



## **SENSE as a Conflict Management Tool**

One of the Institute's core missions is strengthening capabilities of decision makers around the world to manage post-conflict transitions successfully. The Strategic Economic Needs and Security Exercise (SENSE), originally developed by the Institute for Defense Analyses (IDA), is a computer-facilitated simulation that focuses on negotiations and decision-making in a post-conflict environment. SENSE simulates the resource allocation challenges confronting national and international decision-makers. The sophisticated computer support provides participants with rapid feedback on the results of their time-sensitive decision-making in terms of political stability, social justice, and a foundation for economic progress. But the primary activity in SENSE is negotiation between and among those participating in the simulation. SENSE has been used in the Balkans, the Caucasus, Iraq, and Poland and neighboring countries, as well as the U.S.

## **Objectives**

SENSE has four interrelated objectives, which can be modified depending on the target audience and curriculum:

- Develop the principles of negotiating, cooperative problem-solving, and decision making, which are critical for successful democratic processes;
- Illustrate the tradeoffs among military security, economic progress, and the creation of equitable societies;
- Demonstrate the efficacy and efficiency of free market economies; and,
- Provide a practical and informative experience with the issues of governance in "transitional" societies.

## **SENSE In Action**

Over the course of three or four days, SENSE simulates resource allocation and other challenges confronting national and international decision-makers. It models the conditions in an imaginary country ("Akrona") that is emerging from destructive conflict with a significant ethnic component. Players representing government officials, private firms, civil society, and international actors are challenged to identify and coordinate economic, social, and political policies aimed at bringing about recovery and reconstruction.

SENSE is used to provide participants with strategic insights and opportunities for creative problem-solving. In the course of a SENSE simulation, participants must test the costs and benefits of both competition and teamwork. The simulation provides a multi-disciplinary framework for time-sensitive decision-making aimed at building political stability, social justice, and a foundation for economic progress. Participants must integrate economic, political, social and military challenges, develop and act on decision options, and test crisis-action plans. SENSE provides the opportunity to move beyond collaborative discourse and information exchange into a setting that requires users to make difficult decisions and act on the consequences (both intended and unintended) of those decisions.

## **SENSE Around the Globe**

SENSE has been successfully employed (by USIP and/or IDA) in training programs with participants from Bosnia, Kosovo, the Republic of Georgia, Iraq, Poland, Moldova, Ukraine, Belarus and elsewhere, as well as with U.S. officials.

### **SENSE in Iraq**

In 2004, the Institute conducted special SENSE training programs designed for senior Iraqi national security officials. The training, conducted in the Washington, DC area, employed a series of formal presentations and interactive exercises designed to:

- refine participants' skills in conflict analysis and resolution,
- master negotiation styles and techniques,
- understand the roles that third parties can play in mediating disagreements.

In those programs, the Institute trained 173 Iraqi officials from key ministries such as Defense (including military officers), Foreign Affairs, Interior (including police generals), Justice (including judges), Planning, and Finance. Based in part on feedback from the Iraqi participants, USIP contracted with IDA to enhance the simulation by scaling the imaginary country closer to Iraqi dimensions and including a significant role for the oil sector in the economy (with pipelines vulnerable to terrorist disruption), as well as additional elements that address managing the risk of inflation in an economy in transition.

In 2005, the Institute conducted further SENSE programs for Iraqis in Jordan, and since that time has sponsored SENSE events in Iraq conducted by Iraqis themselves (programs have been conducted in the International Zone in Baghdad and in various sites in Kurdistan). Participants have included officials of the Transitional National Authority, members of Parliament, a wide range of Kurdish authorities, the Baghdad Provincial Council, and members from all of Iraq's 18 Provincial Councils. Between 2004 and early 2008, a total of nearly 800 Iraqis benefited from SENSE trainings. The Iraqi NGO Iraq Institute for Economic Reform (IIER) ran SENSE events there from 2005 to 2007.

### **SENSE in Poland**

In 2006, USIP, in cooperation with IDA, partnered with the Polish Ministry of National Defense and Center for Eastern European Studies Program, University of Warsaw (CEES) to conduct a series of five-day Professional Development and SENSE Training Workshops at the Polish Academy for National Defense. These programs, whose participants came from Moldova and Ukraine, also enabled USIP to provide the Academy and the University with the permanent capability to conduct SENSE training for a wide variety of audiences in Poland and across the region (including Belarus, Georgia, and Azerbaijan).

The CEES has since been awarded a SENSE license, and continues to be active in conducting the simulation for Poland's neighbors, as part of a broader program promoting economic and societal reform.

*For further information on the United States Institute of Peace, please contact our Education and Training Center/International Programs by e-mail at [training@usip.org](mailto:training@usip.org) or by phone at (202) 429-4750, or visit the Institute's Web site at [www.usip.org](http://www.usip.org).*

June 30, 2008