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TIME FOR U.S. FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND THE INTERAGENCY TO SHARPEN ITS REGIONAL FOCUS

by

Michael P. Zick, Lt Col, USAF

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Advisor(s):
Dr. Stephen "Wilbur" Wright
AF Fellowship/Internship Institution

M. Dee Taylor
Spaatz Center for Officer Education

Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama

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14. ABSTRACT

To sharpen U.S. regional focus in foreign affairs, the Department of State, the U.S. Agency for International Development and the Department of Defense should align their geographic regions of the world while also elevating and empowering the regional bureaus within the Department of State. This would allow the regional bureaus to map out and execute a more persistent and consistent U.S. foreign affairs engagement strategy than is currently possible and add control to the interagency process. Through document research and personnel interviews, this paper reviewed the need for change in the national security system as well as the makeup of the three major U.S. foreign affairs stakeholders. It then looked at three different plans to reform the system and interagency process. These three plans included one put forth by the Project on National Security Reform, one by Dr. James J. Carafano from the Heritage Foundation and one offered by the author of this paper. The conclusions find that a hybrid of the three plans actually provides the best solution for this nation. This solution included the elevation and empowerment of regional bureaus within the Department of State to lead and focus foreign affairs efforts within standardized regions around the world. These bureaus would ensure a whole of government approach when it came to actions required within their boundaries. But this solution also required trained interagency professionals and a standardized architecture for sharing information amongst all stakeholders to ensure its success.

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Preface

The researcher, Lt Col Michael P. Zick severed the U.S. Air Force as a mobility pilot for 19 years. He accomplished this research paper while interning as a National Defense Fellow at the Institute for Defense Analyses in Alexandria, Virginia. The institute's guidance and patience was very much appreciated while the researcher collected data and performed interviews for this project. Following the Fellowship, Lt Col Zick was assigned to the U. S. Air Force's Air Staff to work in their War and Mobilization Plans and Policy Division.

Lt Col Zick first became interested in foreign affairs and interagency reform while working on the U.S. Forces Korea joint staff. There, while working in their plans shop, he witnessed countless positive examples of how well coordinated efforts by the Department of State, the Department of Defense and other interagency groups were well received by the Republic of Korea, the North Koreans, and the East-Asian region as a whole. During that same time however, he also witnessed just as many missed opportunities or setbacks due to poorly coordinated or mishandled efforts that seemed to leave the region wondering if the U.S. government had a focused strategy.

It was in this environment that Lt Col Zick began to believe that the U.S. could do far better and accomplish so much more if only it could find a way to focus its foreign affairs message. To this end, this report was born.

Abstract

To sharpen U.S. regional focus in foreign affairs, the Department of State, the U.S. Agency for International Development and the Department of Defense should align their geographic regions of the world while also elevating and empowering the regional bureaus within the Department of State. This would allow the regional bureaus to map out and execute a more persistent and consistent U.S. foreign affairs engagement strategy than is currently possible and add control to the interagency process.

Through document research and personnel interviews, this paper reviewed the need for change in the national security system as well as the makeup of the three major U.S. foreign affairs stakeholders. It then looked at three different plans to reform the system and interagency process. These three plans included one put forth by the Project on National Security Reform, one by Dr. James J. Carafano from the Heritage Foundation and one offered by the author of this paper.

The conclusions find that a hybrid of the three plans actually provides the best solution for this nation. This solution included the elevation and empowerment of regional bureaus within the Department of State to lead and focus foreign affairs efforts within standardized regions around the world. These bureaus would ensure a whole of government approach when it came to actions required within their boundaries. But this solution also required trained interagency professionals and a standardized architecture for sharing information amongst all stakeholders to ensure its success.

Chapter 1

Focusing U.S. Foreign Policy

> *The Quadrennial Roles and Missions Review concludes we must improve our soft power: our national ability to promote economic development, institution-building and the rule of law, internal reconciliation, good governance, training and equipping indigenous military and police forces, strategic communications, and more. Doing so requires exploring whole of government approaches for meeting complex security challenges.*
>
> — Robert M. Gates, Secretary of Defense[1]

In todays fast-paced digital age, the United States (U.S.) foreign affairs and interagency processes must evolve if they are ever to take full advantage of this nation's instruments of power and meet complex security challenges with a whole of government approach as stated by Secretary Gates above. In order to do this, the researcher of this paper believes this nation should create and empower regional bureaus within the Department of State to take the lead within standardized regions around the world. These empowered bureaus would allow for a persistent and consistent foreign affairs engagement strategy and begin to focus our foreign affairs message while ensuring a whole of government approach.

To sharpen this engagement strategy and provide regional focus, the old institutional frameworks that did more to separate and divide the U.S. foreign affairs message must change, and new processes created to allow for true collaboration and coordination amongst key stakeholders. Since national security and foreign affairs rests on the foundation of diplomacy, development and defense, the key stakeholders this paper will focus on are the U.S. Department

of State (DoS), the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD).

By looking at how these three stakeholders interact with regards to foreign affairs, this paper will examine possible changes to the national security structure and interagency process that would allow for a more persistent and consistent regional focus. First, the need for change and the scope and structure of each stakeholder will be reviewed. Next, this paper will review three different plans on how to reform this structure and process. These three plans include one put forward by the Project on National Security Reform (PNSR) championed by Mr. James R. Locher III, another put forward by Dr. James J. Carafano, Senior Fellow at the Heritage Foundation and lastly, one put forward by the researcher of this paper, Lt Col Michael P. Zick, National Defense Fellow at the Institute for Defense Analyses.

Following this review, each plan will be objectively critiqued on their strengths and weaknesses, which will lead to a conclusion on which would be the best course of action to take for our nation. These strengths and weaknesses will point out each plans abilities to provide a regional focus to U.S. foreign affairs and integrate the interagency process. The conclusion will sum up the paper's research and examine if the researcher's theory on creating and empowering regional bureaus within the DoS to take the lead in standardized regions around the world is actually the best way ahead. But before this paper gets to the conclusion, it is important to see when the U.S. started to talk about reform?

One does not have to look very far to find a book, article or after-action report that discusses a need for national security reform. As early as the mid-to-late nineties, articles were calling for Interagency Operation Centers.[2] These calls prompted then President Clinton to publish

Presidential Decision Directive (PDD) 56, *Managing Complex Contingency Operations*, in May of 1997.[3] This directive mandated reform in the joint/interagency coordination process.

Following a flurry of Joint Publications, interagency coordinating documents and working groups, the nation can fast forward to today where the U.S. recently released its *Quadrennial Roles and Missions Review Report.* It stated "the department supports institutionalizing whole-of-government approaches to addressing national security challenges. The desired end state is for U.S. Government national security partners to develop plans and conduct operations from a shared perspective."[4] Before it is explored on how to gain that shared perspective, a review is in order of who the main stakeholders are in U.S. foreign affairs.

The Department of State

The DoS resides within the Executive Branch of the United States Government (USG) and is the lead agency for U.S. foreign affairs. Its head, the Secretary of State, is the primary advisor to the President for foreign policy, although it should be noted that both the Executive Branch and the U.S. Congress have constitutional responsibilities for U.S. foreign policy.[5] The DoS employs just over 30,000 individuals executing a budget of around $35 billion annually.[6]

The organizational structure of the DoS is a typical compartmented three-tier structure. It has the Secretary of State at the top, Under Secretary of State's leading different divisions and Assistant Secretaries of State leading different bureaus. Its mission as stated in a joint DoS and USAID report is to:

> Advance freedom for the benefits of the American people and the international community by helping to build and sustain a more democratic, secure, and prosperous world composed of well-governed states that respond to the needs of their people, reduce widespread poverty, and act responsibly within the international system.[7]

In order to focus its efforts, the DoS has six regional bureaus responsible for implementing U.S. foreign policy abroad. These bureaus are led by Assistant Secretary's that advise the Under Secretary for Policy. These regional bureaus are as follows:[8]

1. Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs (WHA) – Responsible for North and South America (excluding the continental U.S.).
2. Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs (EUR) – Responsible for the region encompassing Greenland, Europe, and Russia.
3. Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs (NEA) – Responsible for Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Palestinian Territories, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.
4. Bureau of African Affairs (AF) – Responsible for sub-Saharan Africa.
5. Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs (SCA) – Responsible for Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.
6. Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs (EAP) – Responsible for the Asia-Pacific region.

As the primary department responsible for U.S. foreign affairs, it operates some 260 embassies, consulates and other posts in support of its mission.[9] These embassies, consulates and posts are on the front lines of U.S. engagement abroad, but recently their jobs have become more difficult due to the myriad of agencies involved within their areas.

This difficulty was highlighted in April of 2008, when Secretary Rice sought greater power for U.S. Ambassadors over what she called the "massive numbers" of government agencies at American embassies because the coordination had become "an almost impossible task."[10] This coordination problem also corresponded with an earlier remark Secretary Rice had made about one of those key agencies, USAID. She said "in today's world, it is impossible to draw clear lines between our security interests, or development efforts, and our democratic ideals. To meet this challenge, we are aligning more closely the programs of the DoS and USAID."[11]

U.S. Agency for International Development

USAID is an independent federal government agency with its own planning, budgeting, and programming cycle. Although unique and distinct, it receives its overall foreign policy guidance from the Secretary of State.[12] Its head, the USAID Administrator, is appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate. The Administrator is dual-hatted as the DoS's Director of Foreign Assistance, a position that reports directly to the Secretary of State.

This arrangement allows USAID and DoS to align resources and budgets when it comes to foreign assistance. Its annual operating budget runs around $809 million, but because the Administrator is dual-hatted, they manage $20.3 billion in U.S. foreign assistance for both DoS and USAID.[13] USAID alone employs just over 1,500 individuals, but has working relationships, through contracts and grant agreements, with more than 3,500 companies and over 300 U.S.-based private voluntary organizations.[14]

The organizational structure of USAID is a typical compartmented three-tier structure. It has the USAID Administrator at the top, Chiefs that run functional and geographic bureaus and Chiefs that run field offices as well. Its mission as stated in its *FY 2008 Annual Performance Report* is:[15]

> USAID accelerates human progress in developing countries by reducing poverty, advancing democracy, building market economics, promoting security, responding to crises, and improving quality of life. Working with governments, institutions, and civil society, we assist individuals to build their own futures by mobilizing the full range of America's public and private resources through our expert presence overseas.

In order to focus its efforts, USAID has five geographic bureaus that are responsible for overseeing agency activities within their regions. These geographic bureaus are:[16]

1. Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) – Responsible for assistance in South America up to and including Mexico.

2. Europe and Eurasia (E&E) – Responsible for assistance in Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Ireland, Kosovo, Latvia, Lithuania, Republic of Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Turkey and Ukraine.
3. Sub-Saharan Africa (AFR) – Responsible for 47 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa.
4. Middle East (ME) – Responsible for assistance to countries in the Middle East and North Africa.
5. Asia (A) – Responsible for assistance to 22 countries in Asia (from Kazakhstan in the Northwest to Papua New Guinea in the Southeast).

In an effort to increase its role in regional planning, USAID recently stated that "it recognizes the need to reduce the long standing imbalance between the military and civilian components of the USG whole-of-government response to unstable, conflict-prone, and post conflict states."[17] To this end, it has placed senior development advisors on each of the Geographic Combatant Commander's staffs to help improve coordination, communication and synchronization. Just recently, USAID also received approval from Secretary of Defense Gates to formally contribute to the *Pentagon's Guidance for the Employment of the Force*, a document that mandates creation of campaign plans that connect peacetime military planning with early stages of specific war plans.[18]

The Department of Defense

DoD is the largest U.S. government agency. Its head, the Secretary of Defense, is the principal policy advisor to the President on matters of national defense.[19] DoD has just over 1.3 million service members on active duty, 684,000 civilians, and 1.1 million people in the National Guard and Reserves.[20] It executes an annual budget of approximately $517 billion.[21]

The organizational structure of DoD is a typical compartmented multi-tiered structure. It has the Secretary of Defense (SecDef) at the top, the Secretary of each Service, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) and the Combatant Commanders on the next tier, and finally the

Field Activities, the different Services and the Defense Agencies on the lower tier. Its mission as stated in on the DoD 101 website is:[22]

> The mission of the Department of Defense is to provide the military forces needed to deter war and to protect the security of our country.

In order to focus its efforts, DoD has six Geographic Combatant Commanders (GCC) responsible for effective coordination of operations within their area. These commands are:[23]

1. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM) – Responsible for North America.
2. Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM) – Responsible for Central and South America.
3. European Command (USEUCOM) – Responsible for the region encompassing Greenland, Europe and Russia.
4. African Command (USAFRICOM) – Responsible for all of Africa except Egypt.
5. Central Command (USCENTCOM) – Responsible for Afghanistan, Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, U.A.E., Uzbekistan, and Yemen.
6. Pacific Command (USPACOM) – Responsible from the pacific region with India and China in the West and Hawaii in the East.

When all the regions of DoD, USAID and DoS are put together, one finds there are many differences amongst their boundaries.

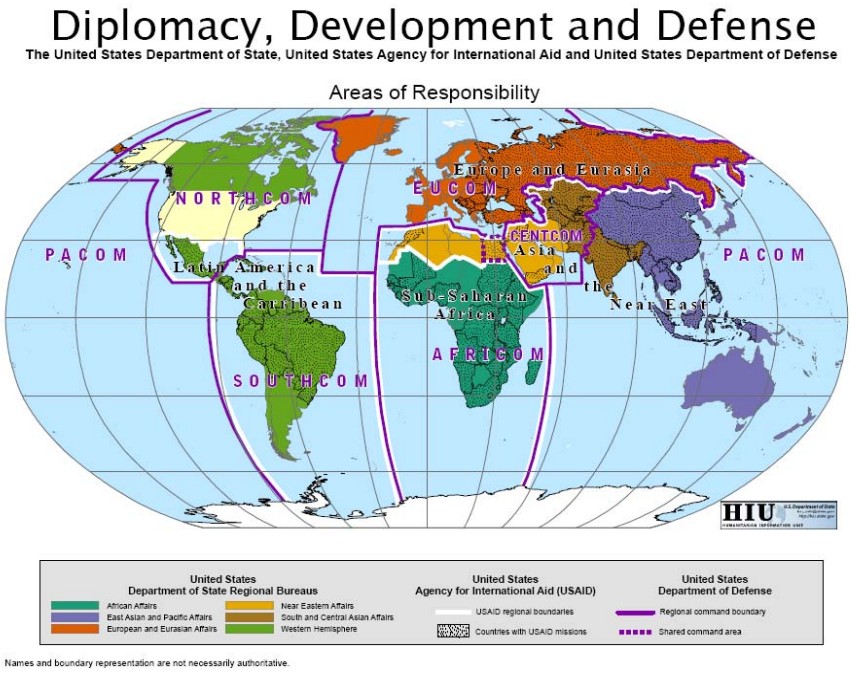

Figure 1 Areas of Responsibility for DoS, USAID & DoD

Lots of Seams

It is easy to see how each of the departments/agencies described earlier play a vital role in U.S. foreign affairs, but it is also interesting to note how they all go about it from their own unique perspectives. There is not one overall coordinating authority that focuses both our current national effort and our future planning effort into any one region. The fact that the regions of the three principle stakeholders in foreign affairs do not match up highlights the challenges our nation faces when it comes to this arena. It also can send mixed message to others about how we as a nation work together. All this, the researcher believes, contributes to the disruption of a persistent and consistent USG foreign affairs strategy.

A small example of this was relayed to the researcher by Lt Col Ken Moss, a National Defense Fellow working in the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization at DoS.[24] He witnessed an effort from DoS to engage a select country and put together a combined effort on drug trafficking. The problem was that other agencies within the USG were already engaging the same select country about similar efforts. As he would later find out, there were other agencies attempting to engage them on different matters as well. Had the overture gone as planned, the selected country would have been left wondering which effort the U.S. really wanted their help with. This would surely have left our national focus in doubt, but worse, the select country probably would have been left wondering if the USG even coordinates amongst itself.

Unfortunately, the reality is things like this probably happen all the time, and that is why it is time for the U.S. to do something about it. The next chapter reviews three plans that aim to do just that, sharpen our nation's regional focus abroad and eliminate interagency miss steps like the one relayed above.

Notes

(All notes appear in shortened form. For full details see appropriate entry in bibliography.)

[1] Department of Defense. *Quadrennial Roles and Missions Review*, Forward.

[2] Gibbings, Thomas, Donold Hurely and Scott Moore. "Interagency Operations Centers: An Opportunity We Can't Ignore," pp 99-112.

[3] Hamblet, William P. and Jerry G. Kline. "Interagency Cooperation – PDD 56 and Complex Contingency Operations," pp 92-97.

[4] Department of Defense. *Quadrennial Roles and Missions Review*, p 31.

[5] *Wikipedia*, "U.S. Department of State."

[6] Department of State, "About State."

[7] Department of State and U.S. Agency for International Development, *Strategic Plan Fiscal Years 2007-2012*, p 9.

[8] Department of State, "About State."

[9] Ibid.

[10] "Coordination of Agencies 'Almost Impossible'," The Washington Times.

[11] Department of State and U.S. Agency for International Development, *Strategic Plan Fiscal Years 2007-2012*, p 4.

[12] U.S. Agency for International Development, "About USAID."

[13] U.S. Agency for International Development, "Summary and Highlights, International Affairs Function 150, Fiscal Year 2008 Budget Request," p 5.

[14] U.S. Agency for International Development, "USAID Primer," p 2.

[15] U.S. Agency for International Development, "FY 2008 Annual Performance Report," p 4.

[16] U.S. Agency for International Development, "About USAID."

[17] U.S. Agency for International Development, *Civilian-Military Cooperation Policy*, p 4.

[18] Sheikh, Fawzia. "USAID to Have Formal Say in Development of Future DoD Guidance."

[19] Department of Defense. "Top Civilian and Military Leaders."

[20] Department of Defense. "DOD 101."

[21] Department of Defense. "Financial Summary Tables for DoD FY 2009."

[22] Department of Defense, "DOD 101: What We Do."

[23] Department of Defense, "Unified Command Plan 2008."

[24] Lt Col John J. Moss (U.S. Department of State, Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization), interview by author, 13 March 2009.

Chapter 2

Different Plans for Change

> *The simple truth is that the world for which the national security system was designed in 1947 no longer exists. Today's challenges require better integration of expertise and capabilities from across the government. The current national security system cannot provide this. Instead, departments and agencies are often working against one another, the White House is unable to make timely and well-informed decisions, and there is an overreliance on military force.*
>
> —James R. Locher III[1]

This chapter examines three plans to bring regional focus back into U.S. foreign affairs while also improving the interagency process. To simplify their comparison, these plans are broken down into three categories differentiated by their potential impact on how the USG currently does business. That is, these plans will have a high impact, medium impact or low impact on USG business practices. The first plan discussed will have potentially the largest impact on the USG and is put forth by the Project on National Security Reform. The second plan is a middle-of-the-road solution put forth by Dr. James J. Carafano of The Heritage Foundation in his briefing "The Future of the Interagency Profession." The third and last plan is one put forth by the researcher himself, and is deemed to have the lowest potential impact on current practices when compared to the other two plans.

High Impact

The Project on National Security Reform (PNSR) championed by Mr. James R. Locher III is the most researched and thorough of any recommendations put forward for national security reform since the passage of the National Security Act of 1947.[2] The PNSR plan calls for a redesign in the structures and processes of the nation's national security system that have been around for 60 years. The emphasis for this reform is to aid the USG in its ability to integrate both "hard" and "soft" power more readily when it comes to current and emerging issues around the world. If implemented, the project could help to focus U.S. foreign affairs abroad, so it is necessary to review some of its recommendations.

One of the first recommendations from PNSR is to replace the National Security Council and Homeland Security Council with one body called the President's Security Council (PSC). This council would focus on national missions and desired outcomes instead of departmental goals and strengths.[3] The report would also create a Director of National Security (DNS) within the Executive Office of the President. This person would be responsible for high-level operations of the national security system that go beyond that of the present assistant to the president for national security affairs.[4] An Executive Secretary for the PSC, also called a staff, would be created that reports to the DNS in order to support overall management of the national security system. The government would also rely on Interagency Teams that report to the DNS, to work specific national security issues. This would allow the PSC to concentrate on policy matters, and not day to day details of overseeing specific tasks.

The project goes on to recommend the transformation of DoS by consolidating within it all functions now assigned to other departments and agencies that really fall within its core of responsibilities.[5] Key to this transformation would be an increase in Foreign Service manning,

new cross-departmental team training, and Ambassador and Chief of Mission authority. If issues came up that were beyond what a country team or regional-level team could handle, an Interagency Crisis Task Force (ICTF) would be created from interested departments and agencies. The lead of this force would be DoS or DoD depending on the security situation. This ICTF would eliminate multiple chains of command which can undermine unity of effort in the field.[6] The project also would direct a common alignment of all world regions for departments and agencies in order to simplify coordination and end unintended confusion.

This was only a highlight of the PNSR report. Truly, it would be a top to bottom overhaul of the current national security system as it now stands, and if successful in its goals, would do much to provide a persistent and consistent regional foreign affairs focus for the nation. However, its adoption would cause a lot of upheaval in the government, and that could have large effects on U.S. foreign affairs. That is why it is prudent to review another plan that could have less of an impact.

Medium Impact

The next plan comes from Dr. James J. Carafano, a Senior Research Fellow for National Security and Homeland Security at The Heritage Foundation. The book he co-authored with Richard Weitz titled, *Mismanaging Mayhem – How Washington Responds to Crisis*, went into great detail about how the U.S. interagency process had failed in the past, but it also put forward many different proposals on how to improve it as well. These proposals dealt more with the inner workings of homeland defense and reaction to a crisis than helping to coordinate and focus U.S. foreign affairs. That is why the basis for his plan described below comes from information he had given in an interview with the researcher as well as from an article of his in *Joint Forces*

Quarterly titled, "Managing Mayhem – The Future of Interagency Reform" and a briefing he created titled, "The Future of the Interagency Profession."

Dr. Carafano's starting premise was "don't fix what ain't broke." He further stated that built in to our USG process are safe guards called checks and balances. No one agency should control everything, nor should "work arounds" be allowed for problems that are better handled with already established processes. If allowed, then the nation could run a risk of circumventing its checks and balances. Dr. Carafano also stated that process should not replace people.[7] By having the right people with the right training, one can make huge differences. All these underlining beliefs went into his interagency solution.

To solve strategic incompetence as he called it, the USG needed to improve executive performance, overcome operational inaction and prepare responders to respond.[8] The nation could improve executive performance by first making sure those in the job could do the job. Do they have the qualities and competence required to carry out the job? Do they have the information and tools required to carry out the job? Bottom line: well chosen leaders with the right tools and information should be able to lead the U.S. through any problem.

To overcome operational inaction, the USG requires permanent but flexible organizations Dr Carafano stated. Up to now, responses to situations outside the military's purview have been "ad hoc" leading to mixed results.[9] To change this, he proposed to use a command structure much like the military's geographic commands. His structure would involve reducing the GCC to only three regions. These three regions would encompass the areas our nation has most interest in. He would replace USEUCOM and USPACOM with a new U.S. NATO Command (USNATOCOM). USNORTHCOM would remain responsible for defense of the U.S. and a new headquarters would be stood up responsible for Northeast Asia. Then, he proposed to stand up

three joint interagency groups (InterGroups) responsible for Latin America, Africa and Middle-East and Central and South Asia.[10] These InterGroups would have specific missions in each of their areas, and would include representatives of all required agencies including the military. If a Military action was required in one of these areas, then a Joint Task Force would be stood up to deal with it.

In order to prepare responders to respond, Dr. Carafano advocated the need for better interagency education and doctrine. To do this, he recommended creating interagency education and doctrine centers.[11] These centers would be patterned after the military's current system, but would focus on teaching interagency skills instead. Finally, requiring interagency experience to advance in ones chosen career field would emphasize the importance of interagency work.

Although it is not in the scope of this paper, Dr. Carafano also pointed out that funding must be taken into account if change is ever to be institutionalized and long lasting. He recommended having the funding go to the "lead agency" for planning, training, education and exercises, and they would pay the other players out of an annual congressional appropriation. For actual operations, the "lead agency" would pay supporting agencies out of supplemental appropriation.[12]

Again, this plan would go a long way in solving problems the USG has had in providing persistent and consistent regional foreign affairs focus. Dr. Carafano pointed out himself that it would take far less time to accomplish than PNSR, and would have less of an impact on our government operation as a whole. Be that as it may, his plan still would have an impact on government operations. That is why it is important to review one more plan, one that could do the same thing but have even less of an impact.

Low Impact

Much like Dr. Carafano's plan, the researcher believes that one should not fix things that are not broken. The researcher also believes accomplishing broad sweeping changes may fix some problems, but it also has a tendency to create just as many new ones. In that light, the approach the researcher advocates first would align all USG department and agency boundaries to one common reference.

For the purpose of an example, the researcher would align all the regions to the current military GCC structure. Aligning the boundaries right away does two things. First and foremost, it immediately creates a "common frame of reference" for all parties involved in foreign affairs. JP 3-08 Vol 1, *Interagency, Intergovernmental Organization, and Nongovernmental Coordination during Joint Operations*, has this as its fourth tenant under "building coordination."[13] This gets everyone talking the same language and aids synchronization. Second, this alignment would eliminate seams between the different departments and agencies where issues could be dropped, mishandled or ignored by one party while at the same time another party is feverously trying to solve it.

Next, the researcher would elevate the regional bureaus in the DoS to Under Secretary positions reporting directly to the Secretary of State. The idea would be to empower these regional bureaus much like the military empowers their GCCs. In a sense, these regional bureaus would be combatant command equivalents within the DoS, responsible for coordinating, planning and executing all foreign affairs within their region. They might never be as resource rich in manpower or funding as the GCCs, but would rely on the entire interagency team within their region to do the heavy lifting when it came to accomplishing tasks. These interagency teams would do this because all interagency players that have a stake in foreign affairs within

that region would have a seat at that bureau. However, this recommendation does have its problems.

As was explained to me by Dr. Edward F. Smith, an Institute for Defense Analyses staffer detailed as an analyst to USPACOM's Commanders Action Group, empowering the regional bureaus would be a major shift in power within DoS. He stated that currently, each country team within DoS holds the relative power of a GCC when it comes to that particular country, and they answer to the ambassador of that country.[14] This statement was further corroborated by a DoS foreign service officer when I asked about the relationship between the regional bureaus and the country teams. This inability of the regional bureaus to provide leadership within their regions is why the researcher believes forging a persistent and consistent strategy is so difficult.

Within any one region, there are twenty or so DoS country teams and maybe a hand full of USAID regional teams. This can work fine when it comes to small single country issues, but it becomes much more complicated when those issues involve several countries throughout a region. That is why these regional bureaus must be empowered to coordinate, plan, budget and execute U.S. foreign affairs within their boundaries. That includes all interagency work. This should not be construed as a plot to diminish what each country team does or the responsibility that each ambassador has in carrying out U.S. engagement in their country, but rather it is an attempt to get a whole of government approach to working issues within a region.

As the GCCs currently do, the under secretary's of each of these regional bureaus would be expected to go out and frequently meet with U.S. ambassadors and foreign leaders within their region. This would allow for more engagement and emphasis in each region than is currently possible, where foreign affairs relies heavily on the Secretary of State to do this task. This would

free up the Secretary of State to concentrate on really large issues or just run DoS, much like the Secretary of Defense currently does with DoD.

Admittedly, for this approach to work, DoS, DoD and USAID must align their planning constructs to produce a clear five-year plan for each region that takes into account all elements of national power. Then, after the initial coordination of this plan, each agency or department would develop its own support plan to this document. Following that, they would then submit budget requests to carry out their tasks in accordance with this jointly agreed upon plan. Each country team and ambassador would also be expected to develop their support plan to carry out the regional plans agenda as well as their own. These coordinated plans would provide the backbone for U.S. foreign affairs within their respective regions and would go a long way in delivering persistent and consistent focus for the U.S. message there.

All plans have strengths and weaknesses. The three described earlier are no different. So, now that they have been reviewed, it is time to bring those out in the light of day.

Notes

[1] Project on National Security Reform, *Case Studies Volume 1*, p i.
[2] Project on National Security Reform, *Forging A New Shield.*
[3] Project on National Security Reform, *Forging A New Shield, p ix.*
[4] Ibid, p ix.
[5] Ibid, p x.
[6] Ibid, p xi.
[7] James J. Carafano, "The Future of the Interagency Profession," slide 4.
[8] Ibid, slide 5.
[9] Ibid, slide 7.
[10] Ibid, slide 9.
[11] Carafano, James J. "Managing Mayhem – The Future of Interagency Reform, p 137.
[12] Dr. James James J. Carafano (Heritage Foundation, Senior Fellow), interview by author, 7 January 2009.
[13] Joint Publication (JP) 3-08 Vol 1, *Interagency, Intergovernmental Organization, and Nongovernmental Coordination during Joint Operations Vol 1*, p I-11.
[14] Dr. Edward F. Smith (Institute for Defense Analyses, Operational Evaluation Division), Interview by author, 9 January 2009.

Chapter 3

Each Plans Strengths and Weaknesses

> *Unlike the U.S. military, which has doctrine and a standard approach to planning its operations, the U.S. government as a whole lacks established procedures for planning and conducting interagency operations.*
>
> — Beyond Goldwaters Nichols: Phase 2 Report[1]

When the researcher first started comparing the strengths and weaknesses of each plan from Chapter 2, it became apparent that the differences could be summed up using two overall benchmarks. First off, did the plan provide the national security system some semblance of a regional focus? Second, did the plan address the need to coordinate and direct the interagency process? By digging into these two broad areas, the researcher found it easier to highlight each plans strengths as well as its weaknesses.

PNSR's Plan

With little doubt, the strength of the PNSR report lies in its completeness. It does an extremely good job of not only assessing this nation's current problems with the national security system, but also its past ones as well. But not only that, the researcher believes the three options for changing the system that the project reviews all have merit as well. Within PNSR, there is an option where it looked at strengthening the current system which relies very heavily on the White House to coordinate and dictate focus and direction. Another option it looked at created Integrated Regional Centers. These centers would have national security proconsuls which

would act as interagency headquarters for national security policy.[2] This option would allow the President to provide broad guidance on priorities and focus rather than having to daily manage specific issues. The third option it reviewed used a Hierarchy of Decentralized Teams to manage the national security system. This allowed the President and his advisors to provide strategic guidance and manage the national security system through "presidential security reviews" and issue teams.[3] These teams would be made up of cross functional members with a national, regional and country focus.

In their entirety, the overall emphasis of these options were to allow the President to become more strategic in his planning and outlook, while having other government entities do more of the day-to-day care and feeding of our national security system. In a sense, specific government entities would provide regional focus and whole of government solutions to problems that currently require the President to facilitate. This idea, the researcher believes, is exactly right and should be a guiding principle to any improvement in our national security system.

Other strengths to emphasize from PNSR would be its drive to mandate a more coherent and integrated planning and budgeting cycle for the national security system as well as a plan to increase the ease of knowledge sharing. The project emphasized where money went, so did time and effort of the departments and agencies. By integrating the planning and budgeting cycles, one could ensure action and participation. It also pointed out that if a system to keep knowledge learned and shared was not fielded, then the nation would continually "reinvent the solution" time and time again.

Finally, the researcher thought the project's drive to create a core of trained interagency professionals through deliberate developmental education and incentives, as well as the overhaul of DoS consolidating all items that fall within its core competence also a strength. Creating an

education system much like the militaries would ensure a standardized level of interagency education while also promoting new thought on reoccurring problems, the solutions of which could eventually find their way to joint interagency doctrine. But unless there is an incentive to attend this training, very few will go. Putting items together that fall under the core competence of DoS would allow for efficiency, coordination and focus of these tasks. It would also help to facilitate the interagency process. But with all these strengths, there comes some weaknesses.

In its final recommendation, the PNSR report embraced the Hierarchy of Decentralized Teams option. The report believes it is better because it parallels the lateral or "horizontal" organizational structure that has been so popular in the private sector. It is seen as being more flexible and adaptable than the current departmental structure in our government. Although this may work in the private sector, the researcher could quickly see the government being overwhelmed by numerous interagency teams or interagency crisis task forces. Just to keep track of them all would be daunting, let alone the fact that they were designed to be of a temporary nature, so their very landscape would constantly change. There temporary nature brings up another issue however.

The researcher's experience in government is that more work is always available, so the notion that these teams would only be in existence for a specific issue or a specific amount of time really does not sound plausible. If anything, the researcher could see these teams jumping from one project to the next, never truly ending. This would increase government and potentially negate any advantage gained by following this approach in the first place.

The largest problem the researcher had with PNSR was its "all or nothing" approach. It rightly cited that piecemeal attempts to correct problems with the system in the past have come to varying degrees of success. But to overhaul the entire system would have a huge impact on

USG operations let alone foreign affairs. This is why the researcher believed it was more prudent to look at other options for changing the system.

Dr. Carafano's Plan

Dr. Carafano's plan has several strengths and weaknesses. First off, he attempted to satisfy the requirement for providing regional focus by building on the concept of the military's GCCs. But instead of six regions like the military has, he chose to only concentrate on what he calls the nation's most critical ones; the United States, the NATO countries and the Northeast Asia countries. The rest of the nation's "areas of interest" would be covered by three joint interagency groups; Latin America, Africa and Middle-East and Central and South Asia. Although this provides flexibility, the researcher found this confusing since there is no clear cut dividing line between the areas of interest. When asked about this confusion, Dr. Carafano agreed it was a concern, but was clearly more emphatic that we as a nation had to have the right people in each of these interagency groups, than where the lines were drawn or even if they matched.[4] As he had put it, the USG always has undervalued its people. If the nation would let the people closest to the problem work it, they would fix it.

To that end, each of the individuals within the groups would have to be trained on "interagency" affairs. This meets the second benchmark the researcher had laid out. His plan to integrate the "interagency" was to establish an Education, Assignment and Accreditation (EA&A) program. By educating these professionals and creating a need for people to fill interagency assignments for advancement, it could spur better decision making and eventually improved doctrine. Unfortunately, with the strengths of his plan grounded in flexibility and education, Dr. Carafano plan was weakest when it came to focus and breaking a golden rule.

Not having the same type of entity watching over each region of the world would eventually lead to problems in focus and funding. Individuals will naturally show more attention to the "big kid" on the block than the "small kid." By only having three GCCs, the researcher believes focus and funding would naturally flow their way, while the joint interagency groups would continually be overlooked and shortchanged. This could have a disastrous affect on our nation's foreign affairs engagement strategy. It could also cause diplomatic problems amongst the U.S. and friendly nations that wonder why they were not important enough to be included in a GCC. This brings up boundary issues.

The boundaries of the GCCs and the joint interagency groups not being clearly delineated is another weakness. It would be too easy for something to happen in one of the seams and be missed. Again, in this fast paced world where it is so critical to keep abreast of all things happening, missing an emerging crisis could have immediate impact on U.S. foreign affairs.

Lastly, Dr. Carafano's plan breaks his golden rule of "don't fix what ain't broke." By reorganizing the DoD GCCs, he clearly is taking something that has worked well for many years and changing it significantly. The lost contacts alone would have a huge impact on foreign affairs, not to mention the changes within DoD required to make it work. These impacts drive the need to look at one more plan to change the system.

The Researcher's Plan

As could be expected, the researcher's plan had its own strengths and weaknesses. It provided for a regional focus of USG foreign affairs by first and foremost standardizing all regions to fixed boundaries. The researcher believed that with a common framework comes a common understanding and a tendency for less miss-matches. The plan also strengthens regional focus by elevating the regional bureaus within the DoS to a more prominent status. Along with

this new status would come the requirement to focus all efforts within that region. That would mean each regional bureau would be responsible for having a mechanism to plan, budget, coordinate, and execute all interagency activities within its boundaries. USAID would be included in these interagencies.

However, after reviewing the PNSR report and Dr. Carafano's work, the researcher found fault in his plan as well. Put simply, it is far easier to say you want to change a department or agency then it is to actually make it happen. The *Beyond Goldwater's Nichols Reports* and the PNSR study do a good job of pointing out the difficulty in getting changes approved. Everything from Presidential Executive Orders, Congressional Legislative Changes or departmental policy changes would be required. That is not to say these changes could not or should not be made, but it would be difficult.

Along with that weakness, the researcher also found that his plan did not take into account the need to train an "interagency" core of workers to better facilitate its processes. By far, all the literature reviewed stressed the need to provide workers the appropriate training for such work. In fact, when a DoS Foreign Service Officer was asked what was the greatest change they had witnessed over the last twenty years to help them do their job better the answer came back; "training."[5] Receiving computers was a close second. The researcher knew right then that he had underestimated the importance of training in the plan. The researcher had purely looked at how to improve the "process" from an organizational point of view, and not taken into account the human element.

The researcher also missed the importance of ensuring that each different department and agency had the ability to share knowledge over a collaborative computer architecture that was

both standardized and user-friendly. Again, this would be a critical enabler to ensure the success of any change within the national security system.

Lastly, the impact of the researcher's plan on the national security system is assessed as minimal when compared to the other two plans, but it would still have an effect on it none the less. Standardizing the regional boundaries would be the easy part. Changing the DoS organizational structure would be quite another matter. Even tougher would be the consolidation of all interagency players under each region in DoS. Again, this is not to say it would be impossible. But if done, it would have to be a deliberate and well planned out move.

All three plans had strengths and weaknesses, but which one had the best course for the nation to follow? Although their potential impacts on the national security system as a whole were varied, they each had similarities with one another. They also had many differences, but some of these differences were good ideas. The next chapter will take all of this into account and plot out which course to follow.

Notes

[1] Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), *Beyond Goldwaters Nichols: U.S. Government and Defense Reform for a New Strategic Era Phase 2 Report*, p 43.

[2] Project on National Security Reform, *Forging A New Shield*, p 428.

[3] Project on National Security Reform, *Forging A New Shield*, p 442.

[4] Dr. James James J. Carafano (Heritage Foundation, Senior Fellow), interview by author, 7 January 2009.

[5] Mrs. Alison M. Shorter (U.S. Department of State, Special Assistant Office of the Under Secretary for Management), interview by author, 28 January 2009.

Chapter 4

Conclusions

> *The lack of interagency collaboration is our most glaring national security problem. It is our most persistent national security problem. Reforms that would ensure interagency collaboration would be the single most significant step we could take to improve our security posture.*
>
> — Christopher J. Lamb, Institute for National Strategic Studies [1]

It is clear that the current national security system that was forged back in 1947 has been in need of updating for some time, especially if the nation expects it to keep pace with the requirements placed on it today. Where in the past the President and his National Security Council were seen to be able to coordinate and provide direction for all government departments and agencies, increasingly this is no longer the case. No mater how adept at organizing or how much leadership the President may provide, the current system that supports him has failed to keep pace with the realities of the demands placed on that office. This failure of the system is the driving factor behind the myriad of reports calling for change.

At first, it would appear only minor changes may be required. But upon further investigation, the changes required to bring a whole of government approach to foreign affairs are not that simple. As was pointed out in this report, the government has had 60 years of patches placed on it up to now, yet the boat in which it rides still leaks. The true question is how much of an overhaul is required to make the ship sound? This report reviewed three plans to actually fix it.

The Project on National Security Reform (PNSR) was by far the most extensive and thorough of the plans reviewed. It would create a new President's Security Council (PSC) to take the place of the current National Security Council and Homeland Security Council. It also would create a new position called the Director of National Security (DNS) to replace the current assistant to the President on national security affairs. The DNS would lead the staff of the PSC, called the Executive Secretary, and would direct tasks in support of the President's agenda. Interagency Teams that report to the DNS would be created on a temporary basis to work specific national security issues. These changes, it is believed, would allow the President to become more strategic in his focus and not be tied down by day to day tasks involving coordination and direction.

Implementing PNSR report recommendations would also change the interagency process. They would standardize the regional boundaries used by all government departments and agencies to a common frame of reference. In addition, they would create a core of trained interagency professionals through deliberate developmental education and incentives, as well as an overhaul of the DoS, consolidating all tasks that fall within its core competence.

With all these governmental changes, the project recommendations were assessed to have the largest impact on the way the U.S. Government (USG) currently operates. This was no surprise, because the project was designed that way. The project cautioned from the beginning that its recommendations must be enacted as a whole of government fix, not piecemeal. This was because if broken up, it would lessen its effects.

Dr. Carafano's plan was less extensive than PNSR, but still provided change to the nation's foreign affairs focus and interagency community. His plan called for improving executive performance, overcoming operational inaction and preparing responders to respond. He stated

the nation could improve executive performance by making sure the right leaders were chosen and that they had the tools and training to do their job.

Operational inaction could be overcome by rearranging the Geographic Combatant Commands (GCC). Instead of the six GCCs that DoD currently has, Dr. Carafano would change it to three; a new U.S. NATO Command, the same U.S. Northern Command and a new Northeast Asia headquarters. The rest of our national interests abroad would be covered by three joint interagency groups focused on Latin America, Africa-Middle East and Central and South Asia. If a military action was required in one of these areas, then a Joint Task Force would be stood up to deal with it.

Dr. Carafano's plan would prepare responders to do their duty using directed education. He would create an interagency education system patterned after the military's current system. This education would focus on teaching interagency skills. By requiring professionals to have interagency experience and training for advancement, the interagency process would be emphasized and improved.

Although the emphasis on the interagency training was outstanding, there was concern that Dr. Carafano's plan would leave gaps in the regional boundaries that could allow for a crisis to materialize without the nation's knowledge. His plan was flexible and simpler than PNSR, but the researcher felt the potential for gaps caused by changes in the GCC structure would not allow for enough focus on all the regions of the world. This could impact U.S. foreign affairs greatly.

The last plan reviewed was that of the researcher's. His plan called for standardizing regional boundaries amongst all USG departments and agencies as well as the elevation of regional bureaus importance within the DoS. These two items were seen as key to focusing U.S. foreign affairs. The PNSR had an option similar to this plan, but it did not place the regional

bureaus under DoS. Other reports reviewed advocated similar concepts, but again, where the regional bureaus were placed varied. The researcher felt that placing the bureaus under DoS reporting directly to the Secretary of State was critical in allowing them to set regional focus for foreign affairs within their boundaries. These empowered bureaus would have representation from all agencies working in their area. This rejuvenation of the importance of each regional bureau would allow for the undersecretaries in charge to engage dignitaries in their boundaries with far more frequency then is currently available from the Secretary of State. Although the impact of this plan on the way the USG currently does business is assessed to be less then the other two plans, in the end, does it go far enough?

The answer to this question is unfortunately no. After review of the different plans, the researcher found the best option is one that takes into account the researcher's plan, but enacts many of the PNSR and Dr. Carafano recommendations. The researcher's plan would allow DoS to be the lead agency for U.S. foreign affairs and would also place it as the focal point for the myriad of U.S. interagency organizations abroad. In effect, each bureau would itself be its own interagency team, one that would facilitate coordination, planning, budgeting and execution of all actions within its region. Agencies like USAID would still be their own entities, but would now be major stakeholders within each bureau. The problem is this still does not go far enough to fix all our nations foreign affairs issues. Educating this interagency work force and ensuring their placement in key government positions would also be critical. No less critical would be the need to create standardized doctrine for use in a crisis, or the ability for different agencies to share knowledge over a collaborative computer architecture that is standardized and user-friendly.

So, the combination of these plans the researcher believes would give the USG the largest payback for the least amount of upheaval. Put another way, it would provide the most dividends while causing the least impact on the nation's already strained foreign affairs. It would do this by providing our departments and agencies the focus they need to provide a persistent and a consistent regional foreign affairs strategy.

The more objective one looks at how our current system accomplishes its foreign affairs work, the more one comes to the conclusion that the government is missing the mark. The nation continually fails to coordinate all elements of national power and for far too long has allowed the military to take the lead in foreign affairs. Not that the military wanted to take this lead, it is just that the foreign affairs system had been too slow or understaffed up to this point to do it itself. This is why change is needed now.

By creating and empowering regional bureaus within the DoS to take the lead within standardized regions around the world, we can begin to focus our foreign affairs message and ensure a whole of government approach. But the trained professionals and a standardized architecture for sharing information will be necessary to ensure they have the tools to make these changes last. If the nation takes these actions above, the researcher believes our course will be set for improved relations abroad while also reaping the benefits of greater interagency coordination.

Notes

[1] House, *Prepared Statement of Christopher J. Lamb before the Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and Capabilities Subcommittee on Implement the Global War on Terror "overcoming Interagency Problems,"* p 20.

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