

Impediments to the Creation of a Specialized Force for Stability Operations

**A Monograph
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Abstract

IMPEDIMENTS TO THE CREATION OF A SPECIALIZED FORCE FOR STABILITY OPERATIONS by MAJ Phillip D. Sounia, USA, 39 pages.

This study is an assessment of the Department of Defense's response to the call to create specialized forces to address the exigent strategic requirement for stability and reconstruction operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. To make an assessment it was necessary first to understand the reason for the call by analyzing the different proposals and the analogy made with the Vietnam-era CORDS program. That analysis revealed that the passage of time has sanitized the memory of CORDS from the political considerations that facilitated its creation. Today, there are significantly more political issues to address before implementing a force development program.

The analysis exposed DOD's response to the call for new organizations. The DOD response did not directly prevent creating specialized units for stability operations, but it did delay the serious consideration of those proposals. How DOD embraced the need for stability and reconstruction operations while fending off the creation of specialized units is a story that reveals in bold relief the salient features of congressional defense and budgetary politics.

The study found that advocates for a specialized force fail to realize that strategic requirements are only one of the important factors that the Department of Defense must weigh before undertaking resource intensive initiatives. As an agency of the US government, the Department of Defense must navigate a course that addresses the political environment as well as operational requirements. In today's political environment, the DOD must consider the partisan political relationship between the executive and legislative branches along with the impact that a new initiative will have upon the implementation of ongoing programs. The Department must also identify the consequences associated with creating additional resource demands and the effect of the new demands on the budget distribution between existing programs, agencies, and current operations. By considering these inter-related factors along with the strategic requirements, it is possible to understand better the Department of Defense's reluctance to create specialized units for stability and reconstruction operations.

This study found that the Department of Defense staved off efforts to create a specialized force for stability operations because DOD and specifically the Army had already committed to transforming to a modular brigade construct. The Army committed to modularity in an effort to solve the problem of efficiently rotating dissimilar units through an enduring conflict. Once committed to Army modularity, the Army did not have the resources to support a second transformation towards stability operations, regardless of strategic requirements. In an effort to stave off stability force advocates, DOD took steps to delay addressing the strategic requirement of stability operations with any initiative that would compete with modularity for resources. By ignoring, retarding, and manipulating initiatives to create a specialized force for stability operations the Army and DOD protected the institutional objective, of modular transformation.

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Introduction

The prolonged conflicts today in Iraq and Afghanistan signal that the Department of Defense (DOD) and the other executive agencies lack the capabilities for conducting stability operations. In both conflicts, the United States military forces were able to dominate the enemy in the operation's maneuver phases but were unable to capitalize on that success in the subsequent stabilization phases. The collective inability to seize and exploit the peace highlights the disparity between the stated authorities and responsibilities of the multiple agencies of the US government and their true capacity to fulfill this task. To rectify the problem, experts began to call for an urgent reshaping and rebalancing of organizations across the executive agencies to address the enduring and now exigent strategic requirement for stabilization and reconstruction (S&R) operations.¹

As early as 2004, scholars, pundits, and practitioners alike began to unite in their call for DOD to direct its vast resources and unique expeditionary culture toward stability operations as an emerging strategic requirement. These advocates called upon the DOD to take action on two complementary efforts to close the obvious gap between the civilian and military capacity to conduct stability operations. The first effort urged the DOD to stimulate the development of expeditionary stability capacity through increased cooperation and coordination with the other executive agencies. The second effort called for DOD to create a specialized force for stabilization and reconstruction operations. That effort would require significant more resources than the first. In support of these proposals, a concert of analysts and historians identified the Vietnam era, Civil Operations and Rural Development Support (CORDS) program as a relevant example to emulate. Noting the speed and comparative effectiveness DOD achieved in the stabilization effort once directed to do so by President Johnson. Armed with the precedent of

¹ Defense Science Board and United States, "Defense Science Board 2004 Summer Study on Transition to and from Hostilities," Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics, 2004, vi.

CORDS, the advocates tried to convince defense policymakers that developing a specialized capacity, to conduct stability operations, was a critical DOD strategic requirement.

What these advocates failed to realize, however, was that strategic requirements are only one of the important factors that the Department of Defense must weigh before undertaking resource intensive initiatives. As an agency of the US government, the Department of Defense must navigate a course that addresses the political environment as well as operational requirements. In today's political environment, the DOD must consider the partisan political relationship between the executive and legislative branches along with the impact that a new initiative will have upon the implementation of ongoing programs. The Department must also identify the consequences associated with creating additional resource demands and the effect of the new demands on the budget distribution between existing programs, agencies, and current operations. By considering these inter-related factors along with the strategic requirements, it is possible to understand better the Department of Defense's reluctance to create specialized units for stability and reconstruction operations.

This study is an assessment of the Department of Defense's response to the call to create specialized forces for stability and reconstruction operations. To make an assessment it was necessary first to understand the reason for the call by analyzing the different proposals and the analogy made with the Vietnam-era CORDS program. That analysis revealed that the passage of time has sanitized the memory of CORDS from the political considerations that facilitated its creation. Today, there are significantly more political issues to address before implementing a force development program.

The analysis also exposed the DOD's response to the call for new organizations. The DOD response did not directly prevent creating specialized units for stability operations, but it did delay the serious consideration of those proposals. How DOD embraced the need for stability and reconstruction operations while fending off the creation of specialized units is a story that reveals in bold relief the salient features of congressional defense and budgetary politics.

Calls for a Specialized Stabilization Force

By late 2003, a bevy of scholars and defense pundits began to bemoan the government's failure to conduct effective stabilization and reconstruction programs to secure the peace in Iraq and Afghanistan. While most experts accepted the need for an interagency effort to address these complex problems, they also recognized that only the Department of Defense possessed the requisite resources. As a result, defense analysts began to investigate the creation of specialized forces for stability operations to address the exigent requirements in Iraq and Afghanistan. The force structure alternatives varied from the simple reorganization of existing units to the creation of separate stabilization and reconstruction (S&R) divisions. Supporters for each of these initiatives identified the strategic requirement to develop such a capability and similar requirements during the Vietnam War that sparked the creation of CORDS.

In November 2003, Dr. Hans Binnendijk and Stuart Johnson published a National Defense University (NDU) report titled, *Transforming for Stabilization and Reconstruction Operations* that report became the foundation for a variety of recommendations for the creation of a standing specialized force for stabilization and reconstruction operations. In the report, the authors recommended complementing combat forces by reorganizing the existing separate battalions of civil affairs, engineer, military police, medical, and psychological operations (PSYOPS) into a stability and reconstruction brigade structure. The existing two integrated Active Component /National Guard divisional headquarters skeletons, the 7th Infantry Division and the 24th Infantry Division, were to support these brigades and assist in their development and administration. The creation of these specialized stability brigades and their subordinate mission tailored task forces was to augment the Army's brigade force structure by providing a dedicated S&R capability. The report's overarching conclusion was that, the US military needs a standing specialized force for stability operations to meet contemporary strategic requirements. Yet, the

authors were careful to present a solution that incorporated the resource constraints relevant to the DOD. The report provided the foundation for future studies by government organizations such as the Defense Science Board and the Congressional Budget Office as well as innumerable articles by advocates of a CORDS-like specialized force for stability operations. However, the subsequent studies and articles never fully incorporated the resource constraints on personnel and organizations that were essential elements of the NDU recommendation.²

In December 2004, the Defense Science Board (DSB), a federal advisory committee established to provide independent advice to the Secretary of Defense, published a report, titled *Transition to and from Hostilities*. The report noted the increasing strain that stabilization and reconstruction (S&R) operations were presenting to the general-purpose force in terms of personnel and resources. As a response, the DSB recommended that the Department of Defense embrace the reality of stabilization and reconstruction missions with vigor equal to that shown for combat operations. To address this reality, the report recommended DOD establish the Army as the lead executive agent for stability operations and provide the resources, authority, responsibility, and accountability for the Army to fulfill this mission set. The report further recommended that the Army establish stability and reconstruction operations as a “core competency of general purpose forces,”³ and develop modular units, below the brigade level, to provide a specialized S&R capability to supplement these forces. Additionally, the report called upon the Army to hasten the restructuring of the Army Reserve and National Guard forces toward a modular capability for the stabilization mission. The recommendations by the 2004 Defense Science Board study provided advocates, for a specialized force, salient points for comparison to President Johnson’s CORDS program.

² Hans Binnendijk and Stuart E. Johnson, "Transforming for Stabilization and Reconstruction Operations," Center for Technology and National Security Policy, National Defense University, 87, <http://purl.access.gpo.gov/GPO/LPS51536>; <http://purl.access.gpo.gov/GPO/LPS51536>.

³ Defense Science Board and United States, *Defense Science Board 2004 Summer Study on Transition to and from Hostilities*, vii.

Proponents of a specialized S&R force seized upon the exigent strategic requirement, demonstrated in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the recommendations published in the National Defense University and Defense Science Boards studies to ignite the call for the creation of a specialized stability operations force. The proponents recognized the similar strategic requirement in Vietnam and alluded to the CORDS program as a historical example for DOD to emulate. By doing so, they were accepting a memory of the CORDS program sanitized from the political considerations that facilitated its creation.

CORDS Remembered

The advocates for a specialized S&R organization remember the CORDS program as a presidential initiative that aligned the stability operations of the multiple agencies of the U.S. government in an expeditious and adroit manner. Prior to the establishment of CORDS, the US pacification effort in Vietnam was an ungainly collection of incoherent half-hearted efforts by a group of reluctant executive agencies. No single governmental agency saw stability operations as their primary mission and yet, no organization was willing to allow another agency to secure the authority, responsibility, or resources for the entire program. “Conscious of the importance of political, social, and economic matters to the successful prosecution of the war”⁴ President Johnson identified the pacification effort as a strategic requirement. When the President found that the multiple agencies were slow to react to his identification of stability operations as a strategic requirement, the President took authoritative action. On May 9 1967, President Johnson issued National Security Action Memorandum 362 directing therein the integration of the “U.S.

⁴ Thomas W. Scoville and Center of Military History, *Reorganizing for Pacification Support* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, U.S. Army: 1999), v.

civil-military support for pacification in Viet Nam.”⁵ Through this document, the President unambiguously aligned the authority, responsibility, and resources of the pacification effort with the military. Unencumbered by the future personnel restraints of an All-Volunteer Army, the military dedicated personnel, resources, and operational effort to ensure the program’s success. The CORDS program brought coherence to the pacification effort and achieved an unprecedented level of success. Today, the advocates for a CORDS-like initiative call for the President to take similar decisive action and develop a specialized force for stability operations to address the stabilization and reconstruction effort in Iraq and Afghanistan.

What these advocates fail to realize is that the conditions that allowed for the expeditious creation and prolonged sustainment of the CORDS program do not exist in the contemporary defense budgetary environment.⁶ The CORDS program emerged in a defense budgetary environment characterized by congressional deference to the President in national security affairs. Congressional deference, in the early Cold War period allowed the President’s defense policies to trump congressional partisanship. The deference to executive leadership in national security affairs coupled with President Johnson’s unique twenty-three year experience as a Congressman and Senator provided his administration a tremendous amount of influence. As a result, the Department of Defense aligned its defense priorities and initiatives with President Johnson’s perceived strategic requirements. However, the budgetary environment has changed. Today, the congressional budgetary environment is one in which political partisanship dictates congressional support for defense initiatives. In response, to this defense budgetary environment, DOD must

⁵ U.S. President. 1967. National Security Action Memorandum No. 362, Responsibility for U.S. Role in Pacification. 1967. <http://www.lbjlib.utexas.edu/johnson/archives.hom/NSAMs/nsam362.asp> (accessed November 5, 2008).

⁶ The Department of Defense in the Vietnam-era was relatively free of the constraints that prevent the simultaneous pursuit of multiple initiatives today. Conscription relieved the personnel constraint while war-funding measures coupled with the consensus on national security policy prevented significant budgetary constraints on the force.

now address institutional priorities in the context of congressional budgetary control rather than solely aligning its efforts with the President's strategic requirements.

To understand why DOD's reacts differently to strategic requirements today it is necessary to understand first the defense budgetary environment of the early Cold War period and its effect on the defense policy initiatives. With that foundation, it is possible to observe the evolution of "congressional assertiveness"⁷ as well as the President's response as Command-In-Chief to the contemporary defense budgetary environment. The result of that analysis explains the Department of Defense's response to calls for a specialized force for stability operations.

The Era of Congressional Deference

Two elements shaped the congressional budgetary environment from World War II to Vietnam: a shared consensus on the national security environment and the Congress's limited institutional capacity to challenge the executive. Following World War II, the President and Congress, in general, shared a consensus on the national security environment and the threats facing the United States. Whether the threat was the Axis Powers or the Soviet Union and its viral communist ideology, the threat was undeniable, unambiguous, and existential. The political consensus on the national security environment neutralized congressional partisanship in defense budgetary matters. Additionally, congressional ability to challenge the executive diminished relative to the growth of the executive branch and the Department of Defense during World War II and the Cold War. The lack of congressional will and the relative erosion of congressional capacity to challenge the executive on the intricacies of defense policy led the Congress to defer to the executive, beginning with the Franklin D. Roosevelt Administration.⁸

⁷ Ralph G. Carter, "Budgeting for Defense" in *The President, the Congress, and the Making of Foreign Policy*, ed. Paul E. Peterson (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994), 169.

⁸ Ibid., 162.

Franklin D. Roosevelt's fifteen-year presidency consolidated power in the executive. The consolidation was partly a result of the demands of the Second World War and accentuated by the longevity of Roosevelt's administration. Roosevelt's consolidation of power, in the executive, established a precedent for congressional deference to the President in matters of national defense policy, funding, and execution. The Truman administration tried to continue the practices of the Roosevelt period but met partisan congressional opposition manifested by significant budget cuts when the Congress differed with the President's national security views. However, when the North Korean offensive found the US armed forces unprepared, criticism was quickly directed toward Congress and the Congress swiftly chose to defer to the President's requests; a position of political safety. The following Eisenhower administration cemented the idea that the Congress should defer to the President in his role as Commander-in-Chief. In the context of the growing Soviet threat, President Eisenhower's unique qualifications as the previous Supreme Allied Commander made his power in defense related matters politically unassailable. In response, the Congress prudently chose to defer to the executive. The defense budgetary environment became one that trusted the White House and the military to create, develop, and execute national security policy without significant interference. The members of Congress were not inclined to assume the physical risk to the United States of America or the political risks of being wrong on defense. Congress did not consider U.S. national security a subject suitable for partisan squabbles. As a result, the Cold War defense budgetary environment continued the Roosevelt era precedent of congressional deference.

Congressional deference to the executive created a period of relative "congressional passivity"⁹ on national security matters. When the executive presented the defense budget request to Congress the budget passed relatively unscathed. While the Congress always attempts to increase efficiency by cutting duplicitous or extraneous programs, they rarely made cuts of any

⁹ Ibid.

significance.¹⁰ In the few cases in which the House of Representative tried to make significant cuts in a major defense program, the Senate Appropriation Committee restored most of the funds. Senate action allowed the program to continue and the Administration sought compensatory funding in the following years. Oddly enough, from 1947-1968, when the President's party did not control Congress, the funds were restored in every single instance.¹¹ Samuel P. Huntington opined in 1966, "except when confronted by similar competing programs, Congress never vetoed, directly, a major strategic program, a force level recommendation, or a major weapon system by the administration in power."¹²

During the period of 'congressional passivity,' the defense establishment did well to guard their close relationship with the Commander-in Chief. Excluding the expected defense budget reduction at the end of the Second World War, the Congress reduced the President's defense requests on average less than two percent. A closer analysis shows that Congress made 'significant' cuts only two times from 1950 -1968.¹³ As a counter to these cuts, Congress authorized appropriations in excess of the defense request eight times, including two 'significant' increases. Congressional appropriations established a trend of fully supporting the President's defense requests and only making mild alterations to eliminate redundancies and reduce costs but never to eliminate entire programs.¹⁴

Prior to 1970, even partisanship did not hold sway over the administration's defense policy. The balance of political power between the executive and legislative branch was to the

¹⁰ Ibid. Ralph G. Carter defines significant budget cuts as those greater than five percent.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Edward A. Kolodziej and Mershon Center for Education in National Security, *The Uncommon Defense and Congress, 1945-1963* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1966), 133-4.

¹³ These two instances corresponded to President Eisenhower's New Look in 1953 and the 1958 DOD Reorganization Act.

¹⁴ Carter, *Budgeting for Defense*, 165. Data for the evaluation of defense budget cuts was extrapolated from Ralph G. Carter's *Budgeting for Defense*, page 165, Table 3. Carter compiled his data from data in the Congressional Quarterly Almanacs, 1946-90 among other sources.

decided benefit of the military. An examination of partisan control of the Congress and the Presidency shows a negligible difference of only 0.1 percent between periods where a single party controlled both the executive and legislative branches, (single party control), and where one party controlled Congress and the other held the Presidency (dual party control).¹⁵ In fact, the relationship between the two is counterintuitive. When no party controlled Congress and the Presidency prior to 1969, the military averaged a comparative funding increase over the resultant average of single party control of 4 percent for research and design, 3.2 percent for procurement and 0.9 percent for military personnel. The insignificant reduction rate of 3.4 percent coupled with the almost automatic restorative funding from Senate appropriations meant that the defense establishment did not have to fear disruptive budgetary cuts or the cancellation of whole programs. For the military, congressional deference to the executive was a workable command structure linking the responsibility, authority, and resources necessary for an effective organizational structure. Congress, wanting to present a strong stand on national defense, supported the administration's defense budget almost explicitly and when faced with a situation where a single party did not control both the executive and legislative branches tended to believe that "playing it safe usually means buying more."¹⁶ This environment of congressional passivity would take a dramatic turn following the 'Tet Offensive of 1968' altering the executive-congressional relationship with the Department of Defense and curtailing the ability of the President to execute his initiatives.¹⁷

¹⁵ Single party control exists when one party holds control over both houses of Congress and the presidency. Dual party control results when one group holds both houses of Congress while the other holds the presidency. Split-Control results when one party controls one house of Congress and the presidency.

¹⁶ Les Aspin, "The Defense Budget and Foreign Policy: The Role of Congress," *Daedalus* 104, no. 3 (1975), 164, <http://search.ebscohost.com/lumen.cgsccarl.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ahl&AN=A000078081.01&site=ehost-live>.

¹⁷ Carter, *Budgeting for Defense*, 175. Data for the evaluations in this paragraph came from Ralph G. Carter's *Budgeting for Defense*, page 175, table 7.

Congress Asserts Its Position

The ripples from the Tet Offensive affected more than just public opinion and media support in America. They reverberated across Congress, fracturing the consensus on national security policy and providing the impetus for a new congressional assertiveness in all matters involving defense appropriations. From 1969 to 1991, every administration saw significant reductions in its defense budget request. A review of annual defense budgets request illuminates the impact of the new congressional assertiveness. Significant annual cuts occurred thirteen times during the period of 1969-1991. In comparison, from 1950-1968 there were only two significant cuts. Even more alarming to the defense establishment was the unbroken string of defense cuts. No longer protected by compensatory funds in following years, defense initiative were now subject to elimination altogether.

Prior to 1969 defense cuts in one year could be recovered in following years but after the 1970, the defense budget reflected a continuous string of cuts with only two exceptions. The first exception occurred in 1981 where President Carter's party held both houses of Congress and the previous year's defense appropriations was at the lowest relative level in twenty years. The impetus for this lone increase was the obvious incapacity of the military to act effectively during the Iran Hostage Crisis. The second exception occurred in 1991 where the President George H. W. Bush secured "a formal budget agreement with congressional leadership specifying the overall amount of military spending before the budget process began."¹⁸ The change in the executive-legislative relationship changed the way that the Department of Defense addressed its relationship with Congress and the President in the defense budgetary environment. Aligning DOD priorities with the President's perception of strategic requirements no longer correlated to

¹⁸ Ibid., 165.

the funding provided by Congress. The fracturing of the executive-legislative consensus on the national security policy released the constraints on political partisanship.

Partisanship, once an insignificant factor in the sanctity of defense appropriations had become a dominant feature in the authorization, allocation and distribution of funding. Prior to 1969 the administration's defense budget was statistically unaffected by control of the Congress or the Presidency. The difference in congressional defense cuts during periods where a single party controlled both the Presidency and Congress and where one did not varied by only one-tenth of one percent. Over the next twenty years, the situation changed dramatically. In a new show of partisan unity, the average annual cuts in period of single party control dropped to 2.4 percent, a 27 percent decrease. Yet, during period where a single party failed to control both the executive and legislative branches, cuts in the defense budget were 100 percent greater at 4.8 percent. Worse yet, in periods where no party controlled Congress and the Presidency, the cuts increased 270 percent, slashing some 6.5 percent from the administration's defense budget.¹⁹ This new reality reflected a treacherous new variable for the Department of Defense to consider. While the DOD received strategic policy and guidance from the President, as Commander-In-Chief, the DOD sought funding from a legislature that was increasingly partisan and willing to challenge the executive in matters of national security policy.²⁰

A telling concern of partisanship in the defense budgets from 1969-1991 is the reduced frequency of Senate restoration. The historical trend of partial funding restoration by the Senate withered after 1970. This restorative funding was critical to maintain funding streams for DOD programs that the House reduced or eliminated from the President's budget request. Without such funding whole capabilities, programs, and organizations might cease to exist for the fiscal year and thus force DOD to accept the loss of the sunk or start-up costs for programs. Depending on

¹⁹ Ibid., 175. Data for the evaluations in this paragraph came from Ralph G. Carter's *Budgeting for Defense*, page 175, table 7.

the nature of the program, this can create tremendous fluctuations in capabilities and organization structures. Senate restorative funding was nearly automatic between 1948 and 1969. While it did not completely restore funds, it allowed a modicum of support to programs and allowed them to continue to exist. Restorative funding measures prevented fluctuations in capabilities, which might have led to mission failures in inter-related programs. Funding of this nature was critical to prevent partisan politics from eliminating defense initiatives.

From 1969 to 1991, defense restorative funding began to correlate with partisan politics. Between 1948 and 1968, when opposing political parties controlled the executive and legislative branches the Senate uniformly restored partial funding to every major defense request cut by the House. Over the next twenty-two years, the frequency of this restoration dropped to a mere 42 percent. Similarly, during periods of single party control between 1948 and 1968 the rate was only 64 percent but rose to 80 percent between 1969 and 1991. The variations in support demonstrated a decided shift towards partisanship and exposed potential hazards to DOD's budget. The emergence of Congressional partisanship in the defense budgetary environment forced DOD to address the political environment before beginning new initiatives or risk significant cuts or elimination. The infrequent restoration, by the Senate, of monies deleted by the House in the period from 1969-1991, is evidence that the Congress had regained some of its control over defense spending. Congress also took steps during this period to increase their ability to consider the minutia of the defense budget.²¹

The ability of Congress to address defense budgetary minutia correlates directly to the size and capability of its staffs. Congressional staffs expanded in their size and capability since the beginning of the Cold War period. During President Johnson's administration, congressional staffs were in the process of growing from a 1955 per member authorization of eight personnel to

²¹Ibid., 176. Data for the evaluations in this paragraph came from Ralph G. Carter's, *Budgeting for Defense*, page 176, table 8.

a 1965 authorization of ten personnel.²² Today, each representative is authorized some eighteen staff members. Not to be outdone, the Senate no longer even holds a limit on the number of staffers. This increase in personal staffs empowered the Congress to become more involved in defense affairs. The expansion of committees, sub-committees, and their associated staffs has also tripled since the 1960s, providing each Congressman an increased capability to investigate defense issues and manipulate policy through legislation or appropriations. Perhaps the greatest aid to Congressional oversight was the introduction of institutional investigative resources. The creation of organizations such as the Congressional Budget Office and the expansion of institutions like the General Accounting Office and the Congressional Research Service provide even junior members with a tremendous amount of well-researched and documented assessments that invariably can and do challenge the institutional expertise of the administration.²³ “The degree of congressional expertise on military matters increases the chances that Congress will act independently of the President on defense policy.”²⁴

Although Congress in the early Cold War period made only large adjustments to defense budgets, today they are able to address the detailed minutia of the defense budget request through the authorization and appropriation line-item numbers. The increase in congressional staffs has a large and growing effect on the defense budget. “In 1969 Congress made 180 changes to the defense authorization bill and 650 changes to the appropriation bill...by 1985 these numbers skyrocketed to 1,145 authorization adjustments and 2,156 appropriation adjustments.”²⁵ This empowerment coupled with the end of deference to the executive in foreign policy resulted in a

²² Steven H. Schiff and Steven S. Smith, "Generational Change and the Allocation of Staff in the U. S. Congress," *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 8, no. 3 (August 1983), 457, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/439593>.

²³ Carter, *Budgeting for Defense*, 177.

²⁴ Deborah D. Avant and Lisa Martin, "Political Institutions and Military Change: Lessons from Peripheral Wars," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*. (1996), 140.

²⁵ Aaron B. Wildavsky and Naomi Caiden, *The New Politics of the Budgetary Process*, Third ed. (New York: Addison-Wesley Educational Publishers Inc, 1988), 243.

Congress that has the knowledge, the capacity, and the potential will to definitively shape or disrupt presidential initiatives.

Significant congressional challenges tend to arise when the parties' identification of existential threats differs from the administrations' or from each other. During the early Cold War period, the threat was unambiguous, undeniable, and growing. The Soviet Union and its use of communist insurgencies dominated national security policy agenda. The administration's defense budget responded directly to this threat by climbing as the intensity of the threat grew and falling as the threat diminished. The Congress acted to increase and decrease the budget in accordance with their perception of the threat but never outside of any range of significance because the threat was always present and lurking behind the Iron Curtain. The Tet-Offensive had a significant psychological impact on the Congress and changed this paradigm. The Congress had deferred to the President and the military but they perceived impending failure in Vietnam and began to challenge the precedent of deference to the executive. The perceived national security failure of the Tet-Offensive drove Congress to increase their organic capability and willingness to intervene in the realm of national defense.²⁶

Today, congressional perceptions of America's existential threats differ sharply. The lack of a common identifiable existential threat, such as the Soviet Union, leaves Congress to fall back upon their partisan base, predispositions, and perceptions as the directing forces for Congress's intervention in the defense budget. When congressional partisan perceptions differ with the administrations over defense policy, Congress has the incentive to challenge the defense budget request and take steps to adjust it to meet their perceptions. "With such policy differences, a heightened sense of partisanship, and increased military expertise, Congress had now both the will and the way to challenge the administration's defense policy objectives."²⁷

²⁶ Carter, *Budgeting for Defense*, 176

²⁷ Ibid., 178.

The Commander in Chief Responds

The executive and the DOD responded to the increased congressional intrusion by exercising Presidential discretion “to spend from large, lump-sum accounts and to spend reprogrammed, transferred, emergency, and contingency funds without specific prior appropriation from Congress”²⁸ “Reprogramming permits funds in an account to be used for different purpose than those contemplated when the funds were appropriated.”²⁹ By using these reprogrammed funds, the President and the DOD are able to bypass congressional oversight and the tedious appropriations process as well as conditional restraints. Congress is reluctant to hamstring the reprogramming of funds for fear of the political ramifications. By not acting decisively against the reprogramming of funds, Congress allows itself a greater measure of political mobility. This maneuverability in matters of national security allows Congress to rally with the President in times of success or distance themselves from accountability in times of failure. The relative congressional reluctance to accept accountability has ceded the executive “his own spending power, eroding the congressional power of the purse, and the check it gives on national security initiatives.”³⁰ While this discretionary spending authority provides the commander in chief significant leeway during period of conflict, Congress still holds the potential to act and often does when that conflict ends or the political concerns subside.

The defense budgetary environment during the Vietnam era and the today are drastically different due to the corresponding changes in executive and legislative power. The executive-legislative relationship that facilitated CORDS was one of ‘congressional passivity.’ This environment provided the executive a dominant position in the conduct of national security affairs and facilitated a suitable defense budgetary environment for the establishment of CORDS

²⁸ William C. Banks and Jeffrey D. Straussman, "A New Imperial Presidency? Insights from U.S. Involvement in Bosnia," *Political Science Quarterly* 114, no. 2 (1999), 200.

²⁹ Wildavsky and Caiden, *The New Politics of the Budgetary Process*, 236.

³⁰ Banks and Straussman, "A New Imperial Presidency? Insights from U.S. Involvement in Bosnia," 214.

as a collective multi-agency stability organization under the direction of the Department of Defense. Today's executive-legislative relationship is one of legislative conflict. Congress, empowered by its increased institutional expertise, disunited by the perceived lack of a common existential threat, and bifurcated by increased partisanship, now possesses the ways, means, and will to affect the implementation of the President's national security policy. However, the President's contemporary ability to use supplemental and reprogrammed funds to finance national security initiatives and operations has restored executive power. During periods of conflict, the President is able to employ this discretionary spending by harnessing Congress' propensity to avoid accountability in national security matters. In the contemporary defense budgetary environment, DOD now seeks to achieve its institutional goals by exploiting political opportunities created by electoral results and the budget cycle. Successfully achieving force development objectives over a long period requires DOD to prioritize objectives and adjust its financial plans to the two-year election cycle.

Selecting Priorities

The early years of the Global War on Terror created a political environment that favored the Department of Defense. The nation held a unified vision on national security policy due to the September 11 terrorist attacks and the recent victories in Afghanistan and Iraq and the President's party held both houses of Congress. The result was an uncommon consensus between the President and the Congress on matters of national security. The costs of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq had not been part of either the FY 2002 or FY 2003 budgets. Consequently, the President sought to pay for military operations by requesting supplemental funds. The introduction of supplemental appropriations into this defense budgetary environment eventually presented DOD an opportunity that was too great to resist.

The President's supplemental funding requests provided DOD a flexible funding stream that evaded some congressional budgetary procedures. "Unlike funding requests submitted

through the regular annual budget process, which work their way through the House and Senate budget committees, armed services committees, and finally appropriation committees, request for supplemental appropriations are submitted directly to the appropriation committees.”³¹ Since the President may submit a supplemental funding request at any time and the request avoids “the substantial resident expertise of the House and Senate Armed Services committee’s”³² the Congress must work through tremendous amount of data, with limited resources, expertise, and time. The result was a secondary defense budget with fewer congressional restrictions. The DOD recognized the opportunities this defense budget environment offered and seized upon these favorable conditions to pursue the organizational priorities associated with defense transformation.

For the Army, defense transformation meant creating a modular force structure to ameliorate the disruptive effects of rotating dissimilar units through enduring missions. The campaign plan titled, *The Army Modular Force* emphasized creating modular units to “increase the number of combat units available to the Army while making those units more flexible, more self-contained, and faster to deploy.”³³ This plan reorganized the Army’s ten divisions and three separate brigades into forty-three or possibly forty-eight modular brigades and, theoretically, increased the Army’s war fighting capacity. The original plan, developed in 1999, sought to reduce the turbulence of the force rotations in Kosovo and foresaw a transformation to the modular concept by fiscal year 2021. The refined 2004 plan sought to complete the

³¹ United States House of Representatives, Committee on the Budget, *The Cost and Funding of the Global War on Terror (GWOT)*, 110th Congress, 1st Session sess., 2007, 3, http://www.csbaonline.org/4Publications/PubLibrary/T.20070118.Cost_of_the_Global/T.20070118.Cost_of_the_Global.pdf (accessed November 5, 2008).

³² Ibid.

³³ The 2007 Army Modularity Plan supplanted the 2004 Army Modularity Plan.

reorganization of the active force to 43 brigades by the end of FY 2006³⁴ and, thus, seized the “fleeting opportunity to do it.”³⁵ Compressing the original plan from twenty-two to two years required the dedication of significantly more resources, mainly larger appropriations and more personnel.

On January 28 2004, the Army briefed the President on a plan titled *Building Army Capabilities*. In that briefing, the Army presented the purpose, requirements, and executive decision timeline for the modularity initiative. The briefing identified two critical ingredients needed to complete modular transformation in a compressed timeline: a continuation of the “executive wartime authorities and funding” through supplemental funds and authorization to expand the Army by 30,000 personnel for a four-year period. The Army also highlighted the requirement to “develop a legislative strategy”³⁶ to gain and sustain congressional support for the Army’s transformation and prevent a delay in the initiative’s implementation.

The Army’s campaign plan demonstrated a deft understanding of the contemporary defense budgetary environment and the potential hazards its achievement. The plan identified sequential biennial objectives and overlaid decision points based upon the congressional election cycle and Congress’s ability to influence the transformation appropriations. The Army planned to use funds in the FY 2004 DOD budget to implement the transformation of active component brigade combat teams (BCTs) in 2004 and to use the additional funds in the FY 2004 Emergency Supplemental to accelerate the effort. The transformation of active component BCTs would continue through fiscal year 2005 through normal budgetary measures and use the FY 2005

³⁴ House Committee on Armed Services, *Force Structure: Preliminary Observations on Army Plans to Implement and Fund Modular Forces*, 109th Congress sess., 2005, 3, www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-05-443T (accessed November 5, 2008).

³⁵ Ann Roosevelt, “Army Transformation Has a Window of Opportunity, Chief Says,” *Defense Daily*, March 8, 2004, Vol. 221, Issue 42, 1.

³⁶ J. Dickey, “Briefing to President Bush on the Building of Army Capabilities” (PowerPoint presentation, 2004). Department of the Army, 28 January 2004, http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/2004/28_Jan_04_Pres_Building_Army_Ca.ppt. (accessed November 5, 2008).

Emergency Supplemental to augment FY 2005 and 2006 appropriations in case the 2004 general election changed the defense budgetary environment. The Army believed that by using supplemental appropriations it could complete transformation of forty-three active duty combat brigades by FY 2007 and pre-empt the effects of a change in the partisan control of Congress.

Two other presidential decision points reflected DOD's strategy for achieving discreet goals within the two-year life of Congress. The first presidential decision point was a decision to expand the modularity initiative through supplemental funds and create five additional BCT prior to the swearing in of the 110th Congress, in 2007. A second presidential decision point addressed accelerating the Army National Guard transformation prior to the 2008 general election. Raising the priority of the National Guard BCT's during the FY 2008 and FY 2009 budgets cycles would allow the Army and the President to exploit congressional support for supplemental funds even as presidential power waned. The Army's objectives and decision points along the transformation timeline demonstrated the Army's deft understanding of the contemporary defense budgetary environment. The Army's effort to achieve objectives within this biennial budgetary environment created significant demands upon other Army resources such as personnel.

To affect the Army's transformation and provide forces for operations in the Global War on Terror, the Army was parsimonious in its assignment of personnel to activities outside of organizational priorities. In fact, just to continue the transformation to modularity the Army requested and fully employed the temporary 30,000 increase in its authorized active duty personnel. Any additional demands on the force structure or initiatives involving the dedication of or even re-organization of personnel or resources would have undermined the timely completion of the Army's primary effort of transforming its active component brigades. The Army realized that personnel had quickly become the constraining resource in the modularity initiative and to prevent the transformation milestones from migrating outside the period of budgetary opportunity the Army had to prevent competing initiatives from diverting personnel. Nevertheless, by December 2004, a chorus of external and internal reports began to call for the creation of a

specialized force to address the exigent strategic requirement for effective stability operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. The Army chose a simple strategy to prevent this competing initiative from siphoning critical personnel or funding from the institutional Army's primary objective. The Army chose simply to delay.

Responding to Proponents

While defense policy is often a balance between institutional priorities and strategic requirements, major initiatives in the contemporary defense budget environment require DOD to prioritize its efforts or risk significant disruptions in the pursuit of defense department goals. The discrete biennial partisan shifts in the defense budgetary environment force DOD to use "sequential attention"³⁷ to secure the department's goals while, simultaneously "satisficing"³⁸ other requirements to delay those initiatives and preserve critical resources. Under this construct, it is possible to understand better DOD's efforts to address and embrace the strategic requirement of stability operations while employing measures to delay the serious consideration for creating a specialized stability force. The Army used a number of tactics to delay opposition to the Army's transformation to modularity. First, the Army simply ignored the proponents calling for a specialized force. As the calls grew, the Army implemented a series of studies to create the perception of action while in reality stalling long enough to secure sequential objectives. When Congress began to actively consider the options for creating a specialized force, DOD and the Army reacted by publishing doctrine and directives to associate the modularity initiative with stability operations. The doctrine and directives also served to define DOD's and the Army's participation in, and integration with, the other executive agencies in stability operations.

The first tactic DOD used to protect the Army's modularity initiative was to ignore the emerging strategic requirement for stability operations and to recommend measures to address it.

³⁷ Mary Jo Hatch, *Organization Theory: Modern, Symbolic, and Postmodern Perspectives* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 122.

³⁸ Ibid.

As noted earlier, Dr. Hans Binnenedijk and Stuart Johnson published a National Defense University (NDU) report titled, *Transforming for Stabilization and Reconstruction Operations*. The report provided a series of modest recommendations for the creation of a standing specialized stabilization force. In the document, the authors recommended reorganizing the existing separate battalions of civil affairs, engineer, military police, medical, and psychological operations (PSYOPS) into a stability and reconstruction brigade structure to complement standing combat forces.³⁹ While the authors were careful to present a solution cognizant of DOD's resource constraints, the publication's timing gave DOD the opportunity to delay serious consideration of the initiative until FY 2006. Published in late November 2003, the NDU report arrived long after the approval of the FY 2004 budget. The study's late publication date also did not provide the DOD any time to evaluate the recommendations for inclusion in the FY 2005 defense budget request to Congress.

Compiling the defense budget is a time intensive process that is not easy to alter once it has completed the arduous process of achieving executive approval. As an example, the FY 2004 budget, covering the period, from October 1, 2003 to September 30, 2004, had begun some 27 months prior to the start of the budget year. The defense budget faces continuous debate within DOD during an eighteen-month planning process and faces an excruciating review by the White House prior to its submission to Congress. The resultant budget request reflects a negotiated balance between force structures, mission priorities, and integration with various other federal agencies even before its presentation to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). While at the OMB, the request is still subject to a variety of opinions among the uniformed and civilian leadership concerning priorities and the subsequent trade-offs necessary to provide for the nation's defense and to secure congressional approval. OMB refines the budget by resolving issues with the Office of the Secretary of Defense and by incorporating the latest economic

³⁹ Binnenedijk and Johnson, *Transforming for Stabilization and Reconstruction Operations*, 60.

projections. OMB then refines the defense budget request for integration with the rest of the federal budget and prepares to submit it to the President for approval. Following the OMB and White House review, the President submits his budget to the Congress by the first Monday of February. Congress then scrutinizes and manipulates the budget request for the next nine months. Any significant changes late in the budgetary process require a tremendous amount of effort to realign priorities and balance them against existing authorizations, institutional capacity and budgetary parameters.⁴⁰

Changes, after the President submits the budget to Congress, create dangerous fractures in the President's budget presentation to Congress and force the President to either relocate funds already programmed or seek additional funding measures. Selection of either of these options disrupts previous departmental budget agreements. One can image the consternation of those involved in the defense budgetary process when significant changes occur in the final days before the submission of the defense budget request to Congress. The late timing of the NDU publication enabled DOD and the Army to delay the serious consideration of the recommendation to create a specialized force for stability operations until the FY 2006 budget.

After securing presidential support for the transformation to modularity, the Army realized it had to protect the initiative's critical resources from any competing initiative through FY 2006. Rather than ignore the obvious strategic requirements identified in the NDU report, DOD decided to delay actions towards stability operations by studying the problem. DOD commissioned the Defense Science Board to conduct a study on "the transitions to and from hostilities"⁴¹ and report the results by December 2004. The suspense for the report ensured a replay of the 2003 NDU study. The report arrived after the FY 2005 budget process, too late to affect the FY2005 Supplemental Budget, and too late for inclusion in the President's FY 2006

⁴⁰ Wildavsky and Caiden, *The New Politics of the Budgetary Process*, 222.

⁴¹ Defense Science Board, *Defense Science Board 2004 Summer Study on Transition to and from Hostilities*, 1.

budget request.⁴² The timing of the report also provided DOD a measure of flexibility, in case the general elections in November changed the political environment. By addressing stability operations through an internal study, the Department of Defense satisfied the pundits call and delayed congressional consideration of the competing initiative beyond the “fleeting window of opportunity”⁴³ the Army required to effect modularity. The study also provided DOD a sounding board to address DOD’s concerns regarding stability operations, to define the conditions and parameters necessary to engage DOD, and to comment on the action necessary from other executive agencies and Congress. The final paragraph of the report’s executive summary called for “urgent action”⁴⁴ to address stabilization and reconstruction operations while highlighting the need for significantly personnel, funding, and resources for DOD and DOS to fulfill their proper roles.

The 2004 general election retained the government under single party control and continued the favorable defense budgetary environment for DOD. In response, DOD raised its supplemental funding request. The request included an increase in the cost estimate for the Army’s transformation from \$28 billion to \$48 billion dollars.⁴⁵ The significant increase in cost estimates drove Congress to investigate modularity through a Government Accounting Office (GAO) study. The report drew Congressional interest because it identified growing and ambiguous costs while failing to provide a corresponding level of transparency. The report

⁴² The report would arrive too late to change the defense budget request if the President was re-elected. It is important to note the timing of this report. The suspense slated for December avoided disrupting the FY 2005 Budget and would follow the General Election. The results of the General election would define DOD’s approach to the initiative and stability operation.

⁴³ Ann Roosevelt, "Army Transformation has a Window of Opportunity, Chief Says," *Defense Daily* 221, no. 42 (March 8, 2004), 1, (accessed November 5, 2008).

⁴⁴ Defense Science Board and United States, *Defense Science Board 2004 Summer Study on Transition to and from Hostilities*, 2.

⁴⁵ US Government Accounting Office, *Force Structure: Preliminary Observations on Army Plans to Implement and Fund Modular Forces*, S. Pickup and J. St. Laurent, GAO-05-44T, 14. The testimony in the above GAO report identified the discrepancy between the estimated and actual funds needed for modularity.

sparked request by the House Committee on Armed Services for a study by the Congressional Budgetary Office (CBO). In May 2005, the CBO published its findings in a report titled *Options for Restructuring the Army*.

The CBO report strengthened the Army's justification for the transformation to a modular force and temporarily quelled the critics call for the establishment of a specialized force for stability operations. In the report, the CBO considered "eight options for restructuring the Army, each of which would either increase the Army's ability to perform some types of missions or decrease its reliance on the reserve component. The options offer[ed] a broad overview of the general types of policy choices and trade-offs that decision-makers face when considering the size, structure, and capability of any plan for reorganizing the Army."⁴⁶ CBO compared the implications of varying three key attributes of the force structure: the overall size of the Army, the distribution between the active and reserve components, and the types of major combat forces along with the associate level of support forces. Although the report contained seven different primary alternatives for the Army's force structure, not including the sub-options, it contained only one primary alternative that discussed the creation of a specialized force for stability operations. Fortunately, for the Army, the CBO's analysis of this alternative was so poor that it effectively countered the previous recommendations to create a specialized force for stability operations.

The alternative titled, *Alternative 4- Organize Stabilization and Reconstruction Divisions*, suggests converting "two active Army divisions into dedicated peacekeeping divisions."⁴⁷ In doing so, the document identified an obvious contradiction between the Army's keystone doctrine in FM 3-0, and the source documents cited by the report: the *Defense Science Boards 2004 Summer Study on Transition to and from Hostilities*, and a National Defense University report

⁴⁶ Adam Talaber and Congressional Budget Office, "Options for Restructuring the Army," Congress of the United States, Congressional Budget Office, 2005, 2.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

titled, *Transforming for Stabilization and Reconstruction Operations*. The CBO report interchanged the terms peacekeeping with stability, erroneously equating the terms defined in Army's cornerstone operational manual, FM 3-0 Operations (June 2001). By using these definitions, the report equated one of the ten stability sub-tasks with the overarching element of stability operations. Chapter 1 of FM 3-0 Operations (June 2001) defines stability and support operations as primary elements of Full-Spectrum Operations that must be "combined and sequenced"⁴⁸ along with offensive and defensive operations to accomplish missions in war. By erroneously categorizing stability and reconstruction operations as 'peacekeeping' operations, the alternative implies that stability operations are not components to combine or sequence in the conduct of war fighting but solely an operation initiated after war-fighting is complete. The report highlighted the elimination of six combat brigades to create this 'peacekeeping' force without demonstrating any quantitative or qualitative advantages. Bifurcating the conduct of stability and combat operations the report surmises that the "alternative would reduce the Army's ability to fight wars"⁴⁹

The CBO report emphasized this point when it noted, "S&R divisions are not intended for major combat operations."⁵⁰ Matching a divisional sized unit with a single type of operation was odd and is in direct conflict with the Army doctrine of Full-Spectrum Operations. FM 3-0 states that large units, such as divisions "are likely to conduct simultaneous offensive, defensive, stability, and support operations"⁵¹ while smaller units usually perform only one type of operation. Specifically tailoring a unit to perform in one element of the spectrum of conflict and then measuring its performance on the opposite end of the spectrum produced predictable results.

⁴⁸ US Department of the Army, *Field Manual 3-0 Operations* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, June 2001), 1-47.

⁴⁹ Talaber and Congressional Budget Office, *Options for Restructuring the Army*, 33.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Department of the Army, *Field Manual 3-0 Operations*, 1-50.

The S&R divisions showed a marked decrease in combat capacity at the cost of six full combat brigades while never addressing a quantitative or qualitative increase in S&R capacity.

Eliminating two full combat divisions to facilitate the creation of four S&R divisions was completely incongruent with the National Defense University (NDU) report titled *Transforming for Stabilization and Reconstruction Operation*. Yet, the NDU report was the only source cited for the alternative. While a cursory review of the first bullet in the NDU document's conclusion may lead one to believe it recommends reorganizing two combat divisions into stability and reconstruction divisions, a complete reading of the document in no way presents such a resource intensive solution. Rather, the document recommends reorganizing the existing separate battalions of civil affairs, engineer, military police, medical, and psychological operations (PSYOPS) under a stability and reconstruction brigade structure to complement standing combat forces. The NDU document specifically states, "Current forces should be adequate insofar as these same units are performing the S&R in Iraq today, albeit under an ad hoc concept of operations belatedly executed."⁵²

The "two active duty divisions"⁵³ referred to in the CBO report are identified in the NDU report as the existing skeletons of two integrated Active Component /National Guard divisional headquarters, the 7th Infantry Division and the 24th Infantry Division. Neither of these divisional headquarters is included among the ten active divisional headquarters and therefore they would not reduce the number of division level units in the active component. Their active duty staff totals a mere 300 personnel. Their mission would be primarily to serve as a force provider and assist in the development, and the administration of the S&R brigades. A comprehensive reading of the source document would readily show that the creation of these specialized stability brigades and their subordinate mission tailored task forces were to complement the modular force

⁵² Binnendijk and Johnson, *Transforming for Stabilization and Reconstruction Operations*, 60.

⁵³ Talaber and Congressional Budget Office, *Options for Restructuring the Army*, xx.

structure with an available S&R capability, rather than compete against them for resources.⁵⁴ By identifying a need to reduce active duty Army divisional combat power in order to implement the option, the CBO undoubtedly bolstered the Army's decision to develop full spectrum rather than specialized units along with congressional opinion.

The CBO report also failed to address the principal recommendation of the *Defense Science Board's 2004 Summer Study on Transition to and from Hostilities*, which was to embrace stability operations as a core competency of general-purpose forces. To accomplish this, the DSB's 2004 Summer Study recommended that the general-purpose forces develop the training and doctrine necessary to reinforce this concept in full spectrum operations. The study did not recommend developing division-sized units to specialize in stability operations. Rather, it recommended that the Army "develop modules, below the brigade level, of S&R capabilities to facilitate task organization"⁵⁵ to enhance U.S. effectiveness at stability operations. This recommendation is, in essence, congruent with the intent of Dr. Binnendijk's NDU report on *Transforming for Stabilization and Reconstruction Operations*. While both of these studies presented a measured approach to addressing the intricacies of stability operations, they still presented a theoretical challenge by advocating the deviation of resources and effort from the Army's primary focus on creating a modular force structure.

Although the Congressional Budget Office May 2005 report on *Options for Restructuring the Army* contained gross errors and was poorly reasoned, the study provided critical support to the Army's position. The report supported the Army's transformation to the modular brigade construct and scoffed at the idea of creating a specialized force for stability and reconstruction operations. By overlooking the CBO's report, the Army leveraged Congress's institutional

⁵⁴ The only force structure increase recommended in Dr. Binnendijk's NDU study were the creation of two battalions for training and security assistance.

⁵⁵ United States. Defense Science Board. and United States. Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics, *Defense Science Board 2004 Summer Study on Transition to and from Hostilities*, vii.

intelligence apparatus to help validate the supplemental funding necessary for transformation of the Army's active component brigades.⁵⁶ However, this report did alert the Army that it had to take effective measures to explain better the functionality of the modular brigade combat team in the conduct of stability operations or face future inquiry in to why the Army had not developed a specialized force to address this strategic requirement.

The Army chose to address the emerging problem through doctrine. Doing so allowed the Army to define the problem and, conveniently, to provide the solution. In June 2005, the Army published FM 1. "FM 1 is one of the Army's two capstone doctrinal manuals. The other is FM 3-0, Operations. FM 1's audience includes the Executive Branch; Congress; Office of the Secretary of Defense;"⁵⁷ along with a host of others. The field manual "states what the Army is, what the Army does, how the Army does it, and where the Army is going."⁵⁸ The manual specifically links the modular brigade combat team's functional utility to the brigade's ability to address operations along the entire spectrum of conflict from major combat to stability operations. The inclusion of stability operations was critical in that it tied the creation of the modular BCT to the effective conduct of stability operations. If the Army had divorced the modular brigade from stability operations, they would have risked losing part of the justification and impetus for transformation. Creating a specialized unit for stability operations would also have challenged the need for the modular brigade to fulfill these missions. If the Army or DOD admitted that the current transformation process did not meet the requirements in the theaters of conflict, Congress might have intervened and either; eliminated funding or detailed appropriations inconsistent with DOD's objectives. Additionally, if the Army had found it necessary to create a complementary S&R module to the modular brigade it would have increased

⁵⁶ The 2005 War Supplemental funding passed on 16 May 2005 just after the issuance of this report. These funds were the primary driver for transformation.

⁵⁷ US Department of the Army, *Field Manual 1, The Army* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, June 2005), iii, <http://www.army.mil/fm1/presentation.html> (accessed November 5, 2008).

⁵⁸ Ibid.

an already burdensome demand on military manpower and significantly increased institutional infrastructure costs. With the cost of transformation well in excess of expectations and personnel over-tasked across the DOD, the Army could ill afford any deviation that would slow achievement of the primary objective, modular transformation. By publishing doctrine that connected the modular-brigade force structure and stability operations the Army continued to delay serious challenges to its primary initiative.⁵⁹

In September 2005, just prior to the congressional approval of the FY 2006 budget, *The Defense Science Board Task Force on Institutionalizing Stability Operations within DOD* released its final report. The task force charge was to “consider the institutional hurdles to effectively constitute and use capabilities for stability operations as called for in the *2004 Defense Science Board Report on Transition to and from Hostilities* and the subsequent draft directive to implement the recommendations of the report.”⁶⁰ The report made clear the essential need to “embrace stability operations as a core activity of the Department of Defense, on par with combat operations.”⁶¹ The Army already addressed this finding through emerging doctrine, by including stability operations as one of the primary elements of full-spectrum operations. Identifying stability operations as a primary element of full spectrum operations validated the Army’s use the brigade centric modular force, the full-spectrum force, to address stability operations. The Army precluded the consideration to create a specialized force for stability operations by designating the modular force, as a means to address all operations along the dynamic and nebulous spectrum between major combat and stability operations.

⁵⁹ FM 3-07 February 2003 – Stability Operations and Support Operations does not recommend or suggest the creation of a specialized force for stability operations. Rather it relies on the Army’s versatile nature and capabilities to task organize and adapt in size, structure, and function to the mission at hand.

⁶⁰ Defense Science Board, William Schneider and Craig Fields, *Report of the Defense Science Board Task Force on Institutionalizing Stability Operations within DoD* (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics,[2005]) (accessed November 5, 2008). This quote taken from the attached memorandum from the TF Chairman, Dr. Craig Fields, to the Chairman of the Defense Science Board

⁶¹ Ibid.

The executive summary of the report made clear the report did not recommend an adjustment to force structure and emphasized the danger to the program such a proposal would represent. The study emphasized that, “re-organization of an institution typically is fractious and disruptive”⁶² and highlighted that reorganization would mandate significant costs in personnel, time, and resources. Furthermore, the report poignantly identified the budgetary reality that the nation “cannot afford to maintain two separate forces; one dedicated to major combat, the other to stability operations.”⁶³ Stability and combat operations are not separate and discreet events rather they are inclusive elements along the spectrum of conflict. These remarks strategically echoed the findings from Congress’ own May 2005 CBO study, *Options for Restructuring the Army*, reinforcing the congressional belief that creating such a force would be an onerous burden. In conclusion, the task force recommended, “that the Department [of Defense] act with dispatch to accelerate the transformation of its own capabilities, while concurrently continuing to give full support to the evolution of capabilities elsewhere in the government.”⁶⁴ Interestingly, the conclusion truncated the text of the original recommendation found in the attached presentation. The original presentation stated, “Accelerate the transformation toward stability operations.”⁶⁵ Hence, the conclusion supported DOD’s effort to prevent congressional interference with defense transformation, delay the creation of a specialized force for stability operations, and simultaneously encourage departments other than DOD to develop new institutional capabilities. The final task of the DSB’s 2005 study was to gain the Secretary of Defense’s approval for DOD

⁶² Ibid., 3.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 4. It is important to note, that internal to the report, the complete phrase is “accelerating Transformation to Stability Operations” not just accelerating transformation. The editorial guidance in this study is apparent both in the introductions and in the memorandums to the Defense Science Board Chairman as well as the Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisitions, Technology, and Logistics). These areas highlight initiatives and doctrine already accepted by DOD and eschewed the more confrontational remarks in the study.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 12.

Directive 3000.05 to prevent unanticipated repercussions from the President's impending National Security Presidential Directive.

DOD Directive 3000.05

The Department of Defense understood the potential that a presidential directive or congressional inquiry into stability operations could have upon defense transformation and moved to pre-empt those measures or to mitigate its effects. A month after the signing of the FY 2006 budget and ten days prior to the release of National Security Presidential Directive – 44 the Department of Defense published Directive 3000.05, *Military Support for Stability, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction Operations*. The publication of this document allowed DOD to secure its investment in defense transformation and define the department's participation in, and integration with, the Department of State and the other executive agencies in stability operations.⁶⁶

The publication of DODD 3000.05 codified stability operation as an integral element of full-spectrum operations and, therefore, linked stability operations to DOD's ongoing efforts at defense transformation. The document did this by proclaiming stability operations as “a core U.S. military mission that the Department of Defense shall be prepared to conduct and support.”⁶⁷ By highlighting the inclusion of stability operations as a core mission, DOD formally recognized stability operations as having equivalent importance with major combat operations. Full spectrum operations doctrinally require the simultaneous, not the sequential, combination of operations ranging from offense, defense, and stability or civil support and, therefore, requires a force that

⁶⁶ As recommended by the September 2005 Defense Science Board Study on Institutionalizing Stability Operations within DOD.

⁶⁷ US Department of Defense, *Department of Defense Directive 3000.05, Military Support for Stability, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction Operations* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, [2005]), 1, <http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/corres/pdf/300005p.pdf> (accessed November 5, 2008).

can operate across the spectrum of conflict.⁶⁸ While seemingly innocuous this linkage provided DOD, and the Army, the protection necessary to continue transformation towards a modular brigade-based force structure defined as the Army's full-spectrum force. Furthermore, the document defined stability operations as "military and civilian activities conducted across the spectrum from peace to conflict to establish or maintain order in States or regions."⁶⁹ By avoiding the conjunction 'or,' the definition incorporates civilian activities into any future stability operation. Necessitating a civilian capacity to conduct expeditionary stability operations precludes DOD from maintaining a capacity to conduct all aspects of stability operations in lieu of the civilian agencies. Codifying stability operation as an integral element of full-spectrum operations secured DOD's investment in transformation without requiring further investment in a specialized force for stability operations.

The directive also defined and, therefore, limited DOD's participation in the resource intense development of Stability, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction (SSTR) capabilities. By defining its policy early in the initiative, DOD established its own reporting requirements, participation, and level of integration. Establishing these parameters demonstrated compliance with the President and deference to the Congress while averting actions that might disrupt defense transformation. By seizing the initiative, DOD was able to limit participation in a way that fit the department's internal goals and prevented external disruptions. By demonstrating its commitment to stability and reconstruction operations and selectively establishing measures to address it, DOD postponed committing significant resources to a competing initiative until FY 2008 when DOD anticipated completing the resources intensive transition to modularity.

⁶⁸ US Department of the Army, *Field Manual 3-0 Operations*, February 2008 ed. (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 2008), 220, <http://downloads.army.mil/fm3-0/FM3-0.pdf> (accessed November 5, 2008).

⁶⁹ US Department of Defense, *Department of Defense Directive 3000.05, Military Support for Stability, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction Operations*, 2.

DODD 3000.05 also allowed DOD to avoid tying its budget to resource intensive mission sets that post-conflict operations presented. The directive highlighted that post-conflict rebuilding efforts are primarily civilian operations. While, the directive recognized that the initial work of restoring order, public services, and rebuilding damaged facilities would likely fall on the military the directive limited DOD's unilateral participation to providing initial capabilities. This understanding diverted the requirement for long-term, resource intensive, SSTR participation to the rest of the U.S. Government. Diverting this requirement allowed DOD greater freedom to pursue its own institutional objectives while demonstrating a willingness to operate with the other executive agencies.

Heralded as a paradigm shift for the military, DOD Directive 3000.05 actually served to help DOD implement defense transformation and achieve its institutional objective. Although the directive codified stability operations as a core military mission, the military abdicated a role in SSTR that would have exploited DOD's disproportionate resources and capabilities. The directive prevented a counterproductive shift in defense transformation towards a "transformation in stability operations."⁷⁰ By defining stability operations as an element of operations equal in importance to offense and defense, the directive reinforced the Army's modular transformation to a full spectrum force. By establishing DOD's policy early and formally assigning internal responsibilities, DOD was able to define its participation and regulate the speed of its efforts towards stability operations. Taking pre-emptive action through DODD 3000.05, the Department of Defense was able to justify and accelerate efforts towards the completion of defense transformation while quelling debate about the creation of a separate military force for stability operations.

⁷⁰ Defense Science Board, Schneider and Dr. Fields, *Report of the Defense Science Board Task Force on Institutionalizing Stability Operations within DoD*, 12. As recommended in the September 2005 study by The Defense Science Board Task Force on Institutionalizing Stability Operations within DoD.

National Security Presidential Directive - 44

On December 7, 2005, the President issued National Security Presidential Directive 44 (NSPD-44). The Presidential Directive states as its goal the unification of the effort of the multiple agencies of the US government towards the effective execution of stability operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. The directive acknowledges the need “to coordinate and strengthen the efforts of the United States Government to prepare, plan for, and conduct reconstruction and stabilization assistance”⁷¹ and to “harmonized, such efforts with US military plans and operations.”⁷² To accomplish that mission, the directive assigned responsibility to the Secretary of State to integrate and lead United States efforts to achieve the policy objective of providing a quick and effective response to the exigent strategic requirement of stability operations.

In many ways, NSPD-44 was similar to President Johnson’s National Security Action Memorandum 362. Both directives sought to unify the efforts of the multiple agencies of the US government in stabilization and reconstruction activities and leverage each organization’s unique capabilities. Yet, NSPD-44 did not align the responsibility, accountability, or the resources to facilitate success. However, NSPD-44 did support DOD’s institutional goals by not interfering with defense transformation.

NSPD-44 was not something for DOD to fear, as anticipated. Instead, NSPD-44 reinforced DOD’s position on stability operations and allowed a continuation of DOD’s transformation. NSPD-44 formalized the role of the nascent Office of the Coordinator for Stabilization and Reconstruction (S/CRS) with the Department of State and in coordination with the other executive agencies. By purposely creating a specialized S&R organization outside of DOD, the President prevented DOD from having to internalize the competing demands that

⁷¹ President George W. Bush, National Security Presidential Directive 44 - Management of Interagency Efforts Concerning Reconstruction and Stabilization, December 7, 2005, 2, <http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/nspd/nspd-44.html> .

⁷² Ibid.

divided interests produce.⁷³ The formalization S/CRS also established an alternate node for the President to “finance national security activities”⁷⁴ outside of the purview of the congressional budgetary cycle.

In the early Cold War environment of congressional deference, a presidential initiative of this magnitude would have gained traction just as NSAM 362 did for the CORDS program. However, in the contemporary budgetary environment, long-term Presidential initiatives depend on a variety of other variables. These variables include the ability of the President’s political party to retain control of Congress, secure funding, and gain the time necessary to establish, develop, and institutionalize the initiative. Without such protections, as has already been shown, initiatives are prone to significant budget cuts as the rationale that facilitated their creation wanes.

Conclusion

While scholars, pundits, and practitioners alike, clamor for creating a specialized stability force, based on the CORDS model, they failed to understand the constraining dynamics of the defense budgetary environment. In the contemporary US national security environment, implementing new initiatives is dependent upon a number of factors other than pure strategic requirements. While defense policy is always a balance between strategic requirements and institutional goals, today’s defense budgetary environment makes balancing the two more difficult to achieve. The lack of consensus on national security policy coupled with Congress’s new ability and willingness to challenge the President’s national defense policy shifted the executive-legislative relationship away from Congress’ Cold War practice of deferring to the President. Today, the defense budgetary environment is one characterized by partisan conflict in the absence of a consensus on national security policy.

⁷³ Hatch, *Organization Theory: Modern, Symbolic, and Postmodern Perspectives*, 122.

⁷⁴ Banks and Straussman, “A New Imperial Presidency? Insights from U.S. Involvement in Bosnia”, 216.

The dynamic biennial Congressional electoral cycle, and the prospects it brings for changes in congressional support for the President's budget, forces the Department of Defense to operate on a biennial basis. The Department of Defense must now search for and seize upon advantageous defense budgetary periods to achieve organizational goals or risk dramatic changes in funding or the elimination of specific programs altogether. To achieve institutional goals within compressed timelines DOD must prioritize its initiatives and mass resources to accelerate implementation of defense policy before the funding opportunity passes. During these periods, DOD must make every effort to delay the consideration of any initiative that competes for similar resources. DOD can secure its organizational objectives in the contemporary budgetary environment by identifying advantageous budgetary environments, prioritizing initiatives, massing resources, and then delaying the consideration of competing initiatives.

The Department of Defense's response to the call for a specialized force for stability operations was not an affront to stability operations advocates. It was a lesson in the realities of the contemporary budgetary environment. While critics understand that initiatives are always a "wedding of reasonable goals to available means,"⁷⁵ today, they must also remember that the time to achieve these goals is always short. Future advocates for defense initiatives must evaluate the executive-legislative relationship along with ongoing defense initiatives, and design their recommendations based upon the resources available to DOD. Failure to address these parameters, no matter how valid the recommendation, will place the advocates of defense initiatives in direct conflict with the priorities of the Department of Defense.

⁷⁵ William J. Gregor, *Toward a Revolution in Civil-Military Affairs: Understanding the United States Military in the Post Cold War World* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, 1996), 54.

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