Security Reform beyond the Project on National Security Reform

by

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Abstract

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By examining writings on contemporary and future threats to our national security, this paper will first reinforce the need for the United States Government to develop standing interagency organization(s), which under the direction of the President are responsible for developing and implementing Whole of Government Grand Strategies, in peace and war. The study will examine recommendations presented by previously accredited studies with a focus on the Project On National Security Reform in order to evaluate organizational structural recommendations and why they weren’t implemented. Then the study will explore US Governmental department culture to understand opportunities that may exist for reform and in so doing recommend a reform to address the needed transformation.
Security Reform beyond the Project on National Security Reform

Let us take comfort in the Knowledge that, whatever the outcome in Iraq and Afghanistan, the precious blood these young people shed for the future shall not-have been shed in vain.\(^2\)

Admiral Mike Mullen, Former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Introduction.

More than two decades after the dissolution of the Soviet Union which brought an end to the bipolar security environment, it seems clear that in the 21\(^{st}\) Century U.S. national security is most reliant on global and regional stability. Stable conditions allow for open international trade and free markets, which sustains our globally impressive Gross Domestic Product vital to maintaining America’s global stature and influence. Stable nations also reduce the ability of transnational criminal organizations and terrorist organizations to threaten the United States and its allies.

The absence of an equally powerful state adversary renders only more urgent the need to recalibrate the nation’s defense capabilities. The new challenges are more insidious and less well understood, while the U.S. continues to operate in an obsolete and clumsy manner. If the recent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have demonstrated anything it is that neither the latest hardware and fancy gadgetry, nor truckloads of cash hurled at highly complex “non-kinetic” problems, can compensate for incoherent strategic goals, cultural ignorance, and overconfidence.

Now more than ever it is important to consider the fact that our nation’s defense system is ill-suited to produce coherent whole of government strategies. The bipartisan Project on National Security Reform, completed in November 2008, by an impressive group of foreign

...
policy professionals, confirms this fact and outlines the imperative for collaborative interagency implementation of what is sometimes called Grand Strategy, in order to accomplish our national security goals. After identifying some of the most critical, if not indeed fatal, flaws in the current system, the Guiding Coalition suggests a number of changes which must be implemented before our system can adequately assist the President’s ability develop comprehensive strategy.

This study acknowledges the fact that achieving operational effectiveness and improving the President’s span of control has always been critical, but especially in the current complex environment, with new challenges which include, most notably, ideologically committed non-state actors intent on destroying us. To that end, it seems imperative to find a way to integrate interagency personnel at the First Strategic level. The paper recommends exploring the establishment of Regional Coordination Authorities (RCA), an adaptation of one of the three major PNSR reform options, as a plausible alternative to the current seemingly ad hoc method of formulating and administering U.S. Grand Strategy.

There are always considerable institutional obstacles to reform, but this is no reason for preemptive capitulation. As even a brief summary of the factors which contributed to the Joint Special Operations Commands (JSOC) strategic interagency success will indicate, the RCA has the potential to greatly improve the ability of the U.S. to articulate and more successfully implement its strategic goals. Moreover, appreciating that long term change can only occur through congressional legislation, this study recommends considering the African Regional Coordination Authority as a pilot program prior to undertaking more comprehensive structural national security reform.
As the only country in the world to maintain a Global Alliance System the United States is in a unique position to contribute to stability in many regions of the world. We can make a difference.

**The Global Security Environment; Complex challenges to US National Security.**

*Paradoxically, 9/11 seemed to on the one hand emphasize the need for a strict counter-terrorism response while on the other hand demonstrating the need to address local social, political and economic grievances drawing young Muslim men to violence.*

Stephen Hines

In President Obama’s cover letter to the 2010 National Security Strategy, he states that “...we face multiple threats – from nations, non-state actors, and failed states.” He acknowledges that the exigent threats from transnational terrorist organizations with access to weapons of mass destruction must be addressed directly with military force or in close cooperation with partnered security forces. But he also acknowledges that U.S. economic and security interests are inextricably linked and that national security is heavily dependent on domestic economic capacity to continue funding involvement in international affairs and serving as the world’s guardian of democracy and peace.

Sophisticated transnational criminal organizations and terrorist groups habitually tend to find opportunities where political instability is caused by such factors as civil discontent, poverty, corruption, and ideology. These conditions are invariably linked to an absence of popularly supported, transparent, effective government and accountable law enforcement authority.

These governmental challenges exist because of complex social and political factors, affected by local environmental factors and often rooted in generational politics or religion. It
is enormously important to appreciate that the problems underlying threats to our security are complex and cannot be solved by using outdated, unilateral National Security Department solutions.

To achieve what president Obama has directed, “for the foreseeable future, the United States will continue to take an active approach to countering these threats by monitoring the activities of non-state threats worldwide...to establish control over ungoverned territories.”6

It would seem to follow that if the United States is to encourage and partner effectively with legitimate and encourage effective governments, it must address the root causes of international problems not only by monitoring but also by seeking to address them at their root causes, by using all the capabilities available in the most efficient manner. This is achievable only through comprehensive interagency approaches. Unfortunately, as Dr. John Lenczowski points out in his book titled Full Spectrum Diplomacy and Grand Strategy, due to insufficient understanding of the need to synchronize all the many forms of diplomacy and the arts of statecraft, the United States has failed to conduct a Full Spectrum Diplomacy, or articulate a coherent Grand Strategy, since at least the end of the Cold War if not indeed long before.7

**United States Contemporary approach to National Defense and Foreign Policy.**

“The global security environment presents an increasingly complex set of challenges and opportunities to which all elements of U.S. national power must be applied.”8

Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel

**What has not worked.**

Trying to solve 21st century problems by using an antiquated defense structure is bound to fail. As established by the National Defense Act of 1947,9 the hierarchical, functionally aligned departments that currently constitute the U.S. national security system disastrously
limit interagency collaboration, Grand Strategy implementation, and regional interagency problem solving. Failing to evolve by using modern organizational design principles, each Presidential administration has resorted to using the National Security Council, as well as Presidential Decision Directives, in an effort to coordinate the activities of an increasingly dysfunctional bureaucracy. Particularly since 2001, National Security Presidential Directives have sought to direct the National Security Council and related Departments to operate collectively, attempting to mandate meeting attendance, outlining subordinate organizational instructions, and suggesting interaction expectations. The results have been underwhelming or worse.

The system has thus reinforced what was already a top-down autocratic structure, which further limits the delegation of authority and undermines the bureaucracy’s already impaired ability to handle multiple complex problems. Caused by a span of control limitations, the NSC inevitably becomes paralyzed by the most trivial crisis, proving ultimately incapable of formulating or even meaningfully affecting a strategic vision. The rigid system, far from improving, tends to discourage greater integration of the arts of Statecraft, limiting even more severely our Nation’s ability to effectively develop coherent Grand or Operational strategy.

In order to understand the U.S. government’s performance over the past several decades, one needs to look no further than the challenges of defining Phase IV (Transition to civilian control and rule of law) objectives for the wars in Afghanistan or Iraq. According to Stuart Bowen, the Special Inspector General for Iraq, both the leadership and the system are to blame: “In Iraq, no U.S. Government office possessed sufficient authority to lead the
reconstruction program. The U.S. approach amounted to an adhocracy, which failed to coalesce into a coherent whole.”

Former Representative Bill Delahunt could only conclude that,” the failure to plan properly for the invasion’s aftermath caused disastrous results. We should never go into combat operations again without doing the kind of planning that’s needed to deal with what comes next.”

If the strategic failures in our recent wars, represented by the countless billions spent on ineffective development programs and loss of 6764 American lives, is insufficient reason to reform the outdated national security structure, the need to recalibrate is likely to be forced upon Congress by the American public in response to dire fiscal realities. It is becoming increasingly clear that cultural ignorance and a refusal to understand the complexities of extremist Jihadist movements could lead to our eventual downfall. Dr. Walid Phares observes that the current lack of environmental understanding, exacerbated by an inability to engage in creative problem solving, spells failure.

It is fitting that the Executive Director of the Project on National Security Reform (PNSR), Mr. James Locher, was also the architect of the landmark Goldwater-Nichols Act. The PNSR provides one of the most comprehensive descriptions of the security system’s failures. Foremost among them, according to Middle East expert Raymond Ibrahim, is “our inability to assess at the right level or keep pace with the dynamic environments that characterize the sub-regions of the globe.”
The detailed and thorough findings of the PNSR explain why the current power structures within the individual departments and the U.S. Congress require little less than a total overhaul, difficult as that might prove politically.

This is true in all areas, but specifically in Africa. Ambassador Bill Garvelink recently described the stove-pipe approval process required to administer humanitarian aid in Africa as cumbersome, charging that it and inhibits us from acting in a responsible and responsive manner. Ambassador Garvelink added that he no longer contemplates being able to achieve comprehensive interagency aid deliverance. But giving up on reform is not an acceptable option.

Why it hasn't worked.

The Project for National Security Reform was mandated by Public Law 110-181, section 1049, of the 2008 National Defense Authorization Act, enacted under President George Bush. All 22 members of the bi-partisan team unanimously affirmed “that the national security of the United States of America is fundamentally at risk.” The executive summary of the 702-page Project on National Security Reform report, which is entitled “Forging A New Shield,” provided a list of major National Security System shortcomings;

1. The system is grossly imbalanced. It supports strong departmental capabilities at the expense of integrating mechanisms. 2. Resources allocated to departments and agencies are shaped by their narrowly defined core mandates rather than broader national missions. 3. The need for presidential integration to compensate for the systemic inability to adequately integrate or resource missions overly centralizes issue management and overburdens the White House. 4. A burdened White House cannot manage the national security system as a whole to be agile and collaborative at any time, but it is particularly vulnerable to breakdown during the protracted transition periods between administrations. 5. Congress provides resources and
conducts oversight in ways that reinforce the first four problems and make improving performance extremely difficult.  

These fatal shortcomings are responsible for limiting our comprehensive Grand Strategy, Full Spectrum Diplomacy, and Regional/Operational strategy (Development of war objectives and other regional interventions).

Yet the United States Government continues to manage international affairs using an organizational structure that fails to properly align policy accountability and prevents responsible leaders from gaining environmental understanding subject to rigorous problem analysis. As General David Petraeus said in September 2007, “The key to the success in Iraq was, first of all, to correctly diagnose and address the fundamental problem. It sounds obvious, but it hadn’t been done by the previous command or the White House Policymakers….The job of the leader is to get the big ideas right.”

The National Security Council and the current department relationships are both obsolete. The NSC struggles to make effective strategic policy decisions while being mired in day to day events, and having to help the President cope with an ever-changing political situation. It is well known that “the NSC staff is still not sized or funded to be an executive agency. . . . Yet a subtler and more serious danger is that as the NSC staff is consumed by … day-to-day tasks, it has less capacity to find the time and detachment needed to advise a President on larger policy issues.” – 9/11 Commission Report

The lack of effective interagency institutions is hardly alleviated by the formation of myriad ad hoc groups set up when a crisis arises. These groups not only lack habitual relationships and a formalized planning process, their command structure invariably fails to
produce positive results, leading to more frustration and wasted energy, time, and money, to say nothing of lost lives. Since the current system is manifestly unmanageable, something needs to be done – but what are the choices? Hardly ideal. It turns out that “U.S. presidents have resorted to two means of reducing their burdens when the interagency process fails to produce adequate policy integration: designate a lead agency or a lead individual – a ‘czar.’” Neither means has worked well. Neither a lead organization nor a lead individual has the de jure or de facto authority to command independent departments and agencies. The lead agency approach thus usually means in practice a sole agency approach.”

One of the major, yet too often ignored problems limiting executive agency integration and collaboration is the Congressional Committee structure. The current appropriation system is organized primarily along functional departmental lines, rather than on operationally logical grounds. Yet the latter would be far more likely to take into account the complexity of relevant policy considerations which must always be involved in any crisis, or, for that matter, in any other national security challenge. This obsolete approach encourages destructive competition between departments at the expense of the broader national interest. 

Interagency cooperation is further impaired by the lack of an institutional interagency personnel management system. The PNSR describes the problem: “The system complements weak integrating structures and processes with even weaker cross-cutting national security culture, personnel system and knowledge sharing mechanisms.” In brief, current professional advancement in the civilian realm fails to encourage interagency experience, in a manner similar to the Armed Forces reward system that existed prior to the reforms that were instituted through the Goldwater-Nichols legislation. Subsequent to the adoption of those
reforms, Armed Forces officers are now required to complete mandatory Joint Service and education prior to being considered for promotion to General Officer.

In the absence of similar incentives, the professional development of national security professionals occurs by happenstance and without clear personal benefit, which was bound to create a cadre of bureaucrats who not only lack an understanding of external department cultures but have not acquired the technical capabilities needed for them to be successful. The system rewards officers in all departments who show expertise in single disciplines, such as military operations, bi-lateral engagement and aid distribution, and produces leaders lacking the ability to innovate or collaborate across disciplines. The current system thus fails to develop strategists gifted in the many arts of statecraft who possess the essential knowledge required to implement diplomacy in its many forms. As a result, “personnel are often deployed to missions for which they have little if any relevant training or experience. It also explains why in novel environments, like ‘nation-building’ missions in Iraq and Afghanistan, multiple U.S. departments and agencies have trouble cooperating effectively with each other; nothing has prepared them for so doing.”

In a recent Congressional Research Service report, Senior Researcher Dr. Catherine Dale acknowledges a widely held desire to take action: “The reform debates have included proposals and initiatives to establish and foster an interagency community of national security professionals (NSPs) from all relevant departments and agencies.” Still no action has occurred.
Former U.S. Ambassador to the Democratic Republic of Congo Bill Garvelick, when asked to recommend changes to the system, responded that the only recommendation for system improvement “I am very hopeful that it will all work out [in the future], and that we will just have to wait and see.” Former U.S. Ambassador to Poland Dan Fried agreed that “some change in the culture has occurred but the next big emergency will judge us on our ability to be interagency.”

Then if everyone seems to agree that the system has to change, that not enough has been done to implement lessons learned, the question remains: why wait for another crisis? Why can’t reform happen sooner, so that a crisis is avoided?

**Resistance to Change.**

“Over the years, the interagency system has become so lethargic and dysfunctional that it inhibits the ability to apply the vast power of the U.S. government on problems. You see this inability to synchronize in our operations in Iraq and in Afghanistan, across our foreign policy, and in our response to Katrina.”

Gen. Wayne Downing, former Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Special Operations Command

National Defense University professor Chris Lamb, a key member of PNSR, explained what he believed to be the factors which limit reform which include:

* a pervasive department executive culture committed to the status quo
* elected representative apprehension to support legislation for change that would undermine the long-established committee assignment system based on seniority, resulting in absence of congressional patrons who might be willing to champion the cause,
* failure of previous efforts to fix the root problems, which have only reinforced skepticism about change without sufficient analysis of what could have been done better.

But perhaps the most important obstacle to organizational changes is the entrenched, “survival-at-all-cost,” bureaucratic cultures which create distrust among the departments. In
his 1998 monograph “Defense is from Mars State is from Venus,” Army Major Ricky Rife describes this destructive relationship between DOD and DOS personnel: “These two cultures are as alien as life forms from two competing planets, the warriors from Mars and the diplomats from Venus. Similar in many respects – professionalism, dedication and competence – Martians and Venusian often have an antagonistic relationship.”

The struggle for scarce resources creates counter-productive department competition, so it is understandable that executive department heads would hold tightly to their prerogatives and generally prefer to limit delegation of authority to the people ‘on the ground.’ Congressional leaders, similarly, covet powerful positions on military oversight and funding committees because of the lucrative windfall that awaits constituents of seated members. This causes congressional policy makers to view change initiatives as political hot potatoes. Last and maybe most important, there are no respected senior sponsors willing or able to garner bi-partisan support for reforming the civilian national security structure in a manner similar to the 1986 Goldwater-Nichols Act.

Given the limited success of integrated interagency strategic initiatives, tactical and operational teams have floundered trying to devise integrated strategy. As a result, next steps are difficult to envisage. Gen. Tommy Franks ’s attempt to create an Interagency Coordination Cell prior to the Iraq war, for example, lacked wider support and thus predictably went nowhere. Departments ended up sending delegates who lacked decision-making authority, and as a result failed to achieve many positive outcomes. This conundrum was pervasive throughout both wars. Only rarely were teams able to navigate through the various obstacles
preventing Interagency Collaboration. It is in a spirit of humility that this paper seeks to attempt one more approach that seeks to heed the lessons of the PNSR.

Project On National Security Reform findings.

“...mindful that wrongheaded reform efforts can do net harm, the report focuses on four key goals as the basis for its recommendations. To achieve desired goals and to achieve them efficiently, the national security system must:

- Mobilize and marshal the full panoply of the instruments of national power to achieve national security objectives
- Create and sustain an environment conducive to the exercise of effective leadership, optimal decision-making, and capable management
- Devise a more constructive relationship between the executive branch and Congress appropriate for tackling the expanded national security agenda successfully
- Generate a sustainable capacity for the practice of stewardship – defined as the long-term ability to nurture the underlying assets of American power in human capital, social trust, and institutional coherence – throughout all domains of American statecraft

Even a casual observer can appreciate the functionality and acknowledge the utility of conceptual goals. The real challenge lies in translating the worthy recommendations into workable solutions that could facilitate more meaningful foreign policy. Clearly the aim is to establish Interagency mechanisms that could enable coordination among all the actors seeking to address the danger, with a maximum of efficiency and an ability to learn from mistakes so as to correct them, eventually leading to victory with the least number of casualties and greater likelihood of success. Briefly put:

“The purpose of the entire set of recommendations offered here is to allow the president strategic direction of the national security system while maintaining an ongoing debate about the details of strategy, missions, and problem-solving efforts and encouraging initiative in problem solving at all levels. Achieving these objectives will require significant cultural change that can only occur over time and with structural and procedural changes to the national security system.”
In addition to the four aforementioned major functional reforms goals, the PNSR offers three structural modifications that serve as the centerpiece for comprehensive reforms. As stated above, “These core reforms provide the president the tools for strategic direction and system management” and “clearly signals to leaders and their subordinate that the system will acknowledge and reward collaboration across organizational Boundaries.”

The first of the three options presented is referred to as White House Command. This option “replace the NSC and the HSC (Homeland Security Council) with the President’s Security Council and create a Director for National Security (DNS) with super-Cabinet authority on interagency issues...that (will) run the hierarchy of Washington-based interagency committees.” This option is likely best suited for competition with another superpower; in the current global situation, it does little to improve the unmanageable span of control of the president and relies heavily on the talents and influence of the Director for National Security.

The second option, titled Integrated Regional Centers, “shift[s] the existing system’s emphasis to the regional level with regional directors heading Integrated Regional Centers (IRCs), which act as interagency headquarters for national security policy. In this option, the national security advisor and a small staff focus on national strategy and system management, as integrated regional centers manage issues”...which “the departments and agencies support by providing capabilities” but are note mandated.

Option three, called A Hierarchy of Decentralized Teams, employs “A hierarchy--National, Regional, country-empowered cross-functional teams, ” which “manage issues at all levels for the president, conducting issue management on a day-to-day basis These Presidential
Priority teams would stand up to handle discrete problems and dissolve once the problems have been addressed. 47

Each of the three proposed structural reform options have corresponding strengths and weaknesses. Option one is most similar to the current system but would rely on lead agency approaches to solving strategic problems and creates a large office for the Director of National Security. Option three allows for the most problem solving decentralization, but relies on the president and the NSC to identify problems, rather than allowing the subordinate teams to develop situations within the regions, unlike option two. Although discounting the importance of continuous problem analysis, option three benefits from legislatively mandated interagency integration rather than relying on Cabinet secretaries to provide professionals to Presidential Priority teams based on their perception of the problem. Unfortunately, small teams created episodically to address discrete problems may not provide the continuity required to address constantly emerging regional problems, thus leaving it to the President and his small staff to analyze and assess the significance of the globally dynamic environment.

To meet the future national security challenges most effectively, we should consider the positive aspects of each option. Option two has several advantages, and appears to be the base option of choice. It “builds on the success of the regional military commands, ….and...would correct this imbalance [between hard and soft power] and provide the same kind of coherent, end-to-end policy implementation process management for the full range of U.S. Foreign relations.” It would also delegate day-to-day issue management to the IRCs and would leave the members of the Washington-based national security system free to focus on global...policy
and strategy. Finally, interagency collaboration would improve dramatically, and provide the best means to synchronize the embassy's country plans with whole-of-nation approaches.

Although on the whole constituting an improvement over the current system, the Presidential Priority Teams advocated by PNSR, established for specific crisis management, do not significantly address improving the president's span of control required in order to allow the Teams to benefit from rigorous problem analysis, nor do they promote continuity in problem solving. The PNSR appears to contradict itself on this point: “It is true that the collaboration, as opposed to mere coordination, is time-consuming. For this reason, the system is given the option of creating crisis task forces with more directive authority, procedures and culture.” Crisis teams that are quickly formed inevitably lack situational understanding and rarely recover from their initial lack of knowledge.

The National Defense System must allow for daily problem-solving because “what used to be considered strategic issues now blend with the ‘Tactical’ levels of activity and are addressed by lower ranking members of the national security community.” A competent authority is required to manage at this level.

Although the Integrated Regional Centers concept offers the greatest combination of decentralization and interagency collaboration, it lacks support from the Office of the Director of National Security and the integration mandate of the Presidential Policy Teams. So, although representing a deviation from the PNSR findings, I recommend blending the three options, as follows:
Create congressionally mandated standing interagency Regional Coordination Authorities (RCAs) which are entrusted with responsibility for all United States Governmental regional foreign policy matters, while establishing a Director of National Security to manage the interface between the RCAs, the President, and the Cabinet.

Although similar to the Integrated Regional Centers, renaming them as Regional Coordination Authorities, delineates the minor differences between this concept and that outlined in the PNSR.

As the key component of this option, places responsible RCA secretaries in a position to create sustained Strategic interagency collaboration on a strategic level, perhaps for the first time in American history. Provided with personal with the proper professional development, executive and congressional support, and the ability to advance well-articulated national security goals, before parochial and short-sighted interests, these structures create the opportunity to allow lower-level empowered strategic leaders to act while keeping the president well informed which the PNSR outlined as critical to the systems success.50

The Regional Coordination Authority.

A Regional Coordination Authority (RCA) would be led by a civilian and have authority over all regionally affiliated department functions, including DOD (Combatant Commanders), DOS (namely, the current Regional Desk officers), the U.S. embassies, USAID, the Defense Intelligence Agency and all other defense-related branches of the U.S. government. The Civilian led RCA would also serve to collaborate with our coalition partners and Non-Government Organizations in their respective regions.
The Cabinet Secretaries and the Departments would remain central, providing functional support for all Regional Authorities, assisting the president with global prioritization approaches, and addressing issues that transcend regional borders, such as climate change and global economic policies. This new relationship between the Regional Coordination Authorities and the Departments is similar to the proven organizational model developed under Goldwater-Nichols for Joint Services Chiefs who provide support to the Geographic Combatant Commanders. See Figure 1. Objective National Security Apparatus for the 21st Century.

This initiative removes the Combatant Commanders as pseudo regional policy makers, which indirectly benefits them by providing harmony in purpose and interagency nesting to their operations. Author, former U.S. Congressional speechwriter and member of NATO’s International Staff in Brussels, Belgium James Snyder recognizes that the military will benefit from this relationship,
“the U.S. military doesn’t have an operational doctrine for military public diplomacy but several concurrent – and often contradictory – doctrines involving public affairs, information operations and psychological operations that can dramatically affect the strategic, tactical, and political environment of countries in which we fight. A lot of work needs to be done to think through and sync up these doctrines, under civilian leadership, so we’re better prepared for the next conflict.”

As with all major reform initiatives, the surest way to accelerate this change is for Congress to pass an interagency reform bill similar to the Goldwater-Nichols act. But as outlined above, reform adversaries are many. But we should not wait until there is catastrophic failure in the current system or some pressing need in order to implement changes. The political risks must be mitigated, and an approach must be found that eases lawmakers’ anxiety. One way to do that is by achieving success in a limited reform implementation.

For the needed comprehensive security reform to occur, there is no question that we must gain consensus in Congress and reduce the political risks involved in supporting the initiative. Fortunately, there are positive examples of success that should encourage proponents of reform. The Joint Special Operations Command organizational structure and approach, for example, offers convincing proof that interagency collaboration is effective. Specifically, further transforming AFRICOM from a standing military headquarters with interagency staff into a fully integrated Regional Command Authority could provide the needed empirical evidence that the approach offered in this paper is both cost-effective and efficient.

**JSOC Interagency “collaboration” foreshadows Regional Coordination Authority.**

During the last decade The Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) developed an extremely effective Joint Interagency Team while simultaneously executing daily global Counter Terrorist operations. This team produced countless strategic interagency accomplishments,
such as the defeat of Al Qaida in Iraq and the capture of Osama Bin Ladin. These astonishing achievements were facilitated by a fully integrated interagency team with a network of functional reach back support from the partnered departments.

JSOC has demonstrated remarkable success in overcoming the organizational challenges currently inherent in the National Defense System which has so thwarted progress in other major endeavors, notably the infamous Iraq Coalition Provisional Authority. By leveraging multidisciplinary intelligence, which General Stanley McChrystal called “the Strategy of Collaborative Warfare,” the Joint Interagency Task Force (JIATF) that he created was able to engage in continuous problem solving. JIATFs enabled Commanders to maintain close linkages between problems and solutions. This included mission decision authority and mission funding executed by self-effacing interagency contributions, by public servants dedicated to the national interest rather than individual agency agendas. JSOC thus demonstrated the effectiveness of establishing ‘mission command’ concepts, which empowered subordinate leaders to manage regional problems through autonomous Interagency Task Forces. Finally, and this is most important, the system included a personnel management / education process that enabled the model’s success.

The JSOC command and staff organizational structure was an integral part of the Team’s success. Even without a specific mandate from the President or the Joint services, General Stanley McChrystal was able to build an interagency team featuring fully integrated staffs that collaboratively solved problems. Even without the luxury of a formally sanctioned Chain of Command, GEN McChrystal gradually and patiently garnered the support of the major departments by using a diplomatic leadership style, and personal charisma, which all but
compelled leaders to participate. Although criticized later for presumably lacking high level political diplomacy, McChrystal shared JSOC successes among all participants, which solidified participation in what developed into a standing Joint Interagency Headquarters that is the model for Interagency Success.

Understanding the importance of people in the success quotient, GEN McChrystal created innovative leader development programs. The informal programs trained leaders to be aware of agency cultures and technical offerings, who could innovatively manage the new organizations using a diplomatic, but exacting, leadership styles. Again using diplomacy as the principal tool, the JSOC Commander established informal interagency internships, exchanges, and a robust LNO network, which provided far ranging educational experiences. Officers working on the JSOC teams, while not specifically involved in interagency exchanges, also received exceptional professional development, thus preparing JIATF commanders and staff members to excel.

Although it enjoyed a singular focus on Counter Terrorist operations, JSOC is a superb model of interagency success, having contributed measurably to the greater success of the Regional Commanders in both wars. Replicating the synergy created by the interagency team on a Grand Scale is essential to convince lawmakers that this is an effective approach, which is bound to reduce redundancy dramatically and greatly improve efficiency. Results speak louder than words and we need to prove the principle.

United States Regional Coordination Authority Africa.
"For too long, many nations, including my own, tolerated, even excused, oppression in the Middle East in the name of stability. We must help the reformers of the Middle East as they work for freedom, and strive to build a community of peaceful, democratic nations."*54

President George W. Bush in a speech to the U.N. General Assembly, Sept. 21, 2004

Unfortunately, far too many Africans suffer under extreme conditions of poverty, malnutrition, and poor physical security.55 And yet much of the western and industrial world recognizes the massive potential in developing African natural resources, human capital, and global markets. This interest continues to encourage global investments that are short-sighted and counterproductive. Unfortunately, too often investors ignore the fact that without oversight in the manner resources are being used, much of the investment only serves to enable corrupt governments and perpetuates existing conditions. Were such oversight encouraged and supported by a Regional Command Authority, the benefits to the population – and, by extension, global security – would be substantial.

Prior to 2007, the European Combatant Commander was responsible for military operations in Europe and Africa. With the goal of focusing the military’s efforts on the unique problems faced by the African continent, the United States Department of Defense established Africa Combatant Command (AFRICOM).56 Understanding that most African problems did not lend themselves exclusively or even primarily to military solutions, Defense Secretary Robert Gates sought interagency inclusion in the new command, an offered deputy command positions to the major departments.57 The Department of State and other agencies sent representatives to join the AFRICOM staff and created the first integrated Combatant Command.
Africa is the ideal region to experiment with developing a fully integrated Regional Coordination Authority (RCA). In the first place, there is reduced risk of major confrontation, as the continent lacks a near peer military competitor to the United States. Second, the continent is saddled with a whole host of problems caused by poor governance, which best addressed by interagency approaches. Momentum has been created for this endeavor by the formulation of interagency standing staff in AFRICOM; each of the major departments has contributed personnel to its staff, all of whom understand the importance of collaboration.

Although at first slow to properly integrate into the larger strategic landscape, AFRICOM has accomplished notable progress in interagency coordination. That said, it still has a long ways to go. David Brown from the Army War College Strategic Studies Institute suggests that AFRICOM still spends far too much effort in the coordination process rather than benefiting from collaborative planning, and relies too heavily on deconfliction measures of dubious effectiveness rather than vigorously implementing harmonized approaches.  

AFRICOM can be considered a success for involving interagency staff input to their planning process. A more robust Regional Coordination Authority approach in all likelihood “would resolve the current imbalance between hard and soft power in the conduct of Foreign Policy.” The PNSR outlines that “despite good intentions, a regional perspective and a decided penchant for taking the initiative, combatant commanders invariably put a military face on American activity that often in inappropriate.” In the same section, the PNSR states that “Africa Command....’ has become a lightning [sic] rod for bigger concern which is that U.S. foreign policy is being dictated almost entirely by the Department of Defense.”
This initiative is less about casting aspersions on the COCOMs and more about acknowledging that they have been tasked to “shape” their environments and “in doing so, they often end up concerned about the same issues that demand the attention of their civilian colleagues, but under pressure and ill-equipped to take the lead for organizing regional policy and activities they get exceedingly frustrated.”\(^{61}\) Robert Oakley, in a speech about ‘The changing Roles of the Regional Commanders In Chief’ stated that the COCOMs didn’t want to be the ones whom National Leaders call when they need help, “But leaders in many of the countries don’t feel that there is anyone on the civilian side to whom they can talk honestly and get honest answers.”\(^{62}\) “Ineffective regional PCCs mean the combatant commanders receive little useful strategic direction…and are discouraged from communication with members of regional interagency groups in Washington.”\(^{63}\)

Until congress mandates reform, The African Regional Coordination Authority (RCA) would have to rely on the power of a National Security Presidential Decision Directive. The President can appoint and the Senate confirm a Regional Director that would be “senior in rank to ambassadors and chiefs of mission...He would have the leadership, managerial, entrepreneurial, political and diplomatic skills befitting of the highest levels...”\(^{64}\) The Director would have responsibility for integrating all interagency activities and for encouraging regional international collaboration.

As with any government initiative, funding and staffing are bound to constitute be the most important concern and, unfortunately, the main friction point. Without a congressional mandate, each department would have to assign leaders from their organizations to serve in the RCA. Luckily, these leaders already exist on the staffs of the Africa related bureaus in each
of the departments. Theoretically, the only cost is in moving a percentage of these people to Stuttgart, Germany, the current headquarters of AFRICOM, in order to fully integrate the staff.

The United States Regional Coordination Authority can continue to occupy the AFRICOM headquarters in Stuttgart, thus leveraging the existing infrastructure and logistical assets. DOD, using the current AFRICOM infrastructure, could underwrite the administrative and logistical costs of all staff processes and leadership overhead. The Congress could continue to fund operational costs of traditionally associated activities, such as humanitarian assistance (provided through USAID) and Security force Assistance (a DOD responsibility) through routine appropriations along department lines. The only change to current funding mechanisms would be that the approval for any actions in Africa would come from RCA Africa.

Last but by no means least, absolutely integral to strategic success is a more robust independent intelligence section, led by a civilian intelligence staff, which is able to organize the intelligence functions in order to educate the Regional Coordination Authority Secretary, his staff and all the relevant functional departments, which would enable the American national security leadership to make prudent, savvy, well-informed policy decisions. This topic, however, deserves another study in itself.

Time management processes, planning formats, and integrated work groups would all function together, ideally creating an Interagency Team Culture. This structure would enable us to achieve Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates’s vision that diplomacy and development should lead American efforts abroad. He outlined these thoughts in a speech presented to the
In the campaign against terrorist networks and other extremists, we know that direct military force will continue to have a role. But over the long term, we cannot kill or capture our way to victory. What the Pentagon calls "kinetic" operations should be subordinate to measures to promote participation in government, economic programs to spur development, and efforts to address the grievances that often lie at the heart of insurgencies and among the discontented from which the terrorists recruit. It will take the patient accumulation of quiet successes over time to discredit and defeat extremist movements and their ideology.

Conclusion.

Understanding that it is negligent for our leaders to wait for the next big crisis to address needed changes in our National Defense Systems, we must act now. Many tactical and operational teams, led by selfless, dedicated, committed leaders who proved willing to place the national interest before their own, have overcome daunting challenges, many of which resulted from an obsolete national defense organizational system. Their example shows that it is possible to successfully orchestrate Interagency efforts. Professionals with a self-developed Interagency Ethos have created hope where hope has previously not existed. These people, and the country, deserve better; any system that relies on individual professional courage and abnegation is far too fragile to endure the tumultuous cycle that is US Foreign policy.

Secretary Gates’s original vision that informed the creation of AFRICOM was an outstanding gesture by the Defense Department, that the other agencies politely but only half-heartedly supported, unwilling and perhaps unable, given current legislation, to relinquish control in exchange for interagency cooperation. While indeed laudable, AFRICOM has only
marginaly improved our capacity to positively affect the conduct of U.S. foreign policy in Africa.

We should heed the words of Secretary Gates:

“If we are to meet the myriad challenges around the world in the coming decades, this country must strengthen the other important element of national power both institutionally and financially, and create the capability to integrate and apply all the elements of national power to problems and challenges abroad... New institutions are needed for the twenty-first century, new organizations with a twenty-first-century mindset”

Endnotes

1 Mike Mullen, “They did not die in Vain.” The Washington Post Editorial, November 19, 2013, p A17


4 Ibid., 1.

5 Ibid., 1.

6 Ibid., 7


9 National Defense Act 1947. AN ACT To promote the national security by providing for a Secretary of Defense; for a National Military Establishment; for a Department of the Army, a Department of the Navy, and a Department of the Air Force; and for the coordination of the activities of the National Military Establishment with other departments and agencies of the Government concerned with the national security.

February 13, 2001


13 “Joint Transition Course Planning Primer.” Norfolk: Joint Forces Staff College, June 2005. https://www.jfsc.ndu.edu/schools_programs/jtc/JTC_Planning_Primer.pdf. 1-14. This publication outlines the doctrinal phases in the Joint Campaign; Phase IV is the Transition Phase which involves establishing civilian control and rule of law.

14 Stuart Bowen, “Learning From Iraq; A Final Report From the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction.” Washington: March 2013, 121

15 Ibid., 121

16 Ibid., 55


20 “Impact of Donor Counter Terrorist Measures on the Principled Humanitarian Action.” Center for Strategic and International Studies. Washington, October 22, 2013. Ambassador Bill Garvelink discussed the challenges of gaining interagency approvals for humanitarian aide caused by disconnected planning and stove piped approval processes. The current United States governmental structure severally limit our capacity to provide the most basic Humanitarian relief efforts, as explained by Ambassador Bill Garvelink during a recent lecture at CSIS titled, “Impact of Donor CT Measures on the Principled Humanitarian Action.” Ambassador Garvelink, CEO of Inter Action Sam Worthington, Valeria Amos, UN Under Secretary for Humanitarian Affairs and Energy Relief Coordination all expressed deep concern that there too many bureaucratic obstacles which limit NGOs and USG from efficiently providing desperately needed Humanitarian aide.

21 Ibid.

22 Project on National Security Reform. Cover Letter from the 22 members of the Guiding Coalition of the Project for National Security Reform.

23 Ibid., vi: Executive Summary

24 Ibid., 493
Ibid., 493. Quote from Linda Robinsons, interview September 24, 2008, Foreign Policy, Outlining General Petraeus opinion about the importance of problem analysis.

Ibid., vii: Executive Summary

Ibid., vii

Ibid.,

Ibid., 511. Human Capital Reforms


“We have to invest continually in good policy, robust communications capacities and above all, creative and capable people, regardless of who is in charge. There are probably only 1,000 "coned" State Department public diplomacy officers, and not all of them are doing public diplomacy all of the time or for their entire careers. That needs to change.”

John Lenczowski., 59.

Ibid.

PNSR., vi.


Chris Lamb, Personal Interview at the National Defense University, September 30, 2013


Chris Lamb.

Bogdanos., 4. Citing. Request for Joint Interagency Task Force, GENADMIN 170124Z Oct 02. “In the aftermath of September 11, CENTCOM commander General Tommy Franks requested permission from the SECDEF and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) to establish an interagency coordination cell. He also sought the Secretary's assistance in soliciting participation from national-level agencies or, in the alternative, direct liaison authority with those agencies.”
The PNSR recommends also five major structural changes which would have a positive impact on our ability to create and implement Foreign policy. They are to establish a Presidents Security Council (PSC), establish a Director of National Security (DNS), establish a National Security Budget, Create a National Security Professional Corps (NSPC) that would oversee the development of National Security Professionals, and implement the National Security Education Consortium which is outlined by Executive Order 13434.

Ibid., 418.

Ibid., 384.

Ibid., 524.

Ibid., 524.


PNSR., 447.


David Brown, “AFRICOM at 5 Years: the maturation of a new U.S. Combatant command.” Strategic Studies Institute, Carlisle Barracks, Pa. August 2013. AFRICOM was launched with initial operating capability as a sub-unified command under the U.S. European Command on October 1, 2007, and reached full operating capability as a stand-alone unified command on October 1, 2008. AFRICOM’s Army, Air Force, and Special Operations components were not designated as fully operational until October 1, 2009. See “Fact Sheet: United

57 Ibid.

58 Ibid., 1.

59 PNSR., 430

60 PNSR., 430.

61 PNSR., 430.


63 PNSR., 430

64 PNSR., 434.


66 Ibid., 3

67 PNSR., ii.