. Is the basis for federal intervention in circumstances of civil unrest clearly established?**
- 5. How likely are federal courts to provide guardrails against misuse of the military in violation of the Posse Comitatus Act, the law forbidding use of the military in civil law-enforcement?**

Federal courts are unlikely to provide an effective backstop to a scenario in which there are fast breaking events involving illicit use of the military. The timeliness of a response may be problematic in the case of a litigation-based solution. Moreover, many courts may be unwilling to take jurisdiction over a matter involving Commander-in-Chief powers. A likely response on the part of a federal court would be that such issues are “political questions” and that they are best left to the political branches to resolve.

In response to these findings, exercise participants underscored how vital it is for military leaders as well as retired military to work collaboratively to safeguard U.S. democracy and uphold the rule of law. Military leaders involved in the exercise also surmised that the trust among members of the chain of command, instilled as a result of their rigorous military training, is paramount to ensuring that active-duty military will respond appropriately under pressured conditions to an improper or illegal order.

Another key takeaway had to do with the impact of the U.S. Supreme Court’s immunity decision on the chain of command. The idea that the President is above the law and thus has immunity for all official acts was shown to have the potential to wreak havoc on good order and discipline in the military as well as its ability to respond to improper deployment for civilian law enforcement purposes.

IV. Detailed Findings from Contested Election Scenario

Primary Findings & Recommendations:

- 1. Disinformation by malign foreign or domestic actors, lack of response time on the part of law enforcement or national guard, exaggerated responses on the part of such authorities, or ineffectual handling of controversy in the certification process could result in or accelerate civil unrest in the run-up to the election, on Election Day, or in the aftermath.**
- 2. Federal, state and local law-enforcement need to re-examine preparation for civil unrest during and in the aftermath of the 2024 presidential election.** Federal, state, and local law enforcement authorities are inadequately prepared for a worst-case scenario involving extensive violence at polling places or surrounding an election, particularly in the event of a protracted undecided electoral count scenario in which the results of the election are uncertain and state elections officials require time to tabulate votes.
- 3. Measures to ensure physical safety at the polls should take high priority, and such measures will likely be necessary in the 2024 presidential election selectively**

throughout the country at at-risk locations. Such measures may include ready deployment of first responders, including local police, National Guard troops, the FBI, and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Law enforcement should focus on protecting polling places rather than policing protestors.

4. **Integrated preparation and communications protocols required of federal, state, and local authorities are needed.** Enhanced preparation at numerous levels is required to ensure the 2024 presidential elections are free from political violence. Federal and state authorities must establish clear communications protocols as well as emergency command and control measures to clarify what the contingency plans are in case of a mass civil unrest scenario surrounding the election.
5. **The decision of whether to deploy troops in a situation of mass civil unrest involves the delicate balancing of multiple factors.** On the one hand, federalizing the National Guard or using federal military forces heightens the risk that the military will itself become radicalized and embroiled in mass violence, with the result that orders may not be strictly followed. On the other hand, failure to deploy troops may make it impossible to gain control of unrest on a large scale and may undermine the President's authority in the mind of the public. On balance, the President should deploy forces—whether National Guard or regular federal military—when the need to do so outweighs the risk of spurring further violence from deployment.
6. **State and local officials should campaign to reduce public mistrust in the election.** This might include publicizing videos on social media of public officials testing voting machines prior to the election; quickly mobilizing election officials to remove any faulty machines and providing transparency regarding the faults; and posting scores of election observers at any location identified as at risk of civil unrest in order to provide trusted testimony to counter any misinformation or disinformation.
7. **Transparency in communications is key and will help build trust and dispel disinformation.** Political leaders at all levels should rely on a strategy of transparent communication. Officials should get on the radio and utilize cell phone notification systems to detail situation updates, issue clear warnings and threats of arrest for illegal unrest, elevate nonpartisan community leaders, and provide clear guidance on voting operations to potential voters.
8. **Community leaders can play a critical role in countering the disinformation that could lead to violence.** Community leaders should form nonpartisan communication and influence networks made up of faith leaders, trusted communicators, election law experts, social media strategists, and others. These networks should be present at poll sites, ballot

curing sites, and other election administrative sites and should be prepared to rapidly deploy to any poll sites where there is an allegation of fraud or fault in order to counter misinformation by issuing trusted, clear, and accurate accounts of the situation. Political leaders should in turn support and amplify these trusted community voices.

9. **Legislation that provides clear and specific protections for poll workers and poll volunteers could aid in protecting the public on Election Day from vigilantism and civil unrest, as well as protect access to continued voting and avoid poll closures.**
10. **Effective and transparent communication with members of the public to dispel disinformation is critical.** The participants highlighted the need for effective and transparent communication. They noted that officials have a duty to give notice of any unrest, avenues of countering the unrest, and the implications for voters seeking to get to the polls. Officials should get on the radio and utilize cell phone notification systems to detail situation updates, issue clear warnings and threats of arrest for illegal unrest, elevate nonpartisan community leaders, and provide clear guidance on voting operations to potential voters.

Secondary Findings & Recommendations:

11. **The Department of Defense should form a Joint Task Force with other federal agencies and state and local partners 60 to 90 days in advance of an election.** This Joint Task Force would be based in NORTHCOM and prepare to rapidly provide state and local officials with resources, capabilities, and information in the event of a crisis. The National Security Council would convene the task force to support lead agencies such as the DHS and the FBI. Federal partners should keep state and local officials apprised of emerging threats. State and local officials should design contingency operations, communications strategies, and rules of engagement in advance with FEMA, PEMA, law enforcement, and community leaders.
12. **The refusal of a county election board to certify their state's election is a major vulnerability and has no easy solution in either law or practice.** In the event that the majority of election board commissioners refuses to certify the results of an election in a given Pennsylvania county and refuses to adhere to a court order to certify, the Governor cannot appoint new election board commissioners. Instead, Art. 6 Sec. 7 of the Pennsylvania Constitution mandates that these officials may only be removed by a two-thirds vote of the Pennsylvania Senate, but that is the only recourse.
13. **The Department of Justice can serve a coordinating role between state and local officials and community leaders.** The DOJ and the FBI should form points of contact for

local and state forces and for community leaders, particularly with regard to relevant parties and the DOJ Civil Rights Division.

14. **The federal Election Count Reform Act and the Voting Rights Act will likely be effective at protecting voters and the facilitation of voting if they can be properly enforced.** Private parties or other parties identified in section 11(b) of the Voting Rights Act can bring civil claims as part of an overall enforcement strategy. Challenges will lie in access to timely court decisions and implementation strategies surrounding those decisions.
15. **The Governor's control over the election board is weak, even in the face of corrupt or illegal conduct.** While Pennsylvania law protects polling location staff and the facilitation of voters, it does not include a provision empowering the governor to appoint new election board commissions if they fail to carry out their duties. This is a critical potential gap in Pennsylvania law, since a governor cannot force board members to certify an election and can only remove board members. If he cannot add board members, however, his powers of removal are weak since he will be reluctant to remove.

V. Detailed Findings from Civil Unrest on Inauguration Day Scenario

Primary Findings & Recommendations:

1. **Presidential authority will win out over a Governor's where control of the National Guard is concerned.** A President's legal authority would likely supersede a Governor's in a contest over the deployment of the National Guard, as long as the President's orders plausibly fell within the parameters of the Insurrection Act or other emergency powers.
2. **Enhanced training to ensure robust rule of law adherence in the military is needed.** In the case of a patently illegal order issued by a new administration, the U.S. military is prepared to disobey on the strength of their oath to abide by the U.S. Constitution. However, training must be conducted to assist active-duty military to recognize illegal orders and prepare for the eventual need to reject illegal orders, particularly in the wake of *Trump v. United States*.
3. **Courts may be ineffective in a critical circumstance involving civil unrest.** The judicial system is not equipped to provide quick and comprehensive direction to state and local officials to clarify the scope of authority in a contest between state and federal command

over the National Guard. The slow pace of judicial decision making may allow for further deterioration in a situation of civil unrest during the time that a court is considering a case.

4. **The immunity decision created a grey area in which presidential orders might be received with uncertainty as to their legality, creating confusion in and potential damage to the chain of command.** The U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Trump v. United States* creates a grey area in which a President may issue a patently illegal order without placing himself in legal jeopardy, thus creating uncertainty for officials lower down the chain as to the legality of orders issued and who may be liable for the consequences of an illegal order.
5. **Senior military leaders could be expected to follow court orders, even in the face of a contrary presidential order following Inauguration Day.** In debating whether the military could rely on an injunctive court order to counter an illegal presidential order, the question arose whether the Secretary of Defense or lower ranking officials could bring an action in federal court to formally oppose the presidential action in question and receive support by way of an injunction. The participants concluded that this would be beneficial as a last resort, since, as a matter of practice, the military would follow the court order, rather than the questionable presidential order, regardless of the legalities involved.
6. **There is a risk of federal overreach with a new administration, particularly in the wake of the immunity decision.** State and local authorities should prepare for the possibility that federal officials may reach beyond official federal mandates to partner with political allies in state and local government. State and local authorities should therefore maintain secure chains of communication, clarify lines of command and authority, and be prepared to act swiftly to counter mis- and disinformation.
7. **The military's commitment to political neutrality may be put under pressure in a highly charged political atmosphere involving civil unrest, and a president enjoying immunity from criminal prosecution for official acts.** There is an abiding tension between the apolitical standards of the professional military in a situation in which the military is deployed domestically to restore order and civil leadership who may be attempting to exploit the military to serve political and ideological goals. This tension must be carefully navigated and suggests the need for carefully scripted protocol and civic education among active-duty military to protect the military's apolitical status.
8. **Direction orders from the president to combatant commanders are a distinct risk.** The military should prepare for a situation in which the President decides that he does not have confidence in the Joint Chiefs and other Pentagon officials and goes straight to a combatant commander.

Secondary Findings & Recommendations:

9. **The need for standard emergency procedures relating to civil unrest.** State and local authorities should create and/or reinforce standard operating procedures specifically designed to address major civil disturbances resulting from politically motivated activities. These procedures should be rehearsed with federal partners to identify weaknesses and improve coordination between federal and state authorities as well as communications across command and control systems.
10. **The need for clear rules of engagement.** Relatedly, state and local authorities should establish clear rules of engagement for law enforcement and protocols for harmonizing the chain of command for the National Guard and other partners under conditions of civil unrest.
11. **Preparation for emergency scenarios by senior military leaders.** Senior military figures must prepare for emergency scenarios in order to minimize the friction of early hours and days in a political crisis involving civil unrest. The Joint Chiefs of Staff and other senior leaders within the Department of Defense should run scenarios to anticipate, prepare, set expectations, and establish metrics to guide their preparations for such eventualities.
12. **Limitations of local officials.** The Mayor and other city officials are limited in their resource surge capacity and may be inclined to request federal support earlier than state actors would normally request federal intervention.
13. **The need for enhanced capabilities in open source intelligence.** Intelligence officials, including state and local law enforcement, should conduct extensive monitoring of social media and other open intelligence sites to combat malign activities and disinformation as well as to preempt harmful outside interference in government processes.
14. **Enhanced communications with educational leaders.** City and state officials should establish clear lines of communication with secondary schools and university leaders to counter student radicalization and ensure the safety of all students during a period of civil unrest.
15. **Long standing local relationships may help to counter disinformation and ensuing political violence.** The Governor, Mayor, and other state and local authorities should take advantage of long-term institutional relationships between their offices and federal partners. The participants were reasonably confident that even with political actors stoking

fires, these institutional partners would coordinate throughout a crisis involving civil unrest to work towards de-escalation.

16. **Following inauguration, the status of newly appointed, but not confirmed federal government officials must be examined.** It is an open question with regard to acting officials or carry-over officials from previous administrations whether their orders are entitled to the same deference as Senate-confirmed appointees who are permanent occupants of their offices. It is important to clarify the role and authority of individuals within the chain of command.
17. **The uniformed military faces considerable pressure to deploy quickly, and this could enhance the risk of green-on-green violence in a situation of civil unrest.** There could be friction when the military is rapidly deployed into a violent protest between protestors, militias, police, and National Guard, without clear communications. Measures must be taken in such emergency deployments to address the potential for conflicting lines of command and the risk of violence within the military must be carefully assessed and countered.

VI. Conclusion

The two tabletop exercises CERL conducted made clear that the risk of political violence on the part of those who would disrupt elections is a very real possibility, and that disinformation by malign foreign or domestic actors, lack of response time on the part of law-enforcement or national guard, or exaggerated responses on the part of such authorities, as well as ineffectual handling of controversy in the certification process could accelerate civil unrest in the election cycle. Most participants felt that a failure to timely certify election results could also result in civil unrest, raising the specter of a vicious cycle in which violence might disrupt the ability to count and certify votes, which might spur further unrest.

Some reassuring factors lay in long-standing relationships among state and local officials, which were believed to be helpful for enhancing communications to improve the speed and effectiveness of response to civil unrest. Community leaders in faith, small business, labor, and other community organizations were also found to be helpful in channeling information and assisting with response processes. The Electoral Count Reform Act was believed to add important clarity to the authority of election officials, but remaining ambiguity with the Act and doubts about the willingness of courts to enforce its provisions casts doubt on its ultimate utility.

Some additional measures states could take would be to allow election officials to process mail-in ballots prior to election day in order to reduce temporal pressure on poll workers. Unfortunately, recent court decisions in two swing states cut the other way. Congress can pass legislation to

protect election workers, and recommending such legislation was a key takeaway from these exercises.

The exercises also made clear that federal and state government must prepare for worst-case scenarios to enhance response time and scope logistics. Participants recommend the establishment of a Joint Task Force to assist with surge capacity, coordinate response, and enhance information sharing. It is also critical to have local election monitors and law-enforcement poised to respond effectively to conspiracy theories and disinformation with well-organized communication capacities that can reach members of the public quickly to dispel false reports of fraud in the elections.

With regard to courts, participants were confident that state courts would fast-track sensitive election cases to the best of their ability, but it was clear that delays would still be sufficient to make judicial resolution of emergency election matters in an immediate crisis an uncertain proposition. Participants also noted that courts might be hesitant to resolve cases involving complex election scenarios, as judges may regard such cases as beyond the scope of federal or state judicial competence. Use of the “political questions doctrine” was expected to impede a court’s willingness to second-guess the legality of military deployment decisions. Finally, participants noted that attempts to anticipate certification obstacles to avoid time-pressured litigation could face another hurdle, namely that such cases could be regarded as failing to meet the “case or controversy” requirement of Article III of the U.S. Constitution and hence be judicially unreviewable in federal court.

With regard to the risks of an authoritarian president who might misuse the military for civilian law enforcement purposes, use of the Insurrection Act of the National Emergencies Act would enable a President to issue orders that supersede a Governor’s orders in deployment of the National Guard. The U.S. military is trained to disobey patently illegal orders based on their oath to the U.S. Constitution. However, further training is needed to help active-duty personnel recognize and reject such orders, especially after the Supreme Court’s immunity decision in *Trump v. U.S.*, which was found to create distinct risks.

The ruling in *Trump v. United States* creates legal ambiguity in the chain of command, allowing a President to issue potentially illegal orders without personal legal risk. This would create a difficult choice for individuals in the chain of command in which they might have to choose between disobeying a direct order of the Commander-in-Chief and committing a crime.

A major concern resulting from these exercises was exposing the fact that the lines between state and federal authority with regard to quelling civil unrest are not sufficiently clear with regard to numerous details. As a result, state and local officials should anticipate federal overreach under

certain circumstances. The basis for federal intervention in state elections calls out for clarification.

All in all, the exercises raised grave concerns about the risk of political violence and the preparedness of state and federal authorities to counter the violence effectively, as well as the availability of federal and state courts to resolve ambiguities relating to law-enforcement efforts, chain of command issues, and legal questions relating to election matters that might create space for undermining confidence in the voting and vote-counting process. More work needs to be done as quickly as possible to improve coordination, training, and communication capacities to prepare for the foregoing eventualities and protect the integrity of the democratic process surrounding elections.